

SQA Advanced Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Work Placement (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: HP4X 47

Superclass: HB

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Unit purpose

This unit is designed to give recognition for a range of work experience activities that learners may complete as part of a SQA Advanced programme. It is intended for learners who will benefit from a flexible approach where a work placement opportunity is tailored to individual needs and is part of their course of study and/or current employment needs. The work placement should take into account any individual prior learning and aim to develop work related skills. The aim of the unit is to develop the necessary essential workplace skills and experience to consider appropriate career development opportunities. The unit aims to enhance existing or new employment prospects and where possible to support progression into paid employment.

Outcomes

On successful completion of the unit the learner will be able to:

- 1 Prepare for a work placement opportunity.
- 2 Develop and enhance personal and vocational skills in the workplace.
- 3 Review and evaluate the workplace experience and identify future career development progression.

Credit points and level

1 SQA Credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7)

SQA Advanced Unit Specification

Recommended entry to the unit

Access to this unit is at the discretion of the centre. Ideally learners should have good communication and interpersonal skills. These could be demonstrated by the achievement of the Core Skill *Communication* and *Working with Others* at SCQF level 5 or above. It would be beneficial if learners had some work experience, but it is not essential. Similarly, learners who are involved in volunteering; an existing work placement and/or paid employment may wish to improve their employment/career prospects with a tailored work placement opportunity.

Core Skills

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skills	Problem Solving at SCQF level 6 Working with Others at SCQF level 6
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Core Skill component	None
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Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the support notes for this unit specification.

Context for delivery

This unit can be delivered as part of a group award. It is recommended that any work experience completed as part of this unit should be in an industry or context which is relevant to the subject area of the group award to which it contributes.

The assessment support pack (ASP) for this unit provides assessment and marking guidelines that exemplify the national standard for achievement. It is a valid, reliable and practicable assessment. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the ASP to ensure a comparable standard. A list of existing ASPs is available to download from SQA's website (<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/46233.2769.html>).

Equality and inclusion

This unit specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Work Placement (SCQF level 7)

Acceptable performance in this unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

Where evidence for outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the knowledge and/or skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Learners should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Outcome 1

Prepare for a work placement opportunity.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Be able to identify individual strengths, skills and qualities suitable for a prospective employer
- ◆ Be able to develop a personal career development plan which includes:
 - knowing how to create and produce a CV
 - setting personal goals and specific objectives that are SMART, ie specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound
- ◆ Negotiating a flexible working contract with an existing or new work placement provider to meet individual needs
- ◆ Agree own role, responsibilities and tasks with the employer to promote individual progression

Outcome 2

Develop and enhance personal and vocational skills in the workplace.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Gain knowledge of the organisational and business structure of the placement organisation
- ◆ Understand how the candidate role fits within the organisation and potential career development
- ◆ Be able to communicate effectively and discuss progress with line manager and/or tutor and gain feedback on personal performance
- ◆ Monitor and maintain records of tasks/duties carried out in the work placement
- ◆ Demonstrate effective collaboration with others to support good working relationships
- ◆ Be able to adopt problem solving techniques
- ◆ Knowledge of policies and/or legislation appropriate to the work experience
- ◆ Participate in tutor and/or employer led events/training
- ◆ Understand how to log CPD
- ◆ Participate in a personal development/career review

SQA Advanced Unit Specification

Outcome 3

Review and evaluate the workplace experience and identify future career development progression.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Critically evaluate the 'whole' work experience process (start to finish) and be able to justify the findings including both positive and negative outcomes
- ◆ Review the personal goals and SMART objectives set in relation to future personal and career progression
- ◆ To draw conclusions on the completion of a CPD log and the Personal Development Review (PDR)
- ◆ Be able to update the CV

Evidence requirements for this unit

Learners will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills across all outcomes by showing that they can:

- ◆ prepare for a work placement opportunity.
- ◆ develop and enhance personal and vocational skills in the workplace.
- ◆ review and evaluate the workplace experience and identify future career development progression.

Evidence for this unit can be gathered in a portfolio and assessed holistically and/or outcome by outcome.

Portfolio evidence should contain all of the following:

Outcome 1

- ◆ An analysis of own strengths, skills and qualities that prospective employers may be looking for
- ◆ An individual personal career development plan which must include all of the following:
 - a completed CV
 - short-term; medium-term and long-term goals
 - SMART objectives, ie specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound
- ◆ The negotiation of a flexible working contract with an existing or new work placement provider to meet individual needs
- ◆ Agreement reached on individual role, responsibilities and tasks with the employer to promote individual progression

SQA Advanced Unit Specification

Outcome 2

A workplace learning plan which must include all of the following:

- ◆ Organisational and business structure of the placement organisation
- ◆ Explanation of the placement role and how this fits within the organisation and potential career pathways
- ◆ A personal log of tasks/duties carried out within the work placement and signed off by tutor and/or work placement provider which includes evidence of:
 - collaboration with others to support good working relationships
 - any problem solving techniques applied
 - adherence to relevant policies or legislation appropriate to the work experience
- ◆ Participation in a minimum of one event/training session led by tutor and/or employer
- ◆ A completed CPD log
- ◆ Participation in a personal development/career review meeting

Outcome 3

- ◆ A completed self- evaluation report for the work experience. The report must include analysis and justification of the findings (minimum 250 words)
- ◆ A short review of the personal goals and SMART objectives set in relation to future personal and career progression (minimum 250 words)
- ◆ Conclusions on the completion of the CPD log and the PDR (Personal Development Review) (minimum 250 words)
- ◆ An updated CV

For the purposes of this unit, the term 'Work Placement' is used in its widest sense and can include any activity that offers an experience of work. Evidence from the following sources should be allowed to contribute to the work placement:

- ◆ Paid part-time employment during the learner's own time
- ◆ A placement organised directly by the learner or with assistance from the centre
- ◆ A simulated working environment (such as a working kitchen or salon within a centre)
- ◆ Volunteer work
- ◆ A real life or simulated business enterprise, where the learner completes all tasks required of a self-employed worker

The work placement activity or activities used should be as flexible as possible. To give a rough indication, the activity or activities (combined), should normally comprise a minimum of three days work experience.

SQA Advanced Unit Specification

Assessment may be carried out:

◆ Outcome by outcome

The unit can be assessed outcome by outcome. Assessing the unit, outcome by outcome captures the three stages of planning and organising, carrying out the work placement and reviewing and evaluating the work placement. The planning and organising of the work placement will lead to the development of the role itself and the responsibilities and tasks associated with the work placement experience. The final stage is the evaluation and how the experience has impacted on the chosen career pathway.

◆ Two or more outcomes together

It is possible when gathering a portfolio of evidence to assess two or more outcomes together. It is important to gather evidence across outcomes and to see the relationship between the gathering of the assessment evidence and the associated tasks, eg setting personal goals, creating SMART targets and how this relates to the work placement role which has been agreed with the employer.

◆ All outcomes together — holistic assessment of the unit

The delivery of the *Work Placement* unit lends itself to the gathering of holistic assessment evidence. A common approach is to develop an index which identifies the three stages of the assessment cycle identifying the associated assessment tasks. The learner is able to see what evidence is required relating to each stage and the relationship between the three phases of the assessment activity.

Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Work Placement (SCQF level 7)

Unit support notes are offered as guidance and are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this unit

This SQA Advanced Unit has been developed in line with the published *Work Placement Standard for Colleges 2016* which was produced by the *Scottish Funding Council*. The standard has been written in response to the Wood Commission's Report '*Education Working for All!*' (June 2014) and the Scottish Government's '*Developing the Young Workforce — Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy*' (December 2014).

The strategy recognises the valuable role in future workforce development:

***'The key message we have had from young people [...] is their need for significantly enhanced quality work experience while at school and college.'* (Wood Commission)**

This unit is aimed at supporting the variety of ways in which learners can experience the world of work in order to develop the necessary and essential skills for future employment. There is a need to recognise how the work placement standard seeks to promote '*a progressive approach to providing such experiences, relevant to where a young person is on their learner journey*'.

The progressive approach is to recognise existing good practice and to consider new and innovative approaches to the delivery of a work placement as part of a programme of study and/or a new or existing placement opportunity. This can bring added value to existing course and vocational requirements to maximise opportunities for practical skills development and contextualised work based learning. *The Work Placement Standard for Colleges 2016* suggests consideration should be given to these contexts and the opportunities that they can provide:

- ◆ simulated work environments
- ◆ enterprise activities
- ◆ volunteering
- ◆ employer presentations
- ◆ practice interviews
- ◆ research tasks
- ◆ site visits
- ◆ personal skills analysis
- ◆ careers events
- ◆ paid part-time employment
- ◆ peer group presentation
- ◆ mentoring and coaching
- ◆ in-house business start ups
- ◆ presentations from previous students
- ◆ employer led master-classes
- ◆ business competitions

SQA Advanced Unit Specification

The work placement should be flexible and a working contract mutually agreed between the learner and the employer. It is important that the model of engagement in work based activities is agreed and supports the development of the learner, eg morning/afternoon/ all day; evening (where appropriate); single day and /or block release.

Learners should be encouraged to access the best quality work placement experience possible, where the outcomes can be measured and used to inform future progress.

It is important that the work placement activity is seen as an integral part of a college programme and not as an additional activity. Work placement learning can be built into the course design where there are time constraints by 'thinking out of the box' and arranging work placement activities to fit into the individual learners' own timescales, eg a learner on a beauty programme may want to use an existing work placement experience with a beauty salon which can focus on an agreed programme of work based learning linked to individual career aspirations and career pathways.

It is important that the work placement experience is 'valued.' Consideration may be given to the *whole process* from the application stage through to the work placement interview and a mutually agreed working pattern which reflects the 'real world' as much as possible.

Partnership working is seen as the key to a successful work placement and this unit is aimed at involving the learner, the course provider and the employer. It is essential that feedback is obtained at regular intervals between the employer, the learner and the centre and that this should be an integral part of the experience within a programme of learning. It is further envisaged that constructive feedback between all the partners involved should inform continuous improvement in their approaches to work placement delivery.

Guidance on approaches to delivery of this unit

Ideally, a work placement opportunity should be made available to all SQA Advanced learners and should be an integral part of their programme of study. It is important that new and creative approaches to the delivery of the work placement opportunity are explored, eg in-house/external placements; simulated/real work environments; business/enterprise approaches; direct links with employers; employment training/events; advice on job applications/interviews where appropriate; engagement in CPD/Career Development Review process. Learners at SQA Advanced level must be supported by the tutor/employment provider to gain the maximum benefit of the work placement experience in order to inform their future progress and development.

Centres need to support learners to consider what 'real' options they have for a work placement opportunity. This should include early information being provided about local/national labour market intelligence linked to appropriate career pathways and employer led events/training opportunities.

The delivery of the work placement unit is likely to involve the learner across the three stages of planning, implementation and the evaluation. It is similar to a graded unit approach where the learner is supported at an early stage and monitoring is provided across each of the three stages of the assessment process as the learner develops the assessment folio.

Guidance on approaches to assessment of this unit

Evidence can be generated using different types of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education.

The SQA Advanced *Work Placement* unit can be assessed outcome by outcome. Alternatively, the unit can be assessed holistically as a portfolio of evidence gathered across all outcomes.

Outcome 1

This outcome is aimed at the learner assessing what development needs are required and how this relates to their own identified short, medium and long-term goals and individual career development. The preparation for the work placement begins with the use of SWOT analysis as a recognised self-evaluation tool. The learner should then be able to provide details of their short, medium and long-term goals and SMART objectives. A completed CV will provide up to date personal and professional information about the learner and can be used to show the prospective placement provider.

It is the responsibility of the learner at SQA Advanced level to negotiate a flexible work placement contract with the employer to meet individual needs. Prior to the negotiation of the work placement contract the learner should provide the employer with their personal career development plan in order to agree a suitable role, responsibilities and tasks as part of the placement contract. Where the work placement has already been organised by the centre for the learner, the requirement to seek an appropriate placement and negotiate the role can be completed as a simulated task.

Outcome 2

This outcome provides evidence of carrying out the work placement activity. A useful approach is to develop a workplace learning plan which can be used to gather all the evidence for this outcome.

It is important that the learner takes responsibility for this and the plan can then be used to inform the CPD development, progress review and career review. The workplace plan should include evidence of the following:

- ◆ A brief overview of the placement business organisation and general structure
- ◆ An explanation of the placement role, how this fits into the structure with details of career development
- ◆ A personal log of placement tasks/duties which includes information relating to co-operative working; any problem solving techniques adopted and how knowledge of current policies and legislation may need to be taken into account in the work role
- ◆ A record of participation in a minimum of **one** event/training session led by tutor and/or employer
- ◆ A record of participation in a progress review meeting with line manager and/or tutor to gain feedback
- ◆ Completed CPD log
- ◆ A record of participation in a personal development/career review meeting

SQA Advanced Unit Specification

Outcome 3

Reviewing and evaluating the work placement experience is an important part of the reflective process. The learner at SQA Advanced level must be able to reflect on the whole work placement learning experience, evaluate what has been learned and assess the impact of this for any future development.

At this level, the review and evaluation process must be achieved with a complex level of analysis and justification of the findings:

- ◆ Reflect on the identified SMART objectives, how they were met and any difficulties encountered (minimum 250 words)
- ◆ Evaluate the impact of the work placement experience on identified career progression routes and pathways (minimum 250 words)
- ◆ Draw conclusions on the completion of the CPD log and the Personal Development Review (PDR) (minimum 250 words)
- ◆ Update the CV

Opportunities for e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all learner evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the evidence requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment.

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

There are opportunities to signpost the core skill of communication. The learner is expected to develop a high level of good communication and interpersonal skills when working with others.

The work placement may provide the opportunity to gain paid employment. The placement experience may also lead to longer-term sustainable employment opportunities.

This unit has the Core Skill of Problem Solving and Working with Others embedded in it, so when learners achieve this unit their Core Skills profile will be updated to show that they have achieved Problem Solving at SCQF level 6 and Working with Others at SCQF level 6.

Administrative information

Version	Description of change	Date

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SQA acknowledges the valuable contribution that Scotland's colleges have made to the development of SQA Advanced Qualifications.

FURTHER INFORMATION: Call SQA's Customer Contact Centre on 44 (0) 141 500 5030 or 0345 279 1000. Alternatively, complete our [Centre Feedback Form](#).

General information for candidates

Unit title: Work Placement (SCQF level 7)

This section will help you decide whether this is the unit for you by explaining what the unit is about, what you should know or be able to do before you start, what you will need to do during the unit and opportunities for further learning and employment.

This unit is designed to give recognition for a range of work experience activities that you may complete as part of a SQA Advanced programme.

Work placements can take many forms but the main aim of any work placement will be to give you some experience of the demands of employment in a given sector. The experience you gain from work placements should help you to put the various subjects you study as part of your SQA Advanced programme into context.

To achieve the unit, you will need to gather evidence to show that you have:

- ◆ prepared for a work placement opportunity.
- ◆ developed and enhanced personal and vocational skills in the workplace.
- ◆ reviewed and evaluated the workplace experience and identified future career development progression.

This unit has the Core Skill of Problem Solving and Working with Others embedded in it, so when you achieve this Unit your Core Skills profile will be updated to show that you have achieved Problem Solving and Working with Others at SCQF level 6.