

# KEY SKILLS UNIT

# Information technology

## What is this unit about?

This unit is about applying your IT skills to suit different purposes.

You will show you can:

- plan and use different sources to search for and select information;
- explore, develop and exchange information, and derive new information;
- present information, including text, numbers and images.



## How do I use the information in this unit?

There are three parts to this unit: what you need to know, what you must do and guidance.

### Part A

#### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

This part of the unit tells you what you need to learn and practise to feel confident about applying IT skills in your studies, work or other aspects of your life.

### Part A

#### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

**In planning and selecting information, you need to know how to:**

- identify a substantial activity to research in more than one area of study;
- compare the advantages and limitations of different sources of information for planning, selecting, presenting and exchanging information;
- identify appropriate techniques for finding information to develop your solutions;
- identify appropriate techniques for presenting information to develop your solutions;
- identify appropriate techniques for exchanging information to develop your solutions;
- identify appropriate techniques for presenting information to develop your solutions;

**In presenting information, you need to know how to:**

- identify the strengths and limitations of different sources of information for presenting information;
- identify appropriate techniques for presenting information to develop your solutions;
- identify appropriate techniques for exchanging information to develop your solutions;
- identify appropriate techniques for presenting information to develop your solutions;

**In developing information, you need to know how to:**

- identify the strengths and limitations of different sources of information for developing information;
- identify appropriate techniques for developing information to develop your solutions;
- identify appropriate techniques for exchanging information to develop your solutions;
- identify appropriate techniques for presenting information to develop your solutions;

### Part B

#### WHAT YOU MUST DO

This part of the unit describes the skills you must show. All your work for this section will be assessed. You must have evidence that you can do all the things listed in the bullet points.

### Part B

#### WHAT YOU MUST DO

**Your must:**

- BT1** Plan, and use different sources to search for and select information required to meet different purposes.
- BT2** Explore, develop, and exchange information and derive new information to meet different purposes.
- BT3** Present information from different sources to meet different purposes and audiences.

**Evidence must show you can:**

- plan how to search for and select information required to meet different purposes;
- explore, develop, and exchange information and derive new information to meet different purposes;
- present information from different sources to meet different purposes and audiences;

### Part C

#### GUIDANCE

This part describes some activities you might like to use to develop and show your IT skills. It also contains examples of the sort of evidence you could produce to prove you have the skills required.

### Part C

#### GUIDANCE

**Examples of activities you might use:**

- developing and presenting a product;
- exchanging information and reporting outcomes to consumers or clients;
- exchanging information and ideas with colleagues or other students;
- developing and presenting a product;
- exchanging information and reporting outcomes to consumers or clients;
- exchanging information and ideas with colleagues or other students;

**Examples of evidence**

**INFORMATION**

A description of the substantial activity and tasks, a plan for achieving and using the information required.

**DEVELOPING INFORMATION**

Examples of the relevant information with notes of sources consulted and used. Notes on how you made decisions and reached conclusions.

**PRESENTING INFORMATION**

Examples of the relevant information with notes of sources consulted and used. Notes on how you made decisions and reached conclusions.

# LEVEL 3

# Part A

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

### *In planning and selecting information,*

#### YOU NEED TO KNOW HOW TO:

- plan a substantial activity by breaking it down into a series of tasks;
- compare the advantages and limitations of different sources of information (*eg databases, the internet, material to be scanned, files on disk, CD-ROMs*) and select those suitable for your purpose (*eg to obtain views of others, to produce financial data, product information or a multi-media presentation*);
- choose appropriate techniques for finding information (*eg database query techniques, internet search engines, multiple criteria including relational operators such as less than/greater than, and logical criteria such as AND/OR/NOT conditions*) and use them to carry out effective searches;
- make selections based on relevance to your purpose and judgements on quality (*eg your own and others' views on accuracy and reliability of content*).

### *In developing information,*

#### YOU NEED TO KNOW HOW TO:

- enter and bring together information in a consistent form (*eg lists, tables, frames, types of images*) and use automated routines (*eg macros, icons, database query and report routines, validation for database entries*);
- create and use structures and procedures for developing text, images and numbers (*eg sort and group information, use mail-merge, analyse and interpret numerical data using spreadsheet software, generate graphs and charts*);
- explore information (*eg design and develop lines of enquiry, change values and rules in a model to make predictions and test hypotheses*);

- derive new information (*eg evaluate information from different sources to reach and justify a conclusion, use facilities to calculate or deduce results*);
- use methods of exchanging information to support your purpose (*eg e-mail, shared access to documents, collaborative development of information*).

### *In presenting information,*

#### YOU NEED TO KNOW HOW TO:

- develop the structure of your presentation (*eg modify templates and paragraph styles, apply automatic referencing facilities such as page numbers, dates and file names*), and use the views of others to guide refinements (*eg obtain feedback on content, layout, format, style*);
- develop and refine the presentation of text, images and numbers (*eg improve impact by changing format or layout, combine information, overlay images on text*);
- present information so that it meets your purpose and the needs of the audience (*eg compare paper based, single form, mixed form and multi-media presentations and choose the most suitable one available*);
- ensure work is accurate and makes sense (*eg proof-read, use a spell-checker, seek the views of others*).

You will also need to know: the implications of using IT, comparing your use of IT with systems used elsewhere; when it is necessary to observe copyright or confidentiality; how to save your work for easy retrieval, for managing versions and to avoid loss; how to identify errors and their causes and minimise risks from viruses; and how to work safely and minimise health risks.

# Part B

## WHAT YOU MUST DO

### *You must:*

Plan and carry through at least one substantial activity that includes tasks for IT3.1, IT3.2 and IT3.3.

#### **IT3.1**

Plan and use different sources to search for, and select, information required for **two** different purposes.

### *Evidence must show you can:*

- plan how to obtain and use the information required to meet the purpose of your activity;
- choose appropriate sources and techniques for finding information and carry out effective searches; and
- make selections based on judgements of relevance and quality.

#### **IT3.2**

Explore, develop and exchange information, and derive new information, to meet **two** different purposes.

- enter and bring together information in a consistent form, using automated routines where appropriate;
- create and use appropriate structures and procedures to explore and develop information and derive new information; and
- use effective methods of exchanging information to support your purpose.

#### **IT3.3**

Present information from different sources for **two** different purposes and audiences.

Your work must include at least **one** example of text, **one** example of images and **one** example of numbers.

- develop the structure and content of your presentation using the views of others, where appropriate, to guide refinements;
- present information effectively, using a format and style that suits your purpose and audience; and
- ensure your work is accurate and makes sense.

# Part

## GUIDANCE



### *Examples of activities you might use*

You will have opportunities to develop and apply your IT skills during your work, studies or other activities. For example, when:

- planning, carrying out and reporting findings from an investigation or project;
- designing and presenting a product;
- researching information and reporting outcomes to customers or clients;
- exchanging information and ideas with work colleagues or other students.

You will need time to practise your skills and prepare for assessment. So it is important to plan ahead. For example, to identify an activity that is substantial enough to provide opportunities for following through tasks for IT3.1, IT3.2 and IT3.3. You may need to do additional tasks to cover all the requirements of Part B.

The purpose for using IT can be decided by you or by other people, but you must make sure that the work you produce suits this purpose. Using IT can contribute evidence of your use of other key skills, such as communication and application of number.

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**This unit is for use in programmes starting from September 2000.**

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You will need to think about the quality of your IT skills and check your evidence covers all the requirements in Part B.

### *Examples of evidence*

#### **3.1 PLAN, AND SELECT INFORMATION**

A description of the substantial activity and tasks. A plan for obtaining and using the information required.

Print-outs of the relevant information with notes of sources compared and used. Notes on how you made searches and selected information.

#### **3.2 DEVELOP INFORMATION**

Print-outs, with notes, or a record from an assessor who observed your use of IT, showing how you have exchanged, explored and developed information and derived new information.

Notes of automated routines.

#### **3.3 PRESENT INFORMATION**

Working drafts, or a record from an assessor who observed your screen displays, showing how you developed the presentation using information from different sources.

Print-outs or a static or dynamic screen display of your final work, including examples of text, images and numbers.

If producing certain types of evidence creates difficulties, through disability or for another reason, you may be able to use other ways to show your achievement. Ask your tutor or supervisor for further information.