SQA Advanced Unit Specification

General information

Unit title: Hospitality Front Office Procedures (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: J485 47

Superclass: ND

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Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

Unit purpose

This unit is designed to enable learners to develop knowledge and skills required to work within the front office of a hospitality accommodation operation. The unit explores the procedures and duties involved in taking advance reservations, dealing with guests' arrival, in-house requirements and departure.

This unit is available as an option in the SQA Advanced Certificate in Hospitality Operations at SCQF level 7 and is mandatory in the SQA Advanced Diploma in Hospitality Management at SCQF level 8. It can also be delivered as a free-standing unit.

This unit is part of a progressive suite of units in hospitality reception and front office operations at SCQF levels 5–7.

Outcomes

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

1. complete the reservation process for the letting of hospitality accommodation
2. carry out arrival procedures and handle in-house requirements of guests
3. apply billing and departure procedures for guests

Credit points and level

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

Recommended entry to the unit

While access to this unit is at the discretion of the centre, it would be beneficial if learners have achieved the SCQF level 5 National Unit in Hospitality Reception Skills, or equivalent.

Core Skills

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the support notes for this unit specification.

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this unit.

Context for delivery

If this unit is delivered as part of a group award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the group award to which it contributes.

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.

Statement of standards

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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
Complete the reservation process for the letting of hospitality accommodation.

Knowledge and/or skills
♦   the reservation process for booking accommodation
♦   standard types of rooms, room rates and technical terms
♦   types of booking systems
♦   special requests and billing requirements
♦   cancellation procedures for reservations received

Outcome 2
Carry out arrival procedures and handle in-house requirements of guests.

Knowledge and/or skills
♦   pre-arrival process including allocation of rooms
♦   communication between front office and other departments about guests' needs
♦   arrival and registration procedures for guests in line with current legislation
♦   dealing with guest queries and situations

Outcome 3
Apply billing and departure procedures for guests.

Knowledge and/or skills
♦   billing and payment procedures
♦   departure process for guests

Evidence requirements for this unit

Learners will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills across all outcomes, as follows:

For Outcome 1, learners should provide written and/or practical evidence that they can:

♦ complete the reservation process for five guest bookings
♦ use either a manual or computer-based booking system to log the bookings accurately including special requests and billing requirements
♦ cancel one reservation in line with procedure

For Outcome 2, learners should provide written and/or practical evidence that they can:

♦ complete pre-arrival processes for the five bookings including the allocation of rooms
♦ identify the guests' special requests and distribute this information to the correct departments
♦ deal with the arrival and registration of three of the five guests in line with current legislation
♦ deal with two in-house guest queries or situations

For Outcome 3, learners should provide written and/or practical evidence that they can:

♦ apply billing procedures, including:
   — allocating the correct charges and processing payments for the three guests' bills
♦ apply the departure procedure for the three registered guests

Support notes

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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

The unit is primarily intended to prepare learners for work within a hospitality front office area. It covers the process of the 'Guest Cycle' from reservations to the departure of guests.

In Outcome 1, it may be beneficial to start with an overview of the 'Guest Cycle' and what front office personnel/receptionists do in the process including the duties carried out and how it relates to the other departments within hospitality accommodation. The reservation process should be explained from the guest's initial enquiry through to the confirmed booking of accommodation. The technical terms used for different room types, room rates and reservation status should be addressed to enable the learner to effectively understand the technical terms used in front office. Terms such as guest shares, different types of VIPs, account to company, and special requests should be explored as well.

Various types of booking system should be considered such as manual systems used by smaller establishments, computer-based systems and app-based systems such as that used by Accor hotels. Learners should be aware of what is required when cancelling a booking to ensure the cancellation is handled effectively.

In Outcome 2, learners look at the theory behind the pre-arrival procedures including the need for attention to detail when satisfying guests' requests. After this introduction, learners should be made aware of how to allocate rooms appropriately when necessary, taking into account any requests or any information given in the guest's history, and be able to produce arrival lists and registration forms. The in/out flow of information between the front office and other departments such as any special requests in accommodation should be explained to the learners, eg extra beds or requirements for a particular room or rooms and guest allergies for all departments.

Learners will also examine the arrival procedures and the activities which may be carried out during the guest stay. This should include the check in of guests, legislation relating to guest registration, updating of guest information including addresses, early morning calls, newspapers, payment information and additional requirements, eg dinner reservations, late check outs and special dietary needs, and relay these to the appropriate department within the establishment.

Learners should also be made aware of how to deal with any unexpected situations/requests or problems when guests are in-house such as requests for a doctor, room moves, safe storage of guest property or extra items placed in rooms.

In Outcome 3, learners should be able to explain the process when guests come to depart the hospitality establishment including express/self-checkout. This should include preparation of guests' bills and review and adjustment of charges (if required). Determining and taking various payments for service provided, return of keys and enquiring about guest satisfaction with products and services. The provision of additional services such as additional reservations and any further requests by guests such as taxis and luggage handling should be explained.

This unit should be delivered as a stand-alone unit. As it is an optional unit within the SQA Advanced Certificate in Hospitality Operations and a mandatory unit within the SQA Advanced Diploma in Hospitality Management frameworks, it can be delivered at any time within the courses. This unit should be taught in a way that enables learners to appreciate its relevance to the occupational area covered.

This unit reflects the underpinning knowledge/skills within the National Occupational Standards PPL2FOH 1–4.

Guidance on approaches to the delivery of this unit

The logical order of teaching this unit should be from Outcome 1 through to Outcome 3 as this reflects the 'Guest Cycle' from reservations through to guest payments and departures. Various delivery methods can be used for this unit. Where appropriate, these could include tutor demonstrations, practical activities and exercises, visits to hotels and other residential establishments, guest speakers from front office departments and role-play.

For centres with specialist front office software, some of the delivery of the unit could be undertaken using this software, by completing practical exercises in respect of the procedures and processes studied and in line with the knowledge and skills of the unit. Centres without specialised software could use paper based and role-play activities in relation to the delivery of knowledge and skills within the unit.

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.

Assessment could be by three instruments of assessment spread throughout the unit after the completion of the exercises for each outcome. The first assessment should be undertaken a third of the way through the unit; the second, mid-way through the unit and the final assessment undertake towards the end of the unit. All assessments should be undertaken in controlled conditions.

This unit can be assessed in many ways. This allows centres to choose the way that best suits its learners, lecturers and resources. For centres with no specialised software, learners could be assessed by completing extended response questions and practical activities in relation to given guest situations from reservations to departure. This could include the completion of documentation relating to the stages of the 'Guest Cycle' and roleplaying aspects of guest arrival and departure.

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For centres with specialist front office software, assessment of the unit can be undertaken using a series of practical exercises that require learners to input information into the system along with some knowledge-based questions.

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.

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, such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres wishing 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

This unit will provide opportunities for learners to enhance their employability skills in front office and will provide them with the knowledge and skills to undertake the position of receptionist in hotels and other forms of residential accommodation.

Information and Communication Technology: Accessing Information at SCQF level 5

If learners use a specialist electronic reservation system to process guest reservations, check room availability, allocate rooms, prepare guest accounts, process payments and carry out departure procedures, they will be demonstrating the Core Skill component of Accessing Information at SCQF level 5.

Information and Communication Technology: Providing/Creating Information at SCQF level 5

If learners use a specialist electronic reservations system to complete guest reservations, provide information on guest services, allocate charges and process payments, they will be demonstrating the Core Skill component of Providing and Creating Information at SCQF level 5.

Problem Solving: Critical Thinking at SCQF level 5

For all outcomes, learners are required understand the procedures and duties involved in taking advance reservations, dealing with guests' arrival, in-house requirements and departures. Learners will also need to know how to operate advanced guest reservations systems and process guest information in line with current legislation. In carrying out these tasks, learners will be demonstrating the Core Skill component of Critical Thinking at SCQF level 5.

History of changes to unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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 learners

Unit title: Hospitality Front Office Procedures (SCQF level 7)

This section will help you to 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 enable you to recognise the important role front office plays in a hospitality establishment. In most cases, it is the first point of contact with the guest and as such has the responsibility to provide a warm welcome and help the business meet the guests' needs. You will be developing the skills and knowledge of how to deal with guests' reservations, arrivals and departures.

The unit provides background information about the duties carried out within the front office. The 'Guest Cycle' will be considered; from making reservations through the guests' stay and departure. You will learn about taking reservations and of various types and the systems used to take bookings; guest arrival procedures and the legislation relating to registration; handling a variety of situations which could occur during guests' stays and finally dealing with guests' bills and checking guests out.

You will work through practical exercises in terms of reservations, arrival, billing and departures. Initially there will be tutor input about the various front office procedures being studied. You will then be required to determine the procedures for dealing with various guest situations to ensure that you satisfy guests' needs.

In order to complete this unit successfully, you will be required to achieve a satisfactory level of performance on your pieces of assessed work. You use a specialised front office system to undertake the assessments for this unit, or alternatively theoretical questions and practical tasks may be used to complete the assessments.

The first assessment will come towards the beginning of the unit. It will consist of you completing the reservations process for some guest situations to ensure that you meet the needs of the guest. The second assessment will be undertaken halfway through the unit. You will be required to handle the arrival procedures and in-house requirements for some guest situations. The final assessment will consist of you dealing with guest billing and departure procedures and will be undertaken at the end of the unit.

Completion of this unit may also enable you to develop the following Core Skills:

♦ Information and Communication Technology: Accessing Information at SCQF level 5
♦ Information and Communication Technology: Providing/Creating Information at SCQF level 5
♦ Problem Solving: Critical Thinking at SCQF level 5

On completion of this unit, you could progress to other units in hospitality at SCQF level 7–8 and/or seek employment in a front office, for example as a receptionist in hotels or other forms of residential accommodation.