

UNIT SUMMARY

What is the unit about?

This unit is about encouraging and supporting the identification and practical implementation of ideas across your organisation. The initial ideas will primarily come from people working for your organisation, although you will be expected to look beyond the organisation for opportunities to identify and develop ideas, and will focus on:

- new products and/or services;
- improvements to existing products and/or services;
- improvements to existing practices, procedures, systems, ways of working etc across the organisation or those of customers or suppliers.

For the purposes of this unit, an 'organisation' can mean a self-contained entity such as a private sector company, a charity or a local authority **or** a significant operating unit, with a relative degree of autonomy, within a larger organisation.

Who is the unit for?

The unit is recommended for senior managers.

Links to other units

This unit is linked to units **B7 Provide leadership for your organisation** and **C2 Encourage innovation in your area of responsibility** in the overall suite of National Occupational Standards for management and leadership.

Skills

Listed below are the main generic skills which need to be applied in encouraging innovation in your organisation. These skills are explicit/implicit in the detailed content of the unit and are listed here as additional information.

- Communicating
- Providing feedback
- Leadership
- Thinking strategically
- Problem solving
- Inspiring
- Thinking creatively
- Motivating
- Analysing
- Making decisions
- Networking
- Monitoring
- Involving others
- Valuing and supporting others
- Reporting
- Evaluating
- Risk management
- Reviewing
- Information management
- Learning
- Reflecting

OUTCOMES OF EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE

You must be able to do the following:

- 1 Identify and, periodically, review the approach(es) to and level of innovation in your organisation.
- 2 Ensure that the organisation has a specific strategy in relation to innovation and that this fits with the overall vision, values, objectives and plans of the organisation.
- 3 Communicate the innovation strategy across the organisation and to other relevant parties.
- 4 Motivate people across the organisation to identify ideas for new products and/or services and improvements and other potential sources of ideas and encourage the sharing of this information.
- 5 Respond enthusiastically to ideas and provide constructive feedback to the originators.
- 6 Ensure that resources, particularly time, are made available across the organisation for the initial generation, further development and testing of ideas and help to remove any identified obstacles.
- 7 Identify and pursue opportunities for your organisation to work in partnership with external experts and/or in partnership with other organisations to generate and develop ideas.
- 8 Establish a culture across the organisation which encourages people to take acceptable risks in pursuing innovation and to make and learn from mistakes.
- 9 Evaluate business cases and plans for the practical implementation of ideas and approve those which appear viable and monitor and review their progress.
- 10 Establish systems for measuring innovation within the organisation and provide information on organisational performance to relevant parties.
- 11 Encourage the sharing of knowledge and information across the organisation on issues to do with creativity and innovation.
- 12 Ensure, across the organisation, that the originators and developers of any ideas which are successfully implemented receive recognition for their achievement.

BEHAVIOURS WHICH UNDERPIN EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE

- 1 You find practical ways to overcome barriers.
- 2 You encourage and support others to make the best use of their abilities.
- 3 You encourage and support others to take decisions autonomously.
- 4 You seek out and act on new business opportunities.
- 5 You display a curiosity to learn and try out new things.
- 6 You make time available to support others.
- 7 You balance risks against the benefits that may arise from taking risks.
- 8 You anticipate likely future scenarios based on a realistic analysis of trends and developments.
- 9 You constantly challenge the status quo and seek better alternatives.
- 10 You use communication styles that are appropriate to different people and situations.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

You need to know and understand the following:

General knowledge and understanding

- 1 The benefits of innovation to the organisation, its customers and other stakeholders.
- 2 The difference between creativity and innovation.
- 3 How to identify and review the approach(es) to and level of innovation in your organisation including any strengths that can be built upon, any weaknesses that need to be addressed and any obstacles to innovation that need to be removed.
- 4 How to develop an organisational strategy for innovation, what it should cover and how to communicate it across the organisation.
- 5 How to select and apply different methods for motivating and encouraging people across the organisation to generate, develop and share ideas.
- 6 The different potential sources of ideas for new products and/or services and improvements.
- 7 Methods for identifying and pursuing opportunities to work in partnership with external experts and/or in partnership with other organisations on the generation and development of ideas.
- 8 The importance of communication in the creative process and how to encourage communication across your organisation.
- 9 The importance of design in innovation.
- 10 The potential obstacles to innovation and whether/how they can be removed.
- 11 The key stages of the creative process.
- 12 The key stages of the innovation process.
- 13 How to learn from mistakes and ways of embedding this in the culture of an organisation.
- 14 How to recognise and manage risk in innovation and encourage others to take acceptable risks in pursuing innovation.
- 15 How to provide constructive feedback on ideas to teams and individuals.
- 16 The range of ways in which initial ideas can be further developed and tested.
- 17 How to identify and work with external specialists and experts and/or in partnership with other organisations to generate and develop ideas which might lead to innovation.

- 18 The resources and support required for creativity and innovation, particularly time.
- 19 How to protect ideas and innovation.
- 20 How to evaluate business cases and plans for the practical implementation of ideas and approve those which appear viable.
- 21 How to recognise the achievements of the originators/ developers of ideas which have been successfully implemented.
- 22 How to establish systems for measuring and reporting on innovation within the organisation and providing information on organisational performance to relevant parties.

Industry/sector specific knowledge and understanding

- 1 The sector(s) in which your organisation works.
- 2 Possible opportunities to work in partnership with external experts and/or in partnership with other organisations on the generation and development of ideas.
- 3 Information sources on innovation in your sector(s).
- 4 Current and emerging political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal developments in the sector(s) and in related sectors.

Context specific knowledge and understanding

- 1 The organisation's specific strategy in relation to innovation.
- 2 The approach(es) to and level of innovation in your organisation.
- 3 The role of innovation in your organisation's culture and how to build on this.
- 4 Organisational guidelines and procedures for developing and implementing ideas.
- 5 The needs of your customers.
- 6 The overall vision, values, objectives and plans of the organisation.
- 7 Your organisation's key stakeholders and any other relevant parties interested in innovation.
- 8 Systems for measuring innovation in your organisation.