

Unit 1: Digital business communication (LEVEL 3)

Learning outcomes

By completing this unit candidates will develop a thorough knowledge and understanding of communication in a business context. They will also demonstrate how ICT can be used to support and enhance business communication.

Candidates will produce evidence to meet the unit assessment objectives in order to show that they understand:

- the role and contribution of communication technology to business
- the aids and barriers to effective communication
- the application of a presentation style to document creation
- the use of written communication using ICT in a business context
- the effective use of email in a business context
- document and computer security in the workplace
- the use of standard ways of working to work safely, keep information secure and manage personal information.

It is anticipated that a candidate will require 60 guided learning hours to complete this unit.

Assessment objectives	Knowledge, understanding and skills
1 Investigate the role and contribution of communication technology to business	<p>Widespread use of business communication systems: eg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • email • WWW, Internet, Intranets • conferencing: video-, tele-, web-, instant messaging <p>Growth of Internet based business eg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • e-Commerce • e-Business • e-Marketing <p>Benefits: e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speed of communication • consistency of messages • central control • collaborative working • customisation • targeting <p>Drawbacks: e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information overload • susceptibility to unauthorised access • dependence on technology • lack of access • cost • legal implications

Assessment objectives	Knowledge, understanding and skills
2 Explain the aids and barriers to effective communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • purpose • medium • message • text (font, style, size), formatting, layout • language (formal/informal, etc) • writing style • readability • accessibility • age, gender, cultural, emotional • speed of delivery
3 Design and create a presentation style for use in business documents	<p>Types of written business communication: eg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • email • report • letter • memo • leaflet/poster/flyer • invoice • agenda • minutes <p>Presentation styles for business document template(s): eg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • type of software (word processing, desktop publishing, presentation, email, web pages) <p>Create document templates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • page layout, text flow • creating style sheet(s) • paragraph formats • graphic style (lines, borders) • images (e.g. logo, partner companies) • corporate signature

Assessment objectives	Knowledge, understanding and skills
<p>4 Demonstrate the effective use of written communication using ICT in a business context</p>	<p>Language/writing style: e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • formal • informal <p>Formatting: e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of tabular form and numerical data • borders and shading • appropriate layout and styles • bullets and numbering • colour <p>Accuracy checking: e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • spelling and grammar checkers, and checking case • checking consistency and layout • proof-reading • thesaurus
<p>5 Demonstrate the effective use of email in a business context</p>	<p>Standard features: e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of cc and bcc • high/low importance • level of confidentiality • address book • creation and use of professional signature • email account management • email etiquette (appropriate subject, message text and use of netiquette, attachment size and file types etc) <p>Advanced features: e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • multiple attachments, zipped files, embedded files • folders to organise mail • rules e.g. to redirect emails, to organise emails into folders, using colours • groups/distribution lists (in address book) • archiving • spam filter • autoreply

Assessment objectives	Knowledge, understanding and skills
<p>6 Demonstrate an understanding of document and computer security in the workplace</p>	<p>Document and computer security: eg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hacking • data misuse • unauthorised transfer or copying • unauthorised copying or distributing software • email and chatroom abuse • adware, malware, spyware • pornography • online threats (phishing, identity and financial abuses, etc) • types of viruses, virus protection
<p>7 Use standard ways of working to work safely, keep information secure and manage personal information</p>	<p>Organising own work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work in compliance with company policy and health and safety legislation <p>Keeping information secure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • saving work regularly • keeping backup copies on removable medium, automatic backups • secure drives • access permissions • passwords (e.g. to open, to modify) <p>Managing personal information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • suitable folder structure • using appropriate names for files and folders • version numbers

Assessment

This unit is centre assessed and externally moderated.

In order to achieve this unit, candidates must produce a portfolio of evidence showing that they have met all of the assessment objectives.

Portfolios of work must be produced independently. They will need to be made available, together with witness statements and any other supporting documentation, to the OCR Visiting Moderator when required.

Centres must confirm to OCR that the evidence produced by candidates is authentic. An OCR Centre Authentication Form is provided in the Centre Handbook and includes a declaration for assessors to sign. It is a requirement of the QCA Common Criteria for all Qualifications that proof of authentication is received.

Guidance on assessment and evidence requirements

Candidates may provide portfolio evidence for this unit using a range of suitable and appropriate techniques. These may include written data, the use of video, audio presentation and slide presentation within the body of the portfolio and display evidence. Where presentations or displays have taken place for which evidence cannot be easily included within the portfolio evidence assessor testimony/witness statements must be included, signed by the assessor(s), and supported by appropriate evidence (handouts, slides etc).

Centres may wish to organise a link with a local business and write an assignment accordingly. This may be useful in the early stages of the course.

An OCR model assignment is available for this unit and can be downloaded from our website: www.ocr.org.uk and can also be found in the Model Assignments folder on this CD ROM.

This unit should make use of one or more case studies. These can be based on local businesses, a centre devised scenario or the model assignment provided by OCR. The case studies must be sufficiently complex to enable candidates to produce evidence suitable for Level 3. The assessment objectives could be linked together.

For Assessment Objectives 1 and 2, it is expected that candidates will conduct appropriate research and are likely to present their findings in a report or presentation.

For Assessment Objective 3, candidates should demonstrate an understanding of the different types of document used in business and the range of software in which these can be created. They will need to understand the importance of a consistent housestyle in the promotion of a corporate image. At Pass and Merit level it is sufficient for candidates to apply appropriate formatting to any text that is part of the template. Distinction candidates must create and store text styles, for example, body text and headings, within the templates so that they can be easily applied by a user.

For Assessment Objective 4, candidates are required to create documents to suit realistic business purposes. It is anticipated that candidates will use their work for Assessment Objective 3 to create these documents. The documents created should be suited to the purpose and audience, which should be identified by the candidate or the task. At Merit and Distinction level, candidates must use an increasing range of software features and also demonstrate higher levels of accuracy. The documents should have content to demonstrate the correct use of language/writing style. At the higher grades the quality of documents will be such that they would be acceptable in a business environment.

For Assessment Objective 5, candidates must provide evidence of the use of both standard and more advanced features of email in a business context. Whilst it is appreciated that not all email software will have all of the listed features, centres must ensure that the email package used will

enable the candidate to achieve the full range of grades. Screen prints may be used as evidence where necessary e.g. of setting up message rules, use of bcc and attachments. Archiving may be evidenced by candidates setting up their own archive folders and storing old messages in these folders or, where archiving is an automatic feature, by setting the archive options.

It is expected that at this level all emails will include a subject, and that the message text will be appropriate (it is not acceptable for candidates to use phone text abbreviations). At the higher levels, candidates should check their emails to ensure that few, if any, grammatical or spelling errors remain.

For Assessment Objective 6, candidates must demonstrate an understanding of how to keep business communications systems secure. The Knowledge, Understanding and Skills section of this unit lists a number of issues for candidates to consider.

For Assessment Objective 7, whilst some specific skills can be evidenced through screen shots, witness statements may be the best way of confirming the appropriateness and consistency of the working practices employed. Backup should be to a medium that is independent of the main hardware used i.e. removable or on-line.

Signposting to Key Skills

- ✓ The unit contains opportunities for developing the Key Skill, and possibly for generating portfolio evidence, if teaching and learning is focused on that aim. Assessing staff will need to check each candidate's evidence against the specifications to ensure all evidence requirements have been met. Additional evidence may also be required.

Key Skill reference		Key Skill reference		Key Skill reference	
C3.1a	✓	N3.1		ICT3.1	✓
C3.1b	✓	N3.2		ICT3.2	✓
C3.2	✓	N3.3		ICT3.3	✓
C3.3	✓				

Mapping to National Occupational Standards

Occupational Standards (e-skills UK)	Title
IT Users	Email
IT Users	Evaluate the impact of IT
IT Users	Information Management
IT Users	IT security for users
IT Users	Make selective use of IT
IT Users	Operate a computer
IT Users	Presentation software
IT Users IT Professional Contact Centres Telecommunications	Use and enable Collaborative Technologies
IT Users	Word processing software
IT Professional	

Occupational Standards (e-skills UK)	Title
Contact Centres Telecommunications	Interpersonal and written Communication
IT Professional Telecommunications	Security of ICT systems
IT User (for export to other sectors)	General uses of IT
IT User (for export to other sectors)	Purposes for using IT
IT User (for export to other sectors)	Use IT software
IT User (for export to other sectors)	Use IT to exchange information

Resources

This section provides suggestions of suitable resources. The list is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive, and candidates should be encouraged to gather information from a variety of sources. Some suggested resources are intended for Tutor use. The resources in this section were correct at the time of production.

Websites

Desktop publishing.

URL:http://desktoppub.about.com/od/softwarehardware/Software_and_Hardware_for_Desktop_Publishing.htm

Communication methods. URL:<http://www.fastrak-consulting.co.uk/tactix/features/commopts/comopt02.htm>

Technical writing. URL:http://www.io.com/~hcexres/textbook/Barriers_to_communication
<http://www.revision-notes.co.uk/revision/952.html>

Computer security. URL:http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer_security

Personal information management.

URL:http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Personal_information_manager

Grading

Assessment Objective	Pass	Merit	Distinction
<p>AO1 Investigate the role and contribution of communication technology to business</p>	<p>Candidates describe at least three different types of business communication system. They will briefly explain the main benefits and drawbacks of these systems using some examples.</p>	<p>Candidates describe at least three different types of business communication system. They will explain a range of benefits and drawbacks of these systems using appropriate examples. They will explain how communication technology has contributed to the growth of e-Commerce.</p>	<p>Candidates describe in detail at least three different types of business communication system. They will explain thoroughly a wide range of benefits and drawbacks of these systems, supported by a variety of well chosen examples. They will explain how communication technology has contributed to the growth of e-Commerce, e-Business and e-Marketing.</p>
<p>AO2 Explain the aids and barriers to effective communication</p>	<p>Candidates demonstrate a limited explanation of some of the aids and barriers to effective communication.</p>	<p>Candidates will explain many of the aids and barriers to effective communication. Their explanation will be supported by at least two appropriate examples of each.</p>	<p>Candidates will explain thoroughly a wide range of aids and barriers to effective communication. Their explanation will be supported by at least four appropriate examples of each.</p>
<p>AO3 Design and create a presentation style for use in business documents</p>	<p>Candidates will design and create templates for at least three business documents. These will include text style and paragraph formatting. The housestyle will be mostly consistent across the templates.</p>	<p>Candidates will design and create templates for at least four business documents using at least two different types of software. These will include text style, paragraph formatting, page layout and graphic elements. Templates will show a consistent housestyle. They will suit the purpose of each communication.</p>	<p>Candidates will design and create templates for at least five business documents using at least three different types of software. These will include appropriate user-defined styles, page layout and graphic elements. Templates will show a consistent housestyle. They will suit the purpose of each communication. All templates will be of near professional quality.</p>

Assessment Objective	Pass	Merit	Distinction
<p>AO4 Demonstrate the effective use of written communication using ICT in a business context</p>	<p>Candidates use at least two different types of written communication. They will use at least two features from: tables, bullets, auto-numbering, columns and text boxes. The documents will be appropriately formatted using the housestyle designed as part of AO3 with few inconsistencies. The documents will contain few errors and be mainly fit for purpose.</p>	<p>Candidates use at least three different types of written communication using templates they have created. They will include the effective use of at least three features from: tables, bullets, auto-numbering, columns and text boxes. The documents will be appropriately formatted using the housestyle designed as part of AO3 with few inconsistencies. The documents will contain few errors and be fit for purpose.</p>	<p>Candidates use at least four different types of written communication using templates they have created. They will justify the suitability of each document for that purpose. They will include the effective use of at least four features from: tables, bullets, auto-numbering, columns and text boxes. The documents will be well structured and appropriately formatted using the housestyle designed as part of AO3 and will be of near-professional business quality.</p>
<p>AO5 Demonstrate the effective use of email in a business context</p>	<p>Candidates will use at least four standard features of email appropriately. Candidates set up and use at least three advanced features of email. Their emails will mainly be fit for purpose.</p>	<p>Candidates will use at least four standard features of email appropriately. Candidates set up and use at least four advanced features of email to good effect. Their emails will be fit for purpose and appropriate to business use.</p>	<p>Candidates will use at least five standard features of email appropriately. Candidates set up and use at least five advanced features of email to good effect. All emails will be fit for purpose and appropriate to business use. Candidates will show an organised approach to the management of their own email system.</p>
<p>AO6 Demonstrate an understanding of document and computer security in the workplace</p>	<p>Candidates describe at least four security issues relating to documents and computers in the workplace. They identify methods used to avoid these issues.</p>	<p>Candidates describe at least five security issues relating to documents and computers in the workplace. They describe methods used to avoid these issues.</p>	<p>Candidates describe in detail, giving specific examples, at least six security issues relating to documents and computers in the workplace. They describe in detail methods used to avoid these issues.</p>

Assessment Objective	Pass	Merit	Distinction
<p>A07 Use standard ways of working to work safely, keep information secure and manage personal information</p>	<p>Candidates will demonstrate an awareness of health and safety issues related to the use of ICT and apply this on most occasions. They will use standard ways of working to organise their work efficiently, showing understanding of some security measures, including passwords to open/modify. They will back up their work to a suitable medium.</p>	<p>Candidates will demonstrate an awareness of health and safety issues related to the use of ICT and apply this on most occasions. They will use standard ways of working to organise their work efficiently. They will demonstrate how they have considered and applied document security to their own files, including passwords to open/modify. They will show a good understanding of version numbers. They will back up their work to a suitable medium on more than one occasion.</p>	<p>Candidates will demonstrate an awareness of health and safety issues related to the use of ICT and apply this at all times. They will use standard ways of working to organise their work efficiently. They will demonstrate how they have considered and applied document security to their own files, including passwords to open/modify. They will show a good understanding of version numbers and access permissions. They will back up their work regularly to a suitable medium.</p>