



Accredited

OCR LEVEL 3 CAMBRIDGE TECHNICAL CERTIFICATE/DIPLOMA IN IT

COMMUNICATION AND
EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS FOR IT

F/601/7233

LEVEL 3 UNIT 1

GUIDED LEARNING HOURS: 60

UNIT CREDIT VALUE: 10



COMMUNICATION AND EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS FOR IT

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AIM OF THE UNIT

Communication is a vital skill for any individual. The effective use of communication and flexibility of styles is a highly desirable attribute to employers to maintain good working practice. This unit identifies the principles for effective communication and introduces learners to the interpersonal skills and attributes required within a work place and how different combinations and approaches are required for a range of job roles it also identifies the different IT tools available for safe and secure communication and exchange of information within an organisation. Learners will consider approaches and adapt the way they communicate, depending on their audience.

This unit will prepare learners to effectively use various communication channels, within a working environment and to understand what an employer expects of an individual and how to communicate effectively whilst developing their own personal development needs.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING CRITERIA

Learning Outcome (LO)	Pass The assessment criteria are the pass requirements for this unit.	Merit To achieve a merit the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	Distinction To achieve a distinction the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
The learner will:	The learner can:		
1 Understand the personal attributes valued by employers	P1 explain the personal attributes valued by employers	M1 explain the different personal skills that employers may require for specific IT job roles	
2 Understand the principles of effective communication	P2 explain the principles of effective communication		
	P3 discuss potential barriers to effective communication		D1 explain how some of the potential barriers can be reduced
	P4 demonstrate a range of effective interpersonal skills		
3 Be able to use IT to communicate effectively	P5 use IT to aid communications	M2 explain the choices of the IT used	D2 justify the use of the IT used to aid communication
	P6 communicate technical information to a specified audience		
4 Be able to address personal development needs	P7 produce a personal development plan		
	P8 follow a personal development plan	M3 identify primary areas for improvement and how these will be achieved	

TEACHING CONTENT

The unit content describes what has to be taught to ensure that learners are able to access the highest grade.

Anything which follows an i.e. details what must be taught as part of that area of content.

Anything which follows an e.g. is illustrative, it should be noted that where e.g. is used, learners must know and be able to apply relevant examples to their work though these do not need to be the same ones specified in the unit content.

LO1 Understand the personal attributes valued by employers

- Personal attributes (e.g. self motivation, leadership qualities, respect, dependability, punctuality, problem solving, determination, independent workers, time management, team working, written numerical and verbal skills, planning and organisational skills)
- Good working practices (e.g. Health and Safety, following organisational procedures, adhering to legislation)
- Specific IT job sectors and personal skills required for the roles (e.g. Networking, Computer gaming, Computer graphics and animation, Programming, Web design).

LO2 Understand the principles of effective communication

- Interpersonal skills (e.g. verbal conversation, lip reading, signing)
- Cues in verbal exchanges (e.g. body language, use of intonation, nodding, summarising and paraphrasing)
- Barriers to effective communication (e.g. language, distraction, noise, lack of concentration)
- Questioning techniques (e.g. closed, open, probing questions, response times)
- Written communication (e.g. emoticons, note taking, reports, letters, faxes, email)
- Proofing documents (e.g. grammar checking, spell checking, proofreading, punctuation).

LO3 Be able to use IT to communicate effectively

- Communication technology
 - presentation software
 - word processing
 - email
 - web
 - blogs/vlogs
 - instant messaging

- video conferencing/podcasting.
- Document Proofing
 - proof reading
 - spelling and grammar checking
 - punctuation.
- Effective communication
 - understanding the audience
 - adapt information to target audience
 - clarification of requirement (e.g. discussion, meetings, questioning, research).

LO4 Be able to address personal development needs

- Identification (e.g. self assessment, appraisal meeting notes, feedback, performance data)
- Recording needs (e.g. target setting, appraisal records, performance management reviews)
- Addressing needs (e.g. work shadowing, team meetings, training, conferences)
- Learning styles and characteristics (e.g. active or reflective, visual, auditory or physical)
- Preparing a well structured CV and application (e.g. focussed, accurate, relevant, proofed).

DELIVERY GUIDANCE

Understand the personal attributes valued by employers

Learners should be taught the attributes that an employer values – if possible managers from local companies could come in for a visit and talk to learners regarding company expectations and the responsibilities of the company in terms of Health and Safety and their other statutory legal requirements. Learners should be encouraged to visit local companies to see how they operate and talk to employees as to the expectations that the company has on them to understand different working practices. They may wish to talk to friends and family who work or interview them as to the expectations of their company and job roles.

Learners should consider different requirements for different areas of the IT industry this may be network managers/technicians, game designers, programmers etc. Learners should be given job advertisements in local/national newspapers and recruitment websites to review, to gain an understanding of the job requirements, skills and qualifications involved in getting these positions. These requirements should be discussed with the tutor and other members of the group.

Learners should also be taught about their responsibilities as employees within a workplace and the legislation that affects the workplace and them as individuals. They should research this, looking at contracts of employment to appreciate the behaviours they would need to apply when employed in any workplace.

Understand the principles of effective communication

Learners must be taught about communication and the barriers to it.

They should identify examples of where accuracy of communication is essential and could engage in role play in order to communicate specific information. They must explore different forms of communication and this is most effective when learners are trying to communicate the same message face to face and then over a telephone and note what they thought with no visual clues as to what the other is saying. This identifies effective communication styles and skills and raises awareness of which methods of communication are most appropriate for given situations and is a good basis for group discussion.

Learners also need to be taught how to elicit information from others to gain information for a purpose. Learners

could work in teams to pose questions and answers to the rest of the class to see how they can gain the best responses and the required information. They can also research cultural differences in communication e.g. how certain countries treat a business card when meeting a new person in business.

To practice their interpersonal skills learners could be interviewed in mock interviews for a job or further study by a board of interviewers. This could be video recorded and replayed to allow learners to identify where they can make improvements. Learners can role play communicating with some one older/younger than themselves and should discuss how they would change their language to suit the audience. Learners should be taught to use different written forms of communication and about formal and informal writing. They should be taught to check their work and be given electronic and printed documents that can be proofread and checked to find errors. This could be reinforced with proofreading exercises and learners checking their own and others work.

Learners should be made aware of the barriers to communication and discuss in groups with some tutor input, how some of the communication barriers could be reduced for example reducing noise in surroundings during an interview by carrying it out in a separate room. They may also use earlier exercises for communication to identify how different forms of communication can cause different barriers.

Be able to use IT to communicate effectively

Learners should be taught how to use industry standard equipment. Learners can be shown how to use video conferencing equipment during which they can present to the remote audience this may simply be their interests and hobbies and aspirations etc. This could be carried out within the centre, between centres or different countries using the technologies available. They should be taught how to create blogs and wikis possibly through demonstration, the learners should then create practice blogs and wikis for a chosen topic and purpose. Wikis can also be used to cover the teaching of safety and security and copyright issues, and reliability of information but learners should carry out additional research themselves.

Podcasts and Vlogs can also be taught through demonstration (discussion groups are not appropriate

here as many learners already had experience of downloading these from popular radio stations etc). They can practice the creation of podcasts, in situations where learners interview each other on their experiences of safety and security using IT systems using the communication skills and techniques they have already learnt.

Learners should be given several pre-prepared documents to review, to reinforce their proofing skills. The documents should contain errors that can only be identified by accurate proofreading for example the wrong use of "there" and "their" or missing an "a" out of "read". The documents for proofing may also be presented as a print out to ensure that learners read carefully and also identify grammatical errors rather than rely on the features of the software. Learners should discuss how effective each method is and the importance of checking. Class discussion and comparison will identify the differences encountered.

There should be a discussion of purposes of communication types, and when each is most appropriate e.g. video interviews are effective for overseas job opportunities to save time, reduce carbon footprint etc. Learners should then be presented with a range of scenarios to enable them to look at how they would communicate information to specific audiences. They may want to explain how a games console works to someone with no experience of gaming versus someone who has used a different form of console and try to put together a persuasive argument to buy the console. They may also wish to try and explain how a game console works for online gaming to someone with no technical experience compared to someone that is very knowledgeable – this could be done in a role play with learners pretending to work for a technical support helpline and clients "phone in" with problems (some of which are people with no knowledge of computers and others with vast knowledge – this could be the tutor acting as the person "phoning in"). They may also practice composing email responses to difficult or complex queries to ensure they are able to add the details and clarity required to communicate effectively. Another way to discuss the purposes would be for learners to work in groups to create and deliver a presentation on communication types or the importance of proofing.

Be able to address personal development needs

Centres may wish to consider this Learning Outcome when beginning to teach the unit. Learners should be taught

how they can identify their development needs through role plays with a given scenario e.g. details of a company and what the company does and then look at various people in the company e.g. a new starter to various heads of department and try to develop what needs they may each have. They should be encouraged to find job advertisements for the roles that they would like to be in and identify the gaps in their knowledge or skills. From here they could carry out a group or one to one discussion of the steps, requirements and additional learning needed to achieve that role.

It may be possible to look at Personal Development Plans for people within the centre if they are happy for this to happen, or create a mock Personal Development Plan that learners can look at and review in order to gain an insight into these plans and the recording mechanisms for them based on their ideal roles. They could link up with a local business and job shadow a person for the day to gain an understanding of job roles and try to identify areas that could be part of a Personal Development Plan. Talks from recruitment companies or local businesses who are or have recently recruited for similar roles to give the learners a clear understanding of the expectations and competition. Learners can be taught about various learning styles and how these can impact on the workings of a group – they may wish to think about their own experiences. Role play can be used with learners given a certain learning style to adhere to and the class have to try to ascertain what learning style is being displayed.

For reinforcement learners can try the following <http://www.businessballs.com/vaklearningstyletest.htm>

Learners must be shown how to write a standard business letter and the layout and formatting of a letter. They should be shown what information is included on a CV (and what CV stands for) and how it is laid out. The tutor may wish to show learners good and bad examples of both and get learners to critique them. Learners should then create their own CV and letter of application for a specific job they are interested in. It may be easier to engage learners, if this is related to the job role used in their personal development plan.

SUGGESTED ASSESSMENT SCENARIOS AND TASK PLUS GUIDANCE ON ASSESSING THE SUGGESTED TASKS

Assessment Criteria P1, M1

The assessment criteria could be evidenced by the use of an information booklet produced by the learners or in the form of a report. It is important that all areas of the teaching content are covered with examples to show a depth of understanding. Learners may choose to relate the leaflet to a specific job role to help them focus on the particular attributes required.

The merit criterion M1 could be evidenced in the form of a table detailing personal skills required for a range (three or more) of different job roles and may be an extension to P1. Learners must show knowledge and understanding of the requirements across different roles within the IT sector and the different personal skills depending on role ~~and be able to explain these~~. The use of sourced job descriptions could further enhance the learners work.

Assessment Criteria P2, P3 and D1

Learners could produce a report or presentation explaining the principles of effective communication and the potential barriers. This must draw on a range of different examples and show knowledge and understanding of all the categories identified in the Teaching Content. Learners should explain these giving examples in context.

The distinction assessment criterion D1 learners must demonstrate their understanding explaining how some of the identified potential barriers to communication can be reduced or removed. This could be presented in the form of a report or presentation that explains their options and solutions and why they are appropriate.

Assessment Criterion P4

This could be evidenced by the use of observation by tutors or others which should be supported by documentary evidence. There must be at least three examples of the use of effective interpersonal skills and the learner should identify the situations they are evidencing and why they thought the skills were appropriate.

Assessment Criteria P5, M2, D2

Learners could provide screen shots as evidence or video evidence for their use of IT to aid their communications. They should provide explanations as to the content and purpose of the different technologies and options which may be presented as a separate document or report.

For the merit criteria M2 learners must annotate or accompany work submitted with explanations as to the choices of the IT used to aid communication. This should include details of the communications and the IT resources used and is an extension of P5. This evidence may be added to the work submitted for P5 or submitted as a separate document.

For the distinction criteria D2 learners must expand the reasoning for the choices of the IT they have used and justify in detail why these options were chosen above others, the alternatives and why they were rejected making reference as to how it has aided their communication.

Assessment Criterion P6

Learners need to communicate ~~technical~~ information to a specified audience. For this they could prepare documentation for users which may be in the form of a “dummies” guide for an identified topic or a technical manual or leaflet or report depending on the audience they are aiming the technical information at. ~~Alternatively, they could communicate the information orally.~~ The evidence must show that the technical information has been communicated clearly and appropriately for the audience they have clearly identified. The details of the specified audience may be presented separately.

Assessment Criteria P7, P8, M3

Learners must put together a personal development plan and evidence it in an appropriate format. They should clearly identify their objectives and the steps to be taken to achieve as well as their own negotiated timescales. This must be followed over a period ~~of at least three months~~ so that progress can be monitored and reviewed. Evidence may include review meetings, assessment outcomes where the learner and tutor get together in order to evaluate progress within the plan.

~~For the Merit criteria M3, learners should review their personal development plan and update it by identifying primary areas for improvement and how they will address these improvements.~~ *Learners could include copies of job descriptions to support the decisions made and approach taken and identify where the improvements they have made or are making as part of their development plan could affect their application for the job/jobs.*

RESOURCES

You may need:

Web cams, pc and other relevant hardware, applicable software for example 'audacity' for podcasting, headsets with micro-phones, internet access, possible use of Virtual Learning Environments, blogger.com wikispaces.com

Centres may have restrictions and policies for social networking and internet accessibility due to filtering on the centres network; this will need to be considered depending upon the methods used for delivery of the teaching content.

MAPPING WITHIN THE QUALIFICATION TO THE OTHER UNITS

Unit 30 Business Resources

LINKS TO NOS

4.3 Human Needs Analysis



CONTACT US

Staff at the OCR Customer Contact Centre are available to take your call between 8am and 5.30pm, Monday to Friday.

We're always delighted to answer questions and give advice.

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