Unit 1: Resolve Administrative Problems

Unit reference number: D/506/1956

QCF level: 4

Credit value: 6

Guided learning hours: 56

Unit summary

Problem solving is a key skill and it is one that can make a huge difference to your career. At work, problems are at the centre of what many people do every day, you are either solving a problem for a client, supporting those who are solving problems, or discovering new problems to solve.

The problems you face can be large or small, simple or complex, and easy or difficult to solve. Regardless of the nature of the problems, a fundamental part of every manager's role is finding ways to solve them. So, being a confident problem solver is important to your success. Much of that confidence comes from having a good process to use when approaching a problem. With a good process, you can solve problems quickly and effectively, without one, your solutions may be ineffective or you will get stuck and do nothing, sometimes with consequences.

In this unit you will learn skills and techniques which will help you identify and resolve a range of problems, associated specifically, to an administrative or business environment. You will develop an awareness of the importance of risk assessment as a preventative measure to avoid impact and risk when problems occur as well as reduce the effect. You will explore and implement techniques to monitor, manage, control and analyse the potential for problems. You will demonstrate effective selection and application of problem solving strategies within the context of identified administrative problems.

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.

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
1 Understand the principles underpinning the resolution of administrative problems	1.1 Evaluate the effectiveness of different types of information on an administrative function 1.2 Explain the basis for selecting tools, techniques and strategies to analyse administrative functions 1.3 Explain the constraints attached to the use of resources needed to resolve administrative problems 1.4 Explain how to apply risk assessment and management techniques to identify and resolve administrative problems 1.5 Analyse the effectiveness of different techniques used to resolve administrative problems
2 Be able to identify administrative problems	2.1 Collect information relevant to the administrative problem 2.2 Use analytical techniques that are appropriate to the administrative problem 2.3 Clarify whether an administrative problem is recurrent, intermittent or a sole instance 2.4 Identify patterns of issues and problems 2.5 Identify the likely cause of an administrative problem

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
3 Be able to resolve administrative problems	3.1 Select a strategy that is appropriate for the nature, scale, seriousness and priority of the administrative problem 3.2 Develop a plan that addresses the administrative problem whilst minimising disruption to business 3.3 Identify success criteria that are capable of measuring the effectiveness of solutions to solve administrative problems 3.4 Implement a problem-solving plan within the agreed timescale and constraints 3.5 Take action to ensure that systems and processes are capable of preventing future reoccurrences 3.6 Evaluate the effectiveness of problem solving activities 3.7 Adhere to organisational policies and procedures, legal and ethical requirements when resolving administrative problems

Unit amplification

AC1.1: Evaluate the effectiveness of different types of information on an administrative function

- *Types of information:* e.g. text, numbers, graphics, audio, video
- *Sources:* internal and external; primary and secondary; formal and informal; team workers; customers and other stakeholders
- *Information needs:* requirements analysis, e.g. strategic, tactical, operational; data requirements, e.g. inputs, outputs, processing activities; information distribution requirements, e.g. location, department, individual
- *Information requirements:* needs for information, e.g. internal, external storing information; information security; accuracy; relevance; outputs, e.g. payroll, invoicing, ordering, bookings, stock control, personnel records, goods tracking, decision making, marketing, customer service
- *Ways of storing information:* methods, e.g. paper based, ICT; location, e.g. local, remote, cloud; organisation of information; retrieval; archive; resources
- *Effectiveness of information:* people, e.g. users, stakeholders; process, e.g. flows, procedures, security, testing; technology, e.g. hardware, software, telecommunications; content, e.g. relevance, validity, level of detail, accuracy; risk; analysis; reporting; monitoring; reviewing

AC1.2: Explain the basis for selecting tools, techniques and strategies to analyse administrative functions

- *Business analysis tools and techniques:*
  - Business strategies and objectives: strategy analysis, e.g. external business environment, internal capability; strategy definition; strategy implementation; performance management
  - Investigation: qualitative; quantitative; documenting results
  - Consider perspectives: stakeholder identification; stakeholder analysis; stakeholder management
  - Analyse needs: organisation modelling; business process analysis; business change identification
  - Evaluate options: options, e.g. identification, shortlist; business case, e.g. preparation, presentation
  - Define requirements: elicitation; analysis; development; modelling
  - Manage change: organisation; people; benefit management and realisation
- *Administrative functions:* human resources; sales and marketing; research and development; production/operations; customer service; finance and accounts; administration and IT

AC1.3: Explain the constraints attached to the use of resources needed to resolve administrative problems

- *Constraints attached to the use of resources:*
  - Time: management; efficiencies; deadlines; working hours; delays
  - People: workforce numbers; skills and knowledge; management; stakeholders needs; expectations; abuse
  - Physical resources: technology; consumables; environmental, e.g. furniture, premises
  - Environment: space; waste; carbon footprint
  - Information: sufficiency; accuracy; validity; reliability; sources
  - Processes: workflows; productivity
  - Costs: budgets operating funds; salary payments; taxation; debt; credit
  - Legal and ethical constraints: relevant legislation; employment law; fraud

AC1.4: Explain how to apply risk assessment and management techniques to identify and resolve administrative problems

- *Risk assessment techniques:* assessments, e.g. impact, probability; contingency planning; project management; frequency; scale; how it affects quality of work; how it affects others
- *Risk management:* avoidance; reduction; transfer; acceptance; strategy, e.g. set objectives, identify risks, assess risks, treat risks, control risks, communicate and monitor

AC1.5: Analyse the effectiveness of different techniques used to resolve administrative problems

- *Administrative problems:* internal, e.g. people, processes, productivity, environment, resources, time, budget, information; external, e.g. suppliers, customers, legislation; business objectives
- *Measuring effectiveness:* objectives; efficiencies; relevance; appropriateness; review; evaluation; stakeholder perception; stakeholder satisfaction

Information for tutors

Suggested resources

Books

Cadle J, Paul D and Turner P – *Business Analysis Techniques: 72 Essential Skills for Success* (BCS, 2010) ISBN 9781906124236

Hopkin P – *Fundamentals of Risk Management: Understanding, Evaluating and Implementing Effective Risk Management* (2nd edition) (Kogan Page, 2012) ISBN 9780749465391

Weiss A E – *Key Business Solutions: Essential Problem-Solving Tools and Techniques that every Manager needs to know* (Financial Times/Prentice Hall, 2011) ISBN 9780273750291

Websites

www.businessballs.com – Businessballs: online training for careers, work, management, business training and educators

www.edexcel.com/qualifications – Pearson qualifications: provide guidance for Wider Key Skills – Problem solving

www.mindtools.com – Mind Tools: essential skills for an effective career

www.skillscfa.org – Skills CFA: Sector Skills Council for Business Administration

Assessment

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 meeting the requirements of learning outcome 2 and learning outcome 3 is direct observation of the learner carrying out their work activities relating to resolving administrative problems.

The evidence from any direct observation for learning outcome 2 and learning outcome 3 could be supported by examining work products such as minutes from meetings, action plans, briefings, reports, business analysis activities, operational observation and monitoring activities, records, e.g. problem solving plans, flow charts, spreadsheets, notes, forms etc. and non-verbal communication to colleagues, managers and/or customers, e.g. emails, letters etc. – this provides further evidence to meet the requirements, for example AC2.1, AC2.3, AC2.4, AC2.5, AC3.1, AC3.2, AC3.3, AC3.4 and AC3.5. To achieve AC3.7, learners need to provide evidence of adhering to organisational policies and procedures, legal and ethical requirements when resolving administrative problems either through checklists or forms. Witness testimony could be used to support the evidence from direct observation for this AC as well as for AC2.1, AC2.3 and AC2.5.

The primary source of evidence for meeting the requirements of learning outcome 1 could come from a professional discussion where the learner demonstrates an understanding of the principles of resolving administrative problems. Learners responses during the professional discussion must be at the appropriate breadth and depth to meet the level of demand for the knowledge assessment criteria; for example, the responses must have sufficient detail about the effectiveness of different types of information on an administrative function (AC1.1), the basis for selecting tools, techniques and strategies to analyse administrative functions (AC1.2), the constraints attached to the use of resources needed to resolve administrative problems (AC1.3), how to apply risk assessment and management techniques to identify and resolve administrative problems (AC1.4) and the effectiveness of different techniques used to resolve administrative problems (AC1.5). Reflective account can be used to support the evidence from professional discussion for learning outcome 1 as well as for AC2.2, AC2.3, AC2.4, AC2.5, AC3.1, AC3.2 and AC3.6.

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.