# Unit 20: Handling Mail

**Unit reference number:** A/502/4008

**QCF level:** 1

**Credit value:** 2

**Guided learning hours:** 20

## Unit aim

This unit aims to enable learners to develop skills in handling mail and aspects associated with it.

## Unit introduction

In this unit, learners will gain an understanding of how to handle mail efficiently and why this is important for an organisation. It is important for those working in administrative roles to have a good understanding of how to handle mail to ensure the flow of communication meets an organisation's administrative needs.

In the first part of the unit, learners will develop a knowledge of the benefits for an organisation of efficient mail distribution, and of the negative impact of inaccuracies or delays. They will also learn about procedures for dealing with confidential post.

In the second part of the unit, learners will have the opportunity to carry out mail-related tasks, such as sorting and distributing incoming mail, collecting, sorting and despatching outgoing mail and considering how to deal with damaged or suspicious items.

### Essential resources

Visits to local organisations should be encouraged and guest speakers will add currency and vocational relevance to the topic.

# Learning outcomes, assessment criteria and unit amplification

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria determine the standard required to achieve the unit.

**On completion of this unit a learner should:**

| Learning outcomes | | Assessment criteria | | Unit amplification |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Know why it is important for a business to handle mail efficiently and securely | 1.1 | State how efficient distribution of mail benefits a business | ☐ *Benefits of efficient distribution*: smooth flow of information; information reaches correct person to be dealt with, e.g. customer queries, complaints, booking forms, invoices, payment; types of post, e.g. internal, external, letters, invoices, packages of supplies |
| | | 1.2 | State why inaccuracies or delays can have a negative impact | ☐ *Negative impact of inaccuracies or delays*: types of impact, e.g. information not received by correct person, information is received late so deadlines are missed, supplies, invoices or payments are not received or are received late, can lead to customer complaints and damage the organisation's reputation |
| | | 1.3 | Identify procedures to protect confidential information | ☐ *Confidentiality*: types of confidential information, e.g. customer or employee details, information sensitive to organisation; procedures, e.g. label post 'confidential' or 'personal', ensure that post marked confidential is not opened before delivery; ensuring confidential post is delivered correctly; using special envelopes for confidential post; using particular postal service, e.g. recorded delivery, special delivery, courier service |
| 2 | Be able to deal with incoming mail | 2.1 | Sort incoming mail appropriately | ☐ *Sorting*: sorting post according to different offices, departments, teams, individuals |
| | | 2.2 | State how to deal with suspicious or damaged items | ☐ *Suspicious or damaged items*: knowing when an item is suspicious or damaged; knowing who to report to; checking with sender; checking with receiver; recording damaged or suspicious items |
| | | 2.3 | Distribute incoming mail accurately and to a given deadline | ☐ *Distributing*: ensuring post is delivered to correct person; ensuring post is left in the correct place; delivering post at set times of day |

| Learning outcomes | | Assessment criteria | | Unit amplification |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | Be able to deal with outgoing mail | 3.1 | Collect and sort outgoing mail accurately and on time | ☐ *Collecting*: collecting post at set times; identifying post to be collected |
| | | 3.2 | Dispatch outgoing mail on time | ☐ *Despatching*: types of services, e.g. special delivery, overnight post; different providers, e.g. Royal Mail, DHL; identifying best options, e.g. checking if mail is urgent, size of package; packaging items, e.g. size, sealing securely; ensuring post is clearly and accurately addressed; completing documentation, e.g. special delivery labels, supplier-related forms |

# Information for tutors

## Delivery

This is essentially a practical unit. Learners will need the opportunity to develop and practise the administrative skills needed to collect, sort and distribute mail.

Visits need to be arranged to different organisations, for example one with a mailroom, one where mail is dealt with on reception.

Learners could observe the mailroom, or mail procedures, of different organisations, including the centre, and be aware of the types of task undertaken. Learners could work in small groups with each group researching a different organisation. The findings could be presented to the rest of the group for discussion.

Learners can discuss the types of problems they might encounter when delivering or collecting items and prepare a poster of how these could be dealt with. Learners should practise securing packages correctly and will need access to the relevant materials. Learners can discuss the types of deliveries and collections made in an organisation. They can then work in small groups to discuss the security measures that need to be in place when handling post with regard to confidentiality and damaged or suspicious items. A guest speaker could provide useful information regarding aspects of confidentiality and security.

## Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance.

| Topic and suggested assignments/activities |
| --- |
| Introduction to unit and structure of the programme of learning. <br><br> Tutor-led discussion – what type of mail might a business receive? What might it send? <br><br> In small groups, learners discuss how efficient distribution of mail benefits a business and what would happen if there are inaccuracies or delays. Learners to record thoughts on a flip chart and feed back to the rest of the group. <br><br> Tutor-led delivery on the importance to businesses of handling mail efficiently and securely to underpin learner knowledge. <br><br> Assessment – learners to have a one-to-one discussion with the tutor and to state at least two benefits of the efficient distribution of mail to business, and at least two effects of inaccuracies and delays (learning outcome 1). <br><br> Assessment – learners complete a checklist of procedures for dealing with confidential information for future reference (learning outcome 1). |
| Visiting from speaker who works in the post-room of an organisation to discuss procedures for sorting and distributing mail and dealing with suspicious or damaged items. Learners to prepare questions in advance. <br><br> In small groups, with materials and timelines supplied by the tutor, learners to practise sorting and distributing incoming post and sorting and despatching outgoing post, choosing the most appropriate postal service. <br><br> Assessment – learners to be observed sorting and distributing incoming post and collecting, sorting and despatching outgoing post according to agreed timelines (learning outcome 2 and 3). |

| Topic and suggested assignments/activities (continued) |
|---|
| Assessment – learners produce a checklist of procedures for dealing with damaged or suspicious items for future reference (learning outcome 2). |
| Assessment feedback, review and evaluation of unit. |

## Assessment

Assessment criteria 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 can be achieved through group discussions or through one-to-one or question and answer sessions with the tutor. Alternatively, learners could produce short written statements, perhaps by completing a pro forma.

To achieve 1.1, learners will need to state two ways in which the efficient distribution of mail can benefit a business. 'Efficient' means mail is delivered on time and to the correct person. For 1.2, learners should then state two negative effects of inaccuracies or delays. To achieve 1.3, learners need to identify two procedures for protecting confidential information.

Assessment criteria 2.1, 2.3, 3.1 and 3.2 can be assessed through practical activities and it would be helpful if learners had access to a model post-room or office and materials for packaging post.

Assessment criteria 2.1 and 2.3 can be achieved through sorting and distributing post correctly within a given timescale. Learners should be observed by a tutor and this observation should be taped or recorded observation on a witness statement. Assessment criterion 2.2 can be achieved through a question and answer session and learners need to state two procedures relating to how to deal with damaged or suspicious items. This must be assessed through tutor observation.

To achieve 3.1 learners must be observed collecting and sorting outgoing mail accurately within a given timescale. To achieve 3.2, learners must despatch two different types of mail in a given timescale, choosing the most appropriate method of despatch and preparing the mail appropriately, for example for urgent or special delivery.

Any witness statements or observation records should be retained for verification purposes.

## Suggested resources

### Books

Tetley C – *BTEC Entry 3/Level 1 Business Administration Student Book* (Pearson, 2010) ISBN 9781846909214

### Websites

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| www.hse.gov.uk | Health and Safety Executive - information on health and safety in the workplace |
| www.skillscfa.org | The Council for Administration |