Unit 17: Professional Identity and Practice

Unit code	**K/618/5058**
Unit level	**4**
Credit value	**15**

Introduction

With employment opportunities and career progression becoming increasingly competitive, it is vital that new employees appreciate the value of the correct skills and competences that are expected by employers.

The aim of this unit is to guide students through the process of self-assessment of skills and competences, personal career planning and the application of different learning and development approaches in a work environment. Students are not necessarily expected to engage in work activities but self-assessment and design must be applied in a specific work context to avoid the experience being generic.

The unit will give students direction on how to prepare for job applications and interviews in a formalised way, with the aim of improving their career prospects.

Students are expected to undertake a practical interview arranged and guided by their tutor or a relevant employer.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit students will be able to:

LO1   Explore the importance of ongoing professional development and self-directed learning to enhance professional identity and career opportunities

LO2   Assess own skills, competences and the different learning and development approaches

LO3   Design a professional development plan in a specific work context

LO4   Demonstrate a range of competences and transferable skills for a job application.

Essential Content

LO1 Explore the importance of ongoing professional development and self-directed learning to enhance professional identity and career opportunities

Importance of ongoing professional development:

Employer benefits such as a skilled workforce, up-to-date knowledge, a competitive edge through human capital, employee engagement through development opportunities, organisational brand image.

Employee benefits such as intrinsic motivation, personal satisfaction, increased employability, added value on CVs and future employment, ownership of role, self-directed approaches gain more buy-in.

Professional standards and expectations:

Personal presentation and appearance, appropriateness of appearance in specific contexts, e.g. role-appropriate dress code, projecting brand image, uniforms.

Importance of projecting the brand image.

Maintaining professional standards – conduct in the workplace, representation out of work.

Working responsibly and ethically.

Common skills expected in the workplace:

Business skills audits, personal/professional skills, soft skills (EQ related) versus hard skills (IQ related) and appropriateness in given contexts.

Soft skills and behaviours such as self-confidence, communications, delegation, networking, creative thinking and initiative.

Hard skills such as maths, accounting, programming, statistics, use of technology.

Customer service skills in understanding and meeting customer needs and expectations.

Importance of cultural awareness and sensitivity for working in a culturally diverse sector.

Team leading and development.

Tuckman's model of group development.

LO2 Assess own skills, competences and the different learning and development approaches

Self-assessment approaches and techniques:

Self-evaluation models, e.g. technical and soft skills audits, personal SWOT analysis, personality trait assessment.

Identifying team characteristics using Belbin team roles.

Competences comparison against job specifications and required personal and professional skills.

Learning and development approaches:

Learning approaches – behaviourist, cognitive and humanist.

Learning theories such as Gagné's theory of instruction, VAK learning styles, Honey & Mumford learning cycle, Kolb's learning cycle, Bloom's Taxonomy, social learning theory, Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory.

Developmental options – formal training, on-job training, shadowing, buddying, self-directed study, secondment, coaching and mentoring, job rotation, workshops, conferences, social learning and networking.

Aligning development options with specific work contexts.

LO3 Design a professional development plan in a specific work context

Writing and designing development plans:

SMART planning, contextualised design, appropriate formats for practical application.

Cohesive personal and professional development:

Developing combinations of skills and competences such as hard skills, soft skills, technical skills, personal demeanour/conduct, appearance and presentation.

Proactive learning and evaluation:

Being proactive, e.g. taking ownership, requesting advice/guidance, showing initiative in developmental processes and recording learning.

Employer involvement:

Management support, appropriate notification and consent, agreed monitoring and guidance.

LO4 Demonstrate a range of competences and transferable skills for a job application.

Effective CV writing:

Presentation format of a CV.

Key information to include in a CV.

Tailoring the CV to the specific job role.

Interview processes and preparation:

First, second and third stage processes, group tasks and behaviours during interviews.

Research of organisations to establish role requirements and key words in job advertisements.

Time management and personal conduct, practice and rehearsal, body language and speech.

Generating evidence of skills and experiences:

Evidence such as achievements and awards, qualifications, Continuous Professional Development (CPD) records, appraisals, guest comments forms, peer review forms, previous employer references
and referrals.

Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria

Pass	Merit	Distinction
LO1 Explore the importance of ongoing professional development and self-directed learning to enhance professional identity and career opportunities		
P1 Examine the key benefits of ongoing professional development for different stakeholders in a specific organisation. **P2** Investigate professional employer expectations of skills and competences in a specific organisational context.	**M1** Evaluate the importance of ongoing professional development and the associated professional skills requirements in a specific organisational context.	**LO1 and LO2** **D1** Critically evaluate own skills and competences to meet the employer expectation of professional skills required for employment in a specific job role.
LO2 Assess own skills, competences and the different learning and development approaches		
P3 Assess own abilities, skills and competences for a specific job role. **P4** Review a range of learning theories and approaches used for personal and professional development processes.	**M2** Evaluate own skills and competences and the most appropriate developmental approach to develop personal and professional skills for a specific job role.	
LO3 Design a professional development plan in a specific work context		
P5 Construct a development plan to enhance chosen skills and competences in a specific work context.	**M3** Provide a detailed development plan that applies underpinning learning and development theory, in a specific work context.	**D2** Produce a comprehensive development plan that sets out clear and achievable targets, strategies and outcomes of learning and training in a specific work context.

Pass	Merit	Distinction
LO4 Demonstrate a range of competences and transferable skills for a job application.		
P6 Undertake a job interview for a suitable role. **P7** Review key strengths and weaknesses of an applied interview process.	**M4** Evaluate a job interview process and the obstacles and challenges it presents.	**D3** Produce a detailed and coherent critical reflection of an interview process and own abilities during this process.

Recommended Resources

Textbooks

BOLTON, G. and DELDERFIED, R. (2018) *Reflective Practice: Writing and Professional Development.* Sage Publications.

COTTRELL, S. (2015) *Skills for Success: Personal Development and Employability.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

LOON, M. (2016) *Professional Practice in Learning and Development; How to Design and Deliver Plans for the Workplace.* London: Kogan Page Ltd.

Websites

www.cipd.co.uk	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
	CPD information
	(General reference)
www.mindtools.com	Mind Tools Essential Skills for an Excellent Career
	Articles, News
	(Research)

Links

This unit links to the following related unit:

Unit 18: Work Experience