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## Assignment Writing

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### Why write assignments?

Assignments provide a structure within which the requirements of the assessment evidence grid can be met. They provide the opportunity to take an holistic approach to assessment requirements, rather than adopting a piecemeal approach. An assignment should:

- set the assessment evidence in a realistic occupational/vocational context;
- provide a vehicle for motivating and stimulating candidates to achieve the full requirements of the assessment evidence grid;
- focus the candidates attention on the **outcomes** required, without being too prescriptive;
- provide the opportunity for candidates to apply the knowledge they have acquired in the *What You Need to Learn* section in a given context;
- provide the opportunity for candidates to produce different types/forms of evidence, for example, paper based evidence, audio/video etc.;
- provide a framework within which candidates can produce evidence.

### What makes a good assignment?

- Setting the assignment in the relevant vocational context, not beyond the candidates' experience. For example, 'Conducting research for a politician...' would not be appropriate to candidates at any of the levels as it is beyond their experience and beyond the level.
- The assignment should allow the candidate to meet *all* the requirements of the assessment evidence grid.
- The depth of verb given within each criteria in the assessment evidence grid should not be changed. For example, if the verb in the criteria states *describe* the task should not require the candidate to *identify* as the appropriate depth of response cannot be met by the candidate.
- The assignment should provide the candidate with the opportunity to *apply* knowledge and skills in given contexts. For example, if the task bar requires that **one** organisation should be studied, all the information given should be applied to the **one** organisation chosen by the candidate and should not be generic.
- The time scales for the assignment should be given and these should be realistic. They should include start and target dates. The candidates need to know about the deadlines. When planning target dates, teachers should take into consideration other time pressures candidates may have, for example, projects for GCSE or other GCEs.
- Opportunities for differentiation should be provided. Activities set should allow for flexibility, for those candidates who wish, or who are able to develop ideas. This will allow scope for the candidate to meet the assessment objectives of *independence* and *originality* which is a requirement for the higher mark bands.
- The language used within the assignment should be appropriate for the level.

- Opportunities within the assignment enable candidates to link with specialists from the occupational sector either through visits or inviting specialists into the centre or through work experience.
- Resources in terms of staffing, expertise and materials can be accessed by candidates.
- Additions to the requirements of the assessment evidence grid should *not* be included.
- Notes or guidance for working the assignment should form an appendix, if they are needed.

## Preparing to Write the Assignment

### Read the banner carefully

Make sure the requirements have been interpreted correctly. For example, Unit 2: *Communication in care settings*, the requirement of the banner is:

“... produce a report based on the different communication skills used in **one** health or social care or early years setting.”

Candidates need to realise that communication skills includes oral, written, computerised and any special forms of communication that may be used, such as Makaton.

They will also need to be clear about what constitutes an early years setting. For example, this usually means an education or care service or facility for children up to the age of eight.

### Interpret each criterion

Examine the requirement of each criteria making sure the depth of the verb is clearly considered. It is possible that teachers may wish to issue and discuss a glossary showing the hierarchy of verbs used and their meaning (see [HSC28 verbs.pdf](#) on this CD-ROM).

### Read the amplification grids

This section of the specifications gives clear guidance to teachers about how to make judgements when considering candidate evidence. It shows how to distinguish between the mark bands.

### Think about a format for the assignment

Is the assignment for a first assignment? If it is, then a task based approach may be more suitable. If not, then a more open ended, non-task based approach is better in order to provide the opportunity for independence and originality. Some candidates may wish to write their own assignments once they have understood the process.

### **Think about a *context* for the assignment**

What would make a suitable occupational link? For example, a report for a voluntary organisation who are training informal carers or some research for the Community Health Council.

### **Plan Key Skills opportunities**

If applicable; see [HSC26\\_keyskills.pdf](#).

## **Guidance for Writing Assignments**

### **Where possible write the assignment with the whole teaching team**

It is always worth having an independent person check out the work against the assessment evidence grid.

### **Make sure the unit title is given**

For example: Unit 2: *Communication care settings*.

### **Give the assignment a title**

For example: Communication in Care Settings.

### **Choose an outcome that suits the assessment evidence grid**

Also choose an outcome which is not too prescriptive e.g. a Resource Pack **or** a Guide **or** Series of Aids **or** a Training Pack. For example Unit 2: *Communication in care settings*: “You have been asked to produce a *resource pack...*”

### **Decide who is to be the target audience**

For example, “You have been asked to produce a resource pack *which can be used when training health and social care workers in care settings...*”. The focus of the resource pack is to demonstrate the different forms of communication used in a care setting and to show how effective oral communication skills are developed and implemented by care professionals.

### **Consider who or what is to be the occupational link**

For example, who has asked for this? Possible occupational links could be the Health Promotion Team, a local GP practice or the Voluntary Sector.

For example, “You have been asked by a *training organisation...*”

**Write the opening scenario making sure that it gives the outcome, the target audience and the occupational link**

This should be approximately three or four lines. For example, the opening scenario could read:

“You have been asked by a training organisation to produce a resource pack *which can be used when training health and social care workers in care settings*. The focus of the resource pack is to demonstrate the different forms of communication used in a care setting and to show how effective oral communication skills are developed and implemented by care professionals.”