Unit 1: Communication in a Business Environment

Unit reference number: H/506/1893
QCF level: 2
Credit value: 3
Guided learning hours: 19
Unit type: Competence

Unit summary

Communication skills are an important part of any business and administration role. They underpin all interactions with internal and external audiences and, run through all the units in the overall qualification as a thread.

In this unit you will develop the knowledge and skills of communication needed in a business environment. You will explore different methods of how to communicate with others, including verbal and non-verbal communication and effective written business communication.

You will look at how to use spoken language appropriately, tone of voice, and the body language used in verbal discussions and when responding to others. You will consider the language, content, structure and accuracy of information in written communications relevant to your role and workplace.
Learning outcomes and assessment criteria

To pass this unit, the learner needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria outline the requirements the learner is expected to meet to achieve the unit.

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<th>Learning outcomes</th>
<th>Assessment criteria</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 Understand the requirements of written and verbal business communication</td>
<td>1.1 Explain why different communication methods are used in the business environment</td>
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<td>1.2 Describe the communication requirements of different audiences</td>
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<td>1.3 Explain the importance of using correct grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, spelling and conventions in business communications</td>
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<td>1.4 Explain the importance of using appropriate body language and tone of voice when communicating verbally</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Be able to produce written business communications</td>
<td>2.1 Identify the nature, purpose, audience and use of the information to be communicated</td>
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<td>2.2 Use communication channels that are appropriate to the information to be communicated and the audience</td>
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<td>2.3 Present information in the format that meets the brief</td>
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<td>2.4 Adhere to agreed business communication conventions and degree of formality of expression when producing documents</td>
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<td>2.5 Produce business communications that are clear, accurate and correct</td>
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<td>2.6 Meet agreed deadlines in communicating with others</td>
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<td>Learning outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Be able to communicate verbally in business environments</td>
<td>3.1 Identify the nature, purpose, recipient/s and intended use of the information to be communicated</td>
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<td>3.2 Use language that is appropriate for the recipient’s needs</td>
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<td>3.3 Use body language and tone of voice to reinforce messages</td>
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<td>3.4 Identify the meaning and implications of information that is communicated verbally</td>
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<td>3.5 Confirm that a recipient has understood correctly what has been communicated</td>
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<td>3.6 Respond in a way that is appropriate to the situation and in accordance with organisational policies and standards</td>
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Unit amplification

AC1.1: Explain why different communication methods are used in the business environment

- Communication methods: verbal; non-verbal; written, e.g. email, letter
- Use of communication methods: speed, efficiency, cost, convenience, recipient

AC1.2: Describe the communication requirements of different audiences

- Audiences:
  - Internal: work for same organisation
  - External: customers, suppliers, regulatory authorities
- Communication requirements: purpose; appropriate communication methods, e.g. formal, informal, verbal, written; language; level of detail; organisation standards and protocols; customer expectations

AC1.3: Explain the importance of using correct grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, spelling and conventions in business communications

- Conventions: salutations; formal language; professional style; house style; appropriate use of punctuation
- Importance: accuracy; own standards of work; professional image; customer perception

AC1.4: Explain the importance of using appropriate body language and tone of voice when communicating verbally

- Verbal communication: making and receiving telephone calls; contributing to discussions; participating in meetings; conversations with colleagues about work issues
- Importance: presenting positive image of self and organisation; impact on others; minimising barriers; discussing sensitive subject
Information for tutors

Suggested resources

Books

Websites
www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise – BBC Skillswise: learning resources which include verbal and written methods of communication

Assessment
This unit is internally assessed. To pass this unit the evidence that the learner presents for assessment must demonstrate that they have met the required standard specified in the learning outcomes and assessment criteria and the requirements of the Assessment Strategy.

To ensure that the assessment tasks and activities enable learners to produce valid, sufficient, authentic and appropriate evidence that meet the assessment criteria, centres should apply the *Unit assessment guidance* provided and the requirements of the Assessment Strategy given below.

Wherever possible, centres should adopt a holistic approach to assessing the units in the qualification. This gives the assessment process greater rigour and minimises repetition, time and the burden of assessment on all parties involved in the process.

Unit assessment requirements
This unit must be assessed in the workplace in accordance with the Skills CFA Assessment Strategy for Business Administration, Customer Service and Management and Leadership in *Annexe A*. Simulation is not allowed for this unit. All evidence of occupational competence should be generated through performance under workplace conditions; this includes evidence of achievement for knowledge-based learning outcomes and associated assessment criteria.
**Unit assessment guidance**

This guidance supports assessors in making decisions about how best to assess each unit and the evidence needed to meet the assessment requirements. Centres can adapt the guidance for learners and the particular assessment context, as appropriate.

The primary source of evidence for demonstrating achievement of learning outcome 3 is direct observation of the learner communicating verbally with others in the business environment. Verbal communications may include telephone and face-to-face. Evidence for AC3.4 should include learners using questioning techniques and active listening to identify the meaning of information communicated and its implications.

The primary source of evidence for demonstrating achievement of learning outcome 2 is the learner’s work products, such as emails, letters, reports and planning notes, produced in the natural course of their work role. The assessor should examine these work products to check accuracy in terms of spelling, grammar and sentence construction as well as judge their clarity and correctness in relation to the purpose and audience of the communications (AC2.5).

The evidence from the direct observation and work products for learning outcome 2 and learning outcome 3 should be supported by Q&A to fill any gaps in the evidence of their competence. For example, for specific written communications, the learner could be asked to explain how they decided that the communication method used was appropriate and why they have organised, structured and presented the information in the way they have. This would provide supporting evidence of competence for AC2.2, AC2.3 and AC2.5. Similarly, to support evidence for learning outcome 3, the learner could be asked to explain how they have used body language and tone of voice to meet audience needs and reinforce messages in specific observed situations (AC3.3 and AC3.3). A learner diary could be used as an alternative to Q&A if appropriate for the learner and the assessment context.

To achieve AC2.6, learners need to provide evidence of meeting the agreed timescale either from the date the communication was distributed or the date the query was resolved. Witness testimony could be used to provide supporting evidence across the unit as appropriate.

Question and answer (Q&A) sessions could be used to corroborate the competence of the learner (e.g. for AC2.1, AC3.1, AC3.4 and AC3.6) as well as meeting the requirements of the knowledge assessment criteria in learning outcome 1. The Q&A should be integrated with the assessment for learning outcome 2 to provide the opportunity for the learner to link and apply their knowledge to their workplace activities. For example, the learner could be asked to explain why it is important for them and their organisation that their written or verbal communications are accurate, correct and appropriate for the audience and business environment. This question should be related to specific observed verbal communications or specific pieces of written communications. This relates the knowledge to meet AC1.3 and AC1.4 to the learner’s work activities in learning outcome 2 and learning outcome 3. If a learner diary is used in the assessment of learning outcome 2 and learning outcome 3, then it can be used as an alternative to the Q&A to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcome 1. The learner diary entries should be contextualised to their work activities to link and apply the knowledge requirements in a similar manner as with the Q&A. The learner’s responses must be at the appropriate breadth and depth to meet the level of demand of the knowledge assessment criteria; for example, the responses must have sufficient detail about the importance of using correct writing conventions (AC1.3) and the importance of using appropriate body language and tone of voice when communicating verbally (AC1.4).

Evidence of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) can also be used within the unit to confirm competence. Wherever possible, the learning outcomes in this unit should be assessed holistically across the qualification.