# SQA Advanced Unit Specification

## General information

**Unit title:** Public Relations: Strategic Analysis, Planning and Application (SCQF level 8)

**Unit code:** J26R 48

**Superclass:** BA

**Publication date:** June 2019

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 01

### Unit purpose

This unit is designed to provide learners with the knowledge and understanding of public relations (PR) activities. It will enable learners to understand the crucial strategic role PR has within an organisation. This will involve understanding the theory behind PR and then applying it through both online and offline methods. It will enable the learner to recognise different clients' needs and objectives — both internally and externally — to create successful PR campaigns.

The learner will also demonstrate how to deal with damage limitation/crisis management and media relations, as well as be able to use a range of online and offline communication techniques when planning and implementing a PR campaign.

### Outcomes

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

1 Review in-house sponsorship or fund raising activities of a non/not for profit organisation.
2 Present a short campaign for a chosen client as in-house PR management.
3 Produce an outline proposal for a damage limitation campaign.
4 Create a public relations news conference on behalf of a damage limitation client.

## Credit points and level

2 SQA unit credit(s) at SCQF level 8: (16 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8).

## Recommended entry to the unit

Access to the unit is at the discretion of the centre; however, it would be beneficial if learners had *Communication* Core Skills at SCQF level 6 or equivalent. It is also recommended that learners have an understanding of the concepts of PR, eg as provided by units such as *PR: Principles and Practices* at SCQF level 7 or equivalent.

## Core Skills

Achievement of this unit gives automatic certification of the following:

- Complete Core Skill(s) Problem Solving at SCQF level 6
- Core Skill component(s) None

There are also opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills which are highlighted in the **support notes** section of this unit specification.

## 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.

The Assessment Support Pack (ASP) for this unit provides assessment and marking guidelines that exemplify the national standard for achievement. It is a valid, reliable and practicable assessment. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the ASP to ensure a comparable standard. A list of existing ASPs is available to download from SQA's website (**http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/46233.2769.html**).

## 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

**Unit title:** Public Relations: Strategic Analysis, Planning and Application (SCQF level 8)

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

Review in-house sponsorship or fund raising activities of a non/not for profit organisation.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- non/not for profit organisations
- PR objectives
- sponsorship and fund raising
- publics for a non/not for profit organisation
- PR media and application
- PR proposals incorporating online and offline platforms

### Outcome 2

Present a short campaign for a chosen client as in-house PR management.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- full PR proposals to a client
- in-house PR management and meetings
- techniques for PR proposal acceptance

### Outcome 3

Produce an outline proposal for a damage limitation campaign.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- PR research techniques
- PR communication audit
- PR media contacts or publics
- crisis management or damage limitation strategies and examples

## Outcome 4

Create a public relations news conference on behalf of a damage limitation client.

### Knowledge and/or Skills

- news conference planning, management and budgeting
- importance of two way communications at news conferences
- news conference objectives
- publics for a damage limitation client
- PR media selection
- online press kit and PR materials
- news conference presentation
- news conference evaluation

## Evidence requirements for this unit

Learners will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills across all outcomes by showing that they can:

### Outcome 1

- from an in-house perspective, review the sponsorship or fund raising activities of a non/not for profit organisation, which must include:
  - identification of qualitative and quantitative PR objectives
  - identification of four main publics relating to the PR campaign
- produce an outline PR Proposal that includes:
  - two appropriate PR objectives
  - online and offline media platforms, where appropriate
  - four relevant target publics
  - three external and one internal techniques to achieve proposed PR objectives

### Outcome 2

- plan and present an in-house PR campaign which covers:
  - identified target publics
  - outline of PR proposal(s) that meets objectives
  - identified media and outline techniques to achieve proposed objectives
  - effective use of audio/visual media
  - use of persuasive techniques

### Outcome 3

- identify a client requiring a damage limitation strategy.
- produce a communication audit, including evidence of online and offline media.
- produce an **outline proposal** for a damage limitation strategy including:
  - campaign objectives
  - two appropriate media contacts and publics
  - an example of an online journal
  - five examples of PR tools from at least two different media sources

- — the importance of using both online and offline media during a PR campaign highlighted

**Outcome 4**

Simulate an external PR consultancy on behalf of a damage limitation client by:

- defining news conference objectives.
- identifying media contacts and key publics to be invited to the news conference.
- devising a news conference budget.
- designing an online press kit and issued to media representatives in advance.
- discussing the importance of a two–way communication (both online and offline) at the news conference.
- creating a news conference with sponsors.
- presenting a news conference in the role of a PR consultant representing a client, including:
  - — addressing audience
  - — dealing with questions
  - — handling conflicts and objections
- evaluating the news conference, including:
  - — strengths
  - — weaknesses
  - — recommendations

To achieve this unit, there must be evidence of learners working as part of a group. However, tutors must ensure that each individual learner has covered all evidence requirements.

See support notes for further advice and guidance on assessment for all outcomes of this unit.

# Support notes

**Unit title:** Public Relations: Strategic Analysis, Planning and Application (SCQF level 8)

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 80 hours.

## Guidance on the content and context for this unit

This double credit unit at SCQF level 8 is designed to provide learners with knowledge and skills required when analysing, planning and carrying out a PR campaign. By understanding the strategic methods behind this, learners can enhance their employability and progress to activities in the PR field.

PR tools are crucial when running a PR campaign — from using more traditional offline methods such as news releases, news conferences and articles to online methods such as social media, digital media and online press kits, etc.

To minimise confusion — and in line with the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) definition/usage in PR activities — the term 'publics' is included in Knowledge and Skills and Evidence Requirements of this unit. However, there is an increasing use of the term 'stakeholders' amongst marketing practitioners. This should be highlighted to learners to ensure they are aware of both terms being used in PR and marketing.

### Outcome 1

Learners gain understanding in the importance of setting objectives and considering publics involved with organisations, eg this could be a task where the learner selects an event to build up the profile of a non/not for profit organisation. There could be a case study relating to an organisation which would benefit from sponsorship and/or fund raising. Learners develop outline proposals which will be expanded and developed in Outcome 2.

PR objectives can include:

- increase awareness and support
- increase sales or profitability
- involves publics and targets
- achieves positive media exposure through online and offline platforms
- attract a key sponsor
- finance an event
- recruit or motivate employees and/or volunteers

Internal/external techniques could include:

- events
- exhibition or road shows
- news releases
- news conferences
- open days or facility visits
- articles (exclusive or feature or syndicated)
- interviews
- publications
- YouTube
- blogs
- Facebook page
- Twitter
- Instagram
- digital PR stunts
- staff newsletters/magazines
- memos or circulars
- extranet or intranet
- events or meetings
- literature
- notices or posters
- in-house training videos
- in-house blogs

Relevant publics can include:

- media or opinion leaders
- consumers
- (potential) employees or volunteers
- financial market
- the community
- suppliers
- distributors

**Outcome 2**

After consideration of possible non/not for profit organisations, learners are to develop their initial outline proposals from Outcome 1 into a more detailed PR campaign. They are to present their proposals which could take a variety of formats eg a report or a presentation.

Where appropriate for the PR activity, this may include a venue and/or location and have an online element. Learners could work individually or in small teams of two or three.

**Outcome 3**

Learners are to research clients requiring damage limitation action and are to produce a communication audit. Online and offline techniques must be considered by learners and they are to justify their selection.
For flexibility for centres, this outcome is designed as either an individual or a group activity.

However, to reflect industry practice, it is strongly recommended that learners work in a team (maximum of four people) as a PR consultancy and outline a proposal which includes the use of a news conference. It is recommended that the PR consultant/consultancy is given a name and corporate identity.

Proposals should include:

- an online journal (eg a blog)
- social media updates (eg Facebook status updates)
- an online communication platform with active users (eg twitter)
- the use of a news conference

When working as a team, and to help ensure that all learners fully participate, each team member could submit a short proposal to both their own team members and their tutor. This could be an outline of an appropriate client in a damage limitation or crisis management situation. The proposal and discussions could be monitored by the tutor before the decision is taken regarding which client the PR consultancy will represent. The group members then devise a final proposal and a communication audit, which is to industry/professional standards.

**Outcome 4**

This outcome develops the work undertaken in Outcome 3.

For flexibility, this outcome is also designed as either an individual or a group activity. However, to reflect industry practice, it is again strongly recommended that learners work in a team as PR consultancy where they organise and deliver a news conference – with the appropriate supporting materials. This involves production of promotional materials, identification of objectives, key publics and media contacts.

Where they work in a team, it is recommended that learners assign themselves a particular role at their news conference.

It is recommended that:

- c.10 media contacts are invited to the news conference.
- the press kit includes:
  - a news release
  - an example of feature article
  - at least two other tools, eg newsletter, bulletin, flyer, links to relevant websites, etc

Additional actions/materials for this outcome could include:

- posters
- proposed Twitter hashtags
- proposed Facebook page links
- information on future proposed events

Consideration is also to be given to:

- the budget involved for such an event
- a link to their online press kit
- digital platforms being a key part of the campaign with justification, etc

At the news conference, a mock of a live feed could be available. The PR consultancy and news conference 'guests' should assist in this — as it could help the publics to participate in debates and amplify the spread of the key messages.

To allow peer evaluation and to help learners understand the role of the media reps present at a news conference, each learner could attend at least one other news conference (ie in addition to the one they create).

## Guidance on approaches to the delivery of this unit

In line with the design of this unit, it is expected that the PR activities are undertaken as a project. Outcomes 1 and 2 are for a non/not for profit organisation and Outcomes 3 and 4 are concerned with an organisation that has had negative press in the media.

As it is strongly recommended that learners work in teams for Outcomes 3 and 4, this will enable learners to plan and deliver group activities, as well as playing appropriate roles in the PR consultancy during the news conference. When working as a team, learners will also discover the importance of encouraging each other to be confident about their ideas to try to ensure the right outcome for their client. All ideas should be considered within the group before the final decision(s) on moving forward are agreed as this helps learners to understand the process of working in a professional PR consultancy.

Where required, learners are to be guided by their tutors, eg consideration of the positive and negatives of different campaigns to make sure they are meeting their main objectives, publics, budget, etc.

For peer review purposes and to help learners understand the role of media representatives at news conferences, learners could act as an invited media representative to other learners' news conferences. This could involve them asking some challenging questions and producing a short evaluation, eg in the form of a summary report, a blog or wiki, etc.

## 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.

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.

### Outcome 1

Given the nature of research involved, the assessment could be completed under self-direction outwith class. The findings can take a wide range of formats; if in written format, it would be expected to be c.1,000 words to ensure all Evidence Requirements are covered.

### Outcome 2

Based on their proposals from Outcome 1, learners plan and present their fuller, detailed campaign proposals. It is recommended that these proposals are aimed at managers or decision-makers in an organisation. This could be in the form of a short report or a presentation. Where learners make a formal presentation, it would be expected to last around six minutes to ensure all Evidence Requirements are covered. The learner's presentation could be recorded to provide supporting evidence.

As Outcomes 1 and 2 are directly linked, learners could be issued with a specific brief for Outcome 1 which is then developed in Outcome 2.

### Outcome 3

As outlined earlier, to allow centres flexibility this outcome is designed as either an individual activity or a group activity. However, to reflect industry practice, it is strongly recommended that the assessment for this outcome involves learners working in teams by acting as a PR consultancy.

Learners must produce evidence of:

- identifying an appropriate client.
- producing a communication audit which includes both online and offline media.
- producing an outline proposal for a damage limitation strategy.

As proposals are to include online media for immediate impact on the audience, it is recommended that a short summary is produced which highlights what must be considered when using these platforms.

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.

### Outcome 4

This assessment follows on from Outcome 3 and is in the form of a simulated news conference with sponsors and delivered as a presentation (eg use of PowerPoint or similar packages).

For this assessment, learners are to produce online press kits and links to these are to be available. Any additional actions/materials produced for the news conference must be visible. They also are to demonstrate the importance at the news conference of two-way communication, which could take the form of a short summary report or blog or wiki, etc.

Learners must also evaluate their news conference, including strengths, weaknesses and recommendations.

As outlined earlier, there must be evidence of learners working in groups. It is recommended that checklists are devised to ensure each individual has covered all evidence requirements. These could assist tutors with assessment, provide feedback to learners and, if required, allow tutors to ask additional questions, etc. Where appropriate, learners' presentations could be recorded.

## 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 to develop Core Skills in:

*Communication:* learners will have many opportunities to develop both written and oral skills in conveying information and opinions regarding the crucial strategic role that PR has within an organisation; conveying different clients' needs and objectives, etc. They will also present their PR proposals for differing clients, eg a not-for-profit organisation and a damage limitation client — including participation in a simulated news conference.

*Problem Solving:* learners will have many opportunities to develop all aspects of problem solving. They will use analysis and reasoning to make decisions and create ideas and produce PR proposals and campaigns for differing clients. They have to deal damage limitation and objection handling at a news conference. They are to evaluate their own news conference and could also have the opportunity to undertake an evaluation of another news conference which they attend as a media representative (for peer evaluation).

*Working with Others:* where learners work as a team, they will have many opportunities in Outcomes 3 and 4 to work co-operatively with others to plan, design and present PR proposals for a damage limitation client. They will recognise and value the roles of others and take responsibility for their own contribution to the development of PR proposals and at their presentation at PR press conference. They also could evaluate the co-operative working of their peers at another news conference if they attend in the role of a media representative.
*Information and Communication Technology (ICT):* learners will have opportunities to use *ICT* to access a wide range of information about how to develop successful PR campaigns for a range of clients. They can also use software and online media tools and techniques for analysis and designing of their PR campaign and damage limitation news conference, press kits and other appropriate materials, etc.

This unit has the Core Skill of Problem Solving embedded in it, so when learners achieve this unit their Core Skills profile will be updated to show that they have achieved Problem Solving at SCQF level 6.

## History of changes to unit

| Version | Description of change | Date |
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## General information for learners

**Unit title:** Public Relations: Strategic Analysis, Planning and Application (SCQF level 8)

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 is a double credit unit at SCQF level 8 which is designed to develop your knowledge and understanding of public relations (PR) activities and the crucial strategic role PR has within an organisation. This will involve understanding the theory behind PR and then applying this using both online and offline PR techniques. It will also help you to recognise different clients' needs and objectives to create successful PR campaigns. You will plan and develop PR campaign proposals then participate in a simulated PR news conference. This will demonstrate that you can deal with damage limitation for a client, as well as dealing with media relations.

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

- review in-house sponsorship or funding activities of a non/not for profit organisation.
- present a short campaign for a chosen client as in-house PR management.
- produce an outline proposal for a damage limitation campaign.
- create a public relations news conference on behalf of a damage limitation client.

Assessments for this unit will be outlined by your tutor and are likely to include production of research findings and PR proposals for different clients (eg not-for-profit organisation and damage limitation client). You will also participate in a PR news conference where you act as a PR consultancy and present your proposals.

There are also opportunities to develop Core Skills in *Communication, Problem Solving, Working with Others and Information* and *Communication Technology (ICT)*.

To undertake this unit, it would be helpful if you have communication skills at SCQF level 6 and you have an understanding of the concepts of public relations, eg units such as *PR: Principles and Practices* at SCQF level 7 or equivalent.

This unit is mandatory within the SQA Advanced in Advertising and PR — and successful achievement of the unit and this SQA Advanced award could provide opportunities for progression to higher education, employment in advertising, PR and marketing or related sectors, etc.

This unit has the Core Skill of Problem Solving embedded in it, so when you achieve this unit your Core Skills profile will be updated to show that you have achieved Problem Solving at SCQF level 6.