

Unit 16: Career Planning for the Public Services

Unit code: H/600/5351

QCF Level 2: BTEC National

Credit value: 5

Guided learning hours: 30

● Aim and purpose

This unit aims to enable learners to gain a knowledge and understanding of applying and preparing for a job in their chosen public service. The unit also enables learners to develop the skills needed in public services to prepare for an application process.

● Unit introduction

There is a huge amount of people employed in the public service sector in this country, and although such services may be liable to public spending cuts, these services will always be required.

Anyone who applies for a job in the public services will almost certainly face stiff competition from other applicants. The recruitment and selection process for most public service jobs is usually quite a lengthy one. It is important that applicants are fully prepared before applying for a job and this unit will help them to achieve this.

Learners will investigate the entry requirements and different routes of entry for their chosen career, which may then give them several options for their future, such as going on to higher education, or gaining relevant voluntary or paid work experience before applying to enter their chosen service.

Learners will understand how public services employers ensure that they are doing all they can to recruit a diverse workforce which reflects the society in the United Kingdom today. Learners could access equal opportunities policies from the internet and compare and discuss them.

Public services employees need to have particular skills and qualities which enable them to deal with the different situations they may encounter. Some public services require certain levels of fitness and stamina to carry out the physical work involved. Others may require particular qualifications and training. Learners will investigate these requirements and carry out a personal audit of their skills and qualities.

Finally, learners will complete an application for a public service job of their choice.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Know the application and selection process for public service employment
- 2 Know the skills and qualities required for a job in the public services
- 3 Be able to complete an application for a role in a chosen public service.

Unit content

1 Know the application and selection process for public service employment

Application process: entry requirements – educational, physical, medical and other requirements; application forms – types of forms and the requirements for completing forms including online applications; letters of application, personal statements and supporting information; CV – different formats, essential information, good and bad practice

Selection process: types and purpose of psychometric tests; equal opportunity – ensuring diversity in recruitment; physical fitness tests; other types of selection tests including competency questions, basic skills tests, simulations and presentations; types of interview; dress code; preparation for interview eg arrangements, potential questions, research; interview skills

2 Know the skills and qualities required for a job in the public services

Required skills: eg teamwork, cooperation, communication, problem solving, achieving aims, working with others; interpersonal skills eg reading, writing, speaking, listening; non-verbal communication eg body language, gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, posture; organisational skills; ICT skills

Required qualities: eg honesty, integrity, reliability, punctuality, commitment, positive attitude to work, concern for others

Roles: uniformed eg firefighter, police officer, soldier, prison officer, paramedic; non-uniformed eg teacher, nurse, administrator, receptionist, call handler, housing officer, social worker

3 Be able to complete an application for a role in a chosen public service

Skills audit: identify personal strengths, weaknesses, areas of development

Improve/develop own skills: training, educational, physical, interpersonal

Skills map: map own skills to job role

Action plan: identify goals; identify actions; set tasks; set timescales

Application: completion of application process for chosen public service role eg CV, letter of application, application form, competency questions, fitness test, basic skills test as appropriate to the chosen role

Assessment and grading criteria

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 for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
P1 describe the current entry requirements for two public service jobs [IE3]		
P2 describe the application and selection process for two public service jobs [IE3]		
P3 identify the different skills and qualities required for a given public service role [IE3]		
P4 carry out a personal skills audit for a given public service role	M1 analyse their skills against a given public service role.	D1 evaluate their skills against a given public service role.
P5 complete an application for a role in a specific public service.		

PLTS: This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills applicable in the pass criteria. It identifies opportunities for learners to demonstrate effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

Key	IE – independent enquirers CT – creative thinkers	RL – reflective learners TW – team workers	SM – self-managers EP – effective participators

Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

It is important that learners be given the opportunity to investigate the entry requirements for different public service jobs to enable them to make decisions about their career choice and how to prepare an application.

Careers officers from the individual services can be invited into the centre to talk to learners about entry requirements and the skills required. However, it should be pointed out to the visiting speaker that this is not a recruitment opportunity but to help learners prepare for application to the service.

Information and recruitment packs can be obtained from many of the public services (both in printed media and online) so tutors may already have the information that learners need to complete their application.

Learners should be given the opportunity to examine a variety of application forms and could practise completing them. Application forms for the public services are usually quite lengthy and often require learners to talk about themselves and describe when they have demonstrated certain skills and competences. Young people usually find this quite difficult so tutors could guide them and allow them to practise. In some cases the specific public services will not provide copies of application forms and for many public services the application process is now online – if this is the case, tutors should devise their own generic application form for learners to complete.

Learners should also be asked to produce CVs and to practise completing competency-based questions and psychometric tests. Equal opportunities policies could be downloaded from different public services websites for learners to examine and compare when looking at ensuring diversity in recruitment.

Identifying the skills and qualities required for public services is an important part of this unit and it can be reinforced through other units on the programme, for example *Unit 1: Public Services Skills*. Public service websites should be used to assist with this task. Learners should be encouraged to recognise when they have demonstrated any of these particular skills as part of their assessment for P4.

Tutors should provide guidance to learners on carrying out a personal skills audit and an individual action plan. Learners are expected to carry out a skills audit identifying their strengths and weaknesses against a particular job. From this, learners can produce an action plan of how they could work towards meeting the requirements for their identified job.

Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan demonstrates one way in planning the delivery and assessment of this unit.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment
Introduction to unit and outline of assessment.
Theoretical input – entry requirements, application and selection processes of the public services. Application process: entry requirements – educational, physical, medical and other requirements; application forms. Selection process: types and purpose of competency-based questions, psychometric tests; ensuring diversity in recruitment; physical fitness tests; other types of selection tests, eg simulations and presentations; types of interview; approaches; dress code; preparation for interview. Visits to the services, visiting speakers, case studies and video/DVDs, 'fly on the wall' TV programmes.
Assignment 1: Entry Requirements and Selection Process Learners could deliver a verbal presentation (supported with leaflets), suitable for school leavers attending a careers exhibition. Include notes to describe the current entry requirements for a chosen uniformed public service. Describe the application and selection process for the chosen service. (P1, P2)
Theoretical input – identification of skills required for uniformed and non-uniformed public services, eg leadership, cooperation, communication, problem solving, achieving aims, working with others; interpersonal skills: reading, writing, speaking, listening; non-verbal communication: eg body language, gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, posture; organisational skills, ICT skills.
Theoretical input – personal skills audit – group discussion, DVDs, case studies. Skills audit: identify strengths, weaknesses, areas of development.
Assignment 2: Public Service Skills Learners could produce a magazine article, suitable for a school/college newsletter, which outlines the skills required for different public services. (P3)
Theoretical – preparing an action plan – skills map: map skills to job. Action plan: identify goals; identify actions; set tasks; set timescales. Improve/develop skills: training, educational, physical, interpersonal.
Theoretical input – personal skills audit – group discussion, DVDs, case studies. <i>Skills audit</i> : identify strengths, weaknesses, areas of development.
Assignment 3: Personal Skills Audit Complete a prepared logbook, recording where required skills have been demonstrated. Using the prepared worksheet provided, look at the skills listed and think about how you rate yourself (on a scale of 1-5). Learners need to carry out a skills audit analysing and evaluating their skills against a given role in a public service organisation and identifying their strengths, weaknesses and areas for development. (P4, M1, D1)

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment

Assignment 4: Application Form

Produce a guidance booklet or guidance notes which outline step by step, with suitable dates, the actions to take, to prepare for applying to a chosen public service.

Prepare an application for a job role in the public services.

(P5)

Review of unit and assessment.

Assessment

A careers office or careers exhibition scenario might be suitable for the assessment of this unit. P1 requires learners to describe the current entry requirements for two different public service jobs. For P2, learners must describe the different application and selection processes for two public service jobs. Evidence for P1 and P2 could take the form of written leaflets or posters or verbal presentations. P3 asks learners to identify the skills required for a job in the public services – this could be evidenced in written form, or verbally, for example, during a group discussion. Learners should be encouraged to recognise and record where they have demonstrated any of the identified skills, either through their programme or through paid or voluntary work as evidence for P4. Signatures should be obtained from a tutor or supervisor.

P4, M1, D1 require learners to self-evaluate, looking at their skills levels and to produce their own individual skills audits for a given role in a public service organisation. M1 requires learners to analyse their skills in more depth against a given role, looking at their own skills, and explain if and how they could be developed further while D1 requires learners to evaluate their skills against the given role and give evidence of how their skills would be developed to meet those needed for the role. Learners generally find any form of self-evaluation quite difficult, so tutors could prepare worksheets for them to complete which would help them to complete this task.

Finally, for P5, learners should complete an application process for their chosen public service role. This will require the tutor agreeing with the learner in advance the role to be applied for. This will then enable the tutor to advise each learner of the specific evidence they will need to present to meet the application requirements of that specific job role. For example, an application for a role in the prison service will require an online application form to be completed and for questions to be answered in relation to how the learner has demonstrated specific job-related competences. If that job application is for a prison officer role a basic skills test will need to be completed and an online form filled in. See link for more information www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/careersandjobs/becomingaprisonofficer/theapplicationprocess/.

Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the assessment and grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any Edexcel assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P1, P2,	Entry Requirements and Selection Process	Working with the careers officer in a public service organisation you have been asked to prepare information for a careers exhibition.	Verbal presentation. Leaflet, booklet, poster.
P3	Public Service Skills	Working with the careers officer in a public service organisation you have been asked to prepare information for a careers exhibition.	Magazine article.
P4, M1, DI`	Personal Skills Audit	As a perspective interviewee you need to carry out a skills audit for a public service job.	Completed logbook. Completed worksheet. Evidence of analysis and evaluation.
P5	Application Form	As a perspective interviewee you need to complete an application for a public service job.	Completed application process.

Links to National Occupational Standards, other BTEC units, other BTEC qualifications and other relevant units and qualifications

This unit forms part of the BTEC Public Services sector suite. This unit has particular links with the following unit titles in the Public Services suite:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Searching for a Job	Employment in the Uniformed Public Services	Understanding Behaviour in the Public Service Employment
Public Service Careers	Employment in the Non-uniformed Public Services	Personnel and Human Resources

Essential resources

It is vital that learners have access to the internet to carry out their research into different public sector organisations and the range of employment opportunities those organisations offer.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Successful delivery of this unit requires learners to meet personnel from a range of public service organisations. Learners should discuss with those personnel the range of jobs and careers in each public service organisation and the recruitment and promotion pathways in their organisations.

Indicative reading for learners

Websites

Army	www.army.mod.uk
Careers advice	www.careersadvice.direct.gov.uk
Careers advice – Directgov Young People	www.direct.gov.uk/en/youngpeople/index
Fire service	www.fireservice.co.uk
Government job vacancy and recruitment agency	www.industryrecruit.co.uk/Government
Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs	www.hmrc.gov.uk
Jobs in the public sector	www.jobsinpublicsector.co.uk
Local government careers	www.lgcareers.com
NHS careers	www.nhscareers.nhs.uk
Prison service	www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/careersandjobs
Public service jobs	www.jobsgopublic.com
Public service recruitment	www.opportunities.co.uk
Reed – recruitment agency	www.reed.co.uk/public
Royal Air Force	www.raf.mod.uk
Royal Navy/Royal Marines	www.royal-navy.mod.uk

Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills

The table below identifies the opportunities for personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) that have been included within the pass assessment criteria of this unit.

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	carrying out research on different public services
Creative thinkers	carrying out a personal skills audit
Reflective learners	carrying out a personal skills audit.

Although PLTS are identified within this unit as an inherent part of the assessment criteria, there are further opportunities to develop a range of PLTS through various approaches to teaching and learning.

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	carrying out personal research
Creative thinkers	adapting own ideas for different assignment tasks
Reflective learners	dealing positively with praise, setbacks and constructive criticism after receiving feedback on own work
Team workers	taking responsibility for own work when carrying out group work
Self-managers	responding positively to change and seeking advice and support dealing with competing pressures, including personal and work-related demands
Effective participators	engaging with a group and participation with outside visits.

● Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are ...
ICT – Use ICT systems	
Select, interact with and use ICT systems independently for a complex task to meet a variety of needs	producing leaflets, posters and presentation
Manage information storage to enable efficient retrieval	saving work
Follow and understand the need for safety and security practices	protecting work with password
Troubleshoot	
ICT – Find and select information	
Select and use a variety of sources of information independently for a complex task	producing leaflets, posters and presentation
Access, search for, select and use ICT-based information and evaluate its fitness for purpose	producing leaflets, posters and presentation
ICT – Develop, present and communicate information	
Enter, develop and format information independently to suit its meaning and purpose including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • text and tables • images • numbers • records 	producing leaflets, posters and presentation
English	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	carrying out a verbal presentation
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	researching material for written work
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	producing posters, leaflets and presentation.