### SQA Personal Development: Self and Work units — a blended learning model or online learning approach

### Guidance briefing note

### Date: August 2020 (updated Sep 2024)

### Introduction

This guidance is intended to support centres considering a blended learning model or fully online delivery approach to SQA’s Personal Development: Self and Work units at SCQF levels 3–6.

The purpose of the Personal Development: Self and Work units is to improve the learner’s self-reliance and confidence by developing task management skills. This is done while carrying out a vocational project related to the world of work, with varying levels of support across SCQF levels 3–6. The project can be carried out individually or as part of a group. Learners may choose any context for their vocational project, with guidance from their teacher/lecturer/trainer. Tasks will vary depending on the level of unit the learner is attempting. At lower SCQF levels the learner may explore a job role, while at SCQF level 6 they may explore a career structure and the skills and attributes they need to progress within their chosen career.

The setting for the project can be outside the centre environment. If this is the case, centres must ensure that the relevant health and safety guidelines are followed at all times. However, the unit does not require learners to undertake a work placement with an employer. It is sufficient for the learner to acquire knowledge of and explore the world of work within their centre through research and undertaking vocationally-related tasks or carrying out simulated work activities.

Digital and online technologies can be used to support both teaching and learning activities and formative and summative assessment tasks in the Personal Development: Self and Work units.

The teacher/lecturer/trainer should consider what digital and online technologies they could use most effectively and agree this with learners. You may wish to consider web-based platforms such as:

* Microsoft Office Suite, for example, Microsoft Teams, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, One Note and Sway
* Google Suite, for example, Classroom, Docs, Slides, Google Meet, Forms, Classroom, Hangouts

The following example looks at how unit H18P 45 *Personal Development: Self and Work*, SCQF level 5 could be delivered using a blended learning model or online approach using digital technologies.

### H18P 45 Personal Development: Self and Work, SCQF level 5 — generating evidence

The context will be different for individual learners. To take an example, let us imagine that the learner wants to achieve the Personal Development: Self and Work unit in the context of Hospitality. The learner must achieve all of the outcomes, performance criteria and evidence requirements detailed below.

The learner portfolio templates within the SQA assessment support pack (ASP) which is available for download from the SQA Secure site. However, other approaches to collating evidence can be used, for example, in an e-portfolio.

#### Outcome 1

Learners prepare to develop task management skills within a vocational project by:

#### Performance criteria

1.1 explaining strengths and limitations in their own task management skills, using an appropriate technique

1.2 identifying personal targets for the development of these skills

1.3 producing a plan for the development of these skills

1.4 identifying their own detailed tasks, which will enable progress towards achieving personal targets

#### Evidence requirements

1.1 Learners can evidence their key strengths and limitations in terms of their task management skills using a technique such as SWOT analysis or force-field analysis. Templates are available in the accompanying ASP on the SQA Secure site. Learners can upload their analysis to, for example, an e-portfolio.

1.2 Learners must identify two personal targets for the development of their task management skills. For example:

**Target 1**: I want to find out more about job roles in Hospitality.

**Target 2**: I want to carry out a virtual interview with a front of house manager.

1.3 The learner must produce a plan. In this example it should contain information about the investigation into job roles within the Hospitality industry, as well as a plan for an online interview with a front of house manager. Software such as Microsoft Planner could be used for project planning. This would allow the learner to organise and visualise tasks and update their status as the learner progresses with their plan. The plan could include researching the best method for an online interview, eg Microsoft Teams, Skype, Google Hangouts.

1.4 The learner must identify **two detailed tasks** that will be undertaken for each target and this can be evidenced using the SQA exemplar templates contained in the accompanying ASP which is available from the SQA secure site or any other suitable online document. For example:

**Target 1:** I want to find out **more** about job roles in Hospitality.

**Detailed task 1:** I will look at:

* SDS My World of Work web site, professional magazines, eg *The Caterer* — <https://www.thecaterer.com/> — and other relevant web sites to find out about different types of job roles in the Hospitality sector and what my interests and skills would be best suited to
* different types of online communication tools available to me and decide on how best to organise an interview as well as considering how to structure and conduct an interview online and what questions to ask

**Detailed task 2**: I will find out about the pay and conditions of one job role that I am interested in.

**Target 2:** I want to carry out a virtual interview with a front of house manager.

**Detailed task 1:** I will investigate who I can interview; I will make contact with identified individuals and request an interview; I will agree and set up an online meeting.

**Detailed task 2:** I will prepare a set of interview questions and use technology to record the interview, eg using Microsoft Teams.

#### Outcome 2

Learners carry out the project by:

#### Performance criteria

2.1 monitoring the progress of the plan and taking appropriate action

2.2 completing their own tasks.

#### Evidence requirements

Learners must monitor their progress and specify any changes made to their plan. They must also keep a record of tasks completed. Progress could be recorded using, for example, Microsoft Planner. Evidence could include:

* a note of web sites researched
* a note of skills required for particular jobs
* a list of identified and relevant tasks
* audio/visual recordings of simulated scenarios
* notes of written/oral communications/meetings with individuals/teams
* details of arrangements made
* changes to the plan

Learners should also upload an audio/visual recording of the interview. They might also wish to create and use a blog.

Depending on the job role chosen for investigation, simulated work activities or tasks could be arranged, for example:

##### Reception (simulated scenario set up online using, eg Microsoft Teams)

#### Examples of activities

* welcoming and greeting customers
* leading and managing the team of reception staff
* dealing with a customer complaint
* organising and agreeing a staff rota
* monitoring staff to ensure consistent and professional standards
* reporting faults to relevant team or department

##### Restaurant manager (simulated scenario set up online)

#### Examples of activities

* organising and managing waiting staff
* ensuring waiting staff deliver efficient and professional service
* responding to a customer complaint
* providing information to customers about ingredients
* providing information about sourcing of ingredients
* monitoring quality of food

##### Concierge (simulated scenario set up online)

#### Examples of activities

* greeting guests at front desk and making recommendations for dining, entertainment, sightseeing etc
* making reservations for guests
* researching travel arrangements
* directing guests to hotel amenities

The teacher/lecturer/trainer will attest that all tasks have been completed. They could use the SQA monitoring of progress report template contained in the accompanying ASP available for download from the SQA Secure site, or any other secure method of providing feedback to the learner, eg Microsoft Forms, Google Forms (written) or Microsoft Teams, Skype (verbal), Flipgrid (feedback video).

#### Outcome 3

Learners review their own task management skills by:

#### Performance criteria

3.1 explaining progress made towards achieving personal targets, giving examples

3.2 reaching and justifying conclusions about the effectiveness of the plan

3.3 explaining areas for further development of their own task management skills

#### Evidence requirements

Learners can use the template in the accompanying SQA unit assessment support pack located on the SQA Secure site or any other suitable online form or document to record evidence. Evidence can be written or oral (video/podcast). It should provide commentary on:

* how personal targets were met
* how well their plan worked and how this could be improved in the future
* what task management skills were developed or developed further
* what skills still need to be developed or improved for future vocational purposes

The teacher/lecturer/trainer will comment on the learner’s review of their task management skills and attest that all performance criteria have been met by using the unit assessment support pack template located on the SQA Secure site or any other suitable online document.

The learner should be asked the following questions:

3.1 Did you fully or partially achieve Target 1? Can you explain why the target was fully or partially achieved? Can you give some examples of the tasks you carried out?

3.2 Did you fully or partially achieve Target 2? Can you explain why the target was fully or partially achieved? Can you give some examples of the tasks you carried out?

3.2 Effectiveness of the plan — describe the strengths and weaknesses of your plan. What did not go as well as you intended or hoped and why? What went well and why?

3.3 Explain how you will develop your task management skills in future, eg ‘I need to be able to stick to deadlines and not ignore them’.

### General

Throughout delivery of the Personal Development: Self and Work units, the teacher/lecturer/ trainer could adopt a variety of learning and teaching approaches using digital and online technologies. Class meetings could be arranged to discuss approaches to learning, to discuss skills development, share experiences and ideas, collaborate in group work, agree tasks, targets, outcomes, and deadlines (using eg Microsoft Teams, Google Hangouts). Recording of these meetings should be made available afterwards for learners to consolidate and review learning. Video posts can be uploaded or YouTube posts shared that exemplify relevant work scenarios or provide relevant information or online learning resources. An online question forum could be created where questions can be sent to the teacher/lecturer/trainer and answers posted so that the whole class group has access. Alternatively, feedback can be provided privately on a one-to-one basis. There are many and varied possibilities.

### Summary

SQA and other key stakeholders recognise that there is opportunity to introduce a blended or fully online learning experience for learners in the delivery of the project-based Personal Development: Self and Work units at SCQF level 3–6. There is a growing recognition that learners are keen to use a variety of digital and online technologies in their learning and assessment. This is also acknowledged in the Scottish Government’s *Enhancing Learning and Teaching Through the Use of Digital Technology Strategy, 2016*. At a time when centres are seeking to introduce new and innovative learning and teaching approaches, it seems the time is right to encourage the use of digital and online technologies that allow the learner to explore the world of work.

The blended learning or fully online approach to delivery is not intended to be a substitute for an actual work placement; rather it is a means to develop knowledge and understanding of the world of work. It can be used as the foundation for seeking a work placement opportunity when the time is right for both the individual learner and the employer.

**Please note:** Further guidance has been provided by SQA specifically with regard to the delivery of work placement units. This can be found on the SQA web site

https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/13775.html.