

EXPERT GROUP REPORT
FOR
AWARDS SEEKING ADMISSION TO
THE UCAS TARIFF

THE ASDAN CERTIFICATE OF PERSONAL PERFORMANCE

February 2005

The ASDAN Certificate of Personal Performance

Background and Context

The Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (CoPE) is a new award from ASDAN that builds upon and extends the existing Universities Award Programme (UAP). Currently the (CoPE) is being piloted and continuing QCA recognition of the award is subject to the outcomes of the pilot evaluation report due in May 2005. ASDAN provided UCAS with a range of testimonial evidence from a number of HE institutions that they would welcome the CoPE being included in the tariff, and this provides the rationale for the current study.

Methodology

Both the UAP and the CoPE are closely linked to the wider key skills qualifications. Given that these qualifications have now been included in the UCAS Tariff as a result of a desk top study rather than a full expert group meeting, it was felt by UCAS, in consultation with Dr Geoff Hayward and ASDAN, that we could adopt a similar approach for this study. To that end Dr Hayward has undertaken the current piece of work drawing upon a range of evidence provided by ASDAN:

- The CoPE Specification
- The CoPE External Moderators Manual
- The University Award Programme Student Book
- The University Award Programme Tutor handbook

In addition, the Key Skill units at level 3 were consulted to provide benchmarks for the CoPE.

Structure of the Award

The Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (Level 3) is a 6 unit award that is linked to Universities/FE Level 3 Universities Award programme. Thus, the Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (CoPE) specification states that

“To achieve the ASDAN Level 3 Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (Universities/FE 3) you must gain a minimum of **FOUR FULL CREDITS** and provide evidence to demonstrate **skills development at level 3**. You will need to:

- ❖ Gain 3 credits by completing the required number of challenges from the modules in the Universities/FE Level 3 student books
- ❖ Include evidence of research, discussion and presentation
- ❖ Action plan each section, record achievement and review progress with a tutor
- ❖ Present an organised portfolio of evidence which documents work for the award and provides at least one example of working at the level set, from each of the following **units**:
 - 01 Introduction to working with others*
 - 02 Introduction to improving own learning and performance*
 - 03 Introduction to problem solving*
 - 04 Planning and carrying out research

- 05 Communicating through discussion
- 06 Planning and giving an oral presentation

To demonstrate working at this level you are expected to use the proforma provided by ASDAN which supports the consistent production of evidence.

Candidates who do not achieve the full qualification requirements of 6 units, will receive certification for units successfully achieved.

- ❖ complete the checklist, which cross references evidence to meet the requirements of the award at level 3

N.B. One credit is given as recognition for the time taken in the processes of action planning, reviewing progress, recording achievements, organising the portfolio and completing the key skills checklists.

- * *partial coverage of national specifications for wider key skills approved by QCA, ACCAC, CCEA.* (my italics)

This is therefore a complex award. On the one hand it looks to an existing and successful ASDAN programme, the Universities Award Programme, for ‘content’. On the other hand it aims to develop skills recognised with the three wider key skills of Working with Others, Improving own Learning and Performance, and Problem Solving; and the Communication Key Skill.

University Award Programme (UAP)

This popular programme was devised by ASDAN as a means of gaining credit for a range of enrichment activities. Its two aims are:

- To provide a way for a student to gain extra credit for enrichment and study activities they undertook as part of their post-16 course.
- To enable a student to develop and demonstrate a range of skills.

Part of the rationale for this was the view that Higher Education Admissions Tutors were interested not just in academic and vocational skills but also in personal skills, qualities and interest when recruiting students. The value of the UAP has been acknowledged by 140 UK Higher Education providers and some give direct credit for the award.

The UAP offers students a choice of ‘challenges’ from six modules:

- Active Citizenship
- Career Planning
- Enrichment Activities
- Work Related Activities
- Global Awareness

- Research and Presentation Skills

To achieve the award, demonstrate that they have:

- Completed a Personal Review
- Gained three credits by undertaking a selection of challenges
- Ensure there is evidence of a research study within the challenges
- Completed at least three Action Plan and Reviews which must be linked to the wider key skills
- Produced a portfolio of evidence
- Contributed to a presentation
- Contributed to a group discussion
- Completed the Summary of Achievement
- Completed the Record of progress
- Submitted their student book let and portfolio of evidence for verification.

Throughout the UAP there is an emphasis on action planning relating to the wider key skills, and the UAP can be seen, at least in part, as a vehicle for enabling young people to generate the evidence needed to gain these qualifications. The CoPE carries forward this tradition.

CoPE is 100% internal teacher assessment based on a portfolio of evidence, followed by external moderation of a sample of candidate portfolios. The award is graded pass/fail.

Findings

In terms of volume of study the recommended study hours for the CoPE is 150 study hours. Though no formal allocations exist for Level 3 qualifications such as AS levels, previous work we have undertaken for the tariff suggests that this is about the sort of study time required for such a qualification.

In terms of outcomes the first three units of the CoPE are clearly modelled on the three wider key skills. Unit 4 is a unit intended to develop research skills and units 5 and 6 map to the Communication key skill. However, the CoPE is not intended to provide the full evidence base to achieve the wider key skill qualifications and this is clearly recognised by ASDAN who in e-mail correspondence pointed out:

‘... the CoPE Qualification does not require a demonstration of underpinning knowledge and understanding as represented by Part A of the full standards which is now examined by the use of Part A questions.’

Nonetheless, it is reasonable to expect that the portfolio evidence produced for units 1-3 of CoPE would be much the same as for Wider Key Skills qualifications. Thus, whilst we cannot simply allocate to the CoPE the tariff points for these wider key skills it seems reasonable that these three units should attract a large proportion of the UCAS Tariff points currently allocated to the three wider key skills. My recommendation is, therefore, that each of these three COPE units should attract 15 UCAS Tariff points.

This would recognise the CoPE as a stepping stone to the full awards for the wider key skills (though this raises issues of double counting that are discussed below).

Units 4, 5 and 6 in the CoPE seem more demanding than the equivalent requirements in the UAP. Units 5 and 6 map to the first element of the Communication key skill at Level 3 (see the table below). In England and Northern Ireland (though not in Wales) Part A of the Communication Key Skill qualification is assessed by a test and Part B by a portfolio of evidence. However, the available documentation on key skills does not provide a weighting for the two elements of the assessment. Assuming that the portfolio evidence provides 75% of the 'marks' for the Communication Key Skill at Level 3, successful completion of units 5 and 6 would provide the portfolio evidence for about one third of the Communication key skill award at Level 3, i.e. about 5 UCAS Tariff Points.

Communication Key Skill	ASDAN COPE
<p>C3.1a Contribute to a group discussion about a complex subject. make clear and relevant contributions in a way</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ make clear and relevant contributions in a way ▪ that suits your purpose and situation; ▪ listen and respond sensitively to others, and develop points and ideas; and ▪ create opportunities for others to contribute when appropriate. 	<p>Unit 05 Communicating through discussion</p> <p>In communicating through discussion, evidence must show you know how to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make clear and relevant contributions in a way that suits the purpose and situation 2. Listen and respond sensitively to others and develop points and ideas 3. Create opportunities for others to contribute when appropriate.
<p>C3.1b Make a presentation about a complex subject, using at least one image to illustrate complex points.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ speak clearly and adapt your style of presentation to suit your purpose, subject, audience and situation; ▪ structure what you say so that the sequence of information and ideas may be easily followed; and ▪ use a range of techniques to engage the audience, including effective use of images. 	<p>Unit 06: Planning and giving an oral presentation</p> <p>In planning and giving an oral presentation, evidence must show you know how to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare talk to suit the purpose; 2. Match the language and style to suit the complexity of the subject, formality of the situation and the needs of the audience; 3. Use techniques to engage the audience including images

Unit 4 is a research unit and has no direct counterpart amongst the key skills qualifications. The competencies to be developed are set out below.

Unit 04: Planning and carrying out a piece of research

In planning and carrying out a piece of research, evidence must show you know how to:

1. Plan and undertake a thorough piece of research into an area that is of special interest

- Identify issues relevant to the study and provide a well-reasoned justification of the final choice.
- Select and use a wide range (5 or more) of relevant sources clearly linked to the topic. (Sources of relevant information may include: books, internet, published research, newspapers, magazines, television/video).
- Identify a specific in depth focus derived from the original research, justifying which methods or techniques will be used to carry out the study. (Suitable methods include: questionnaires, survey of existing research, use of the internet, interviews).

2. Carry out the research study, independently, using primary and secondary sources

- Demonstrate clear understanding of the interrelationship between material collected and the topic (*e.g. how relevant information and data was collected using the methods described above*).
- Provide evidence of a range of exploratory techniques used as part of the study (*e.g. testing, observing, analysing view points*).
- Critically evaluate the findings, formulating coherent and logical opinion based on sound evidence.

3. Present the findings of the research study to others in a sequential and logical way and evaluate

- Demonstrate initiative and independent decision making when deciding, in advance, which data is to be presented.
- Present the information in a clear, concise and effective format using a wide range of presentational methods adapted towards the need of the work. (*Suitable presentation methods include Power Point, wall displays, oral presentations, group presentations, video, written reports. Ensure the methods chosen suit both the topic and the needs of the audience.*)

Seek feedback from the audience to help evaluate the presentation and the research. (Verbal feedback could include a follow up discussion with the tutor, questions asked by the audience. Written feedback could include completed questionnaires, notes from the tutor.)

There are elements within this unit that map to parts of the Communication key skill, for example reading complex documents to extract information and writing a complex document. Thus adding this unit to units 5 and 6 of the CoPE would meet the criteria for most of the Communication skills portfolio, suggesting an allocation of 15 UCAS Tariff points to Units 4 – 6. However, the research unit in the CoPE goes beyond the requirements of the Communication key skills unit in a number of ways. For example, the learner needs to identify a research problem, plan research activities and produce a critical evaluation. This suggests that this unit should attract more UCAS Tariff points. However, there is no obvious objective way that these can be assigned by a benchmarking process. Perhaps the closest analogue of this unit is the requirement for AS level students to produce a research report in, say, history or geography, or a practical notebook in a science subject. Such course work might attract 20% of the final marks for an AS level, suggesting 12 UCAS Tariff Points might be a suitable allocation for this Unit. However, the AS is graded A-E whilst the CoPE is simply pass/fail. A fair compromise might be for Units 4-6 of the COPE to attract 20 UCAS Tariff Points *in toto*.

Finally we need to consider the over arching nature of the CoPE. To achieve the award learners must pass every single unit. I believe that this does add an additional degree of difficulty to the CoPE which should be recognised by an additional 5 UCAS Tariff Points. Under this model the overall CoPE would attract 70 UCAS Tariff points, i.e. more than a grade A at AS

Two additional points need to be considered at this point. First should UCAS Tariff Points be awarded for partial achievement in the CoPE. I do not believe that this would be sensible, not least because of the administrative costs for both ASDAN and UCAS. Second there is the very real problem of double counting. A student achieving CoPE could then go on to collect the evidence needed to achieve the wider key skill qualifications. In the case of the Communication key skill the could use a proxy for the exam component and then use the CoPE portfolio to achieve the qualification. Such a student could, in principle, achieve the CoPE (70 UCAS Tariff Points) and the four key skills at Level 3 (80 UCAS Tariff points) and so claim 150 UCAS Tariff points. In my view this inflates the level of achievement of such a student. However, there is no simple way out of this dilemma. A simple rule saying, for example, that CoPE would not be

considered if a student gained one of the wider key skills, for example, would not be fair to the learner who gained the CoPE and, say, just the Problem Solving key skill qualification, as four fifths of the attainment represent in the CoPE award would be discounted. Some advice as to how this matter might be resolved would be welcome.

Recommendation

On the basis of the judgements made above I recommend that a Pass in the CoPE should attract 70 UCAS Tariff Points.

Geoff Hayward
February 18th 2005