

Creating a scheme of work

This handout will cover:

- What is a scheme of work?
- What details should it include?
- What influences the content?
- Aims and objectives
- Devising a rationale for a scheme of work
- Creating a scheme of work
- Using a scheme of work
- Reading list
- Website list

What is a scheme of work?

A scheme of work (sometimes referred to as a *learning programme* or *scheme of learning*) is a document that you can use to structure the teaching, learning and assessment of your subject in a logical and progressive way over several sessions.

The content should be flexible enough to allow for any changes, for example, a cancelled session due to adverse weather; and detailed enough in case a colleague needs to cover for you. If you meet your learners for one session rather than a series of sessions, you will not need a scheme of work, just a session plan. However, you could use an individual learning plan (ILP) if you train on a one-to-one basis, or a workshop plan if you have learners who are all working to different requirements during your sessions.

A session plan (also known as a *teaching and learning plan*) is a detailed breakdown of the content for each date on your scheme of work. It will outline all the teaching and learning activities, with allocated timings, assessment activities and resources required. It will also take into account the individual requirements of your learners, for example any particular needs.

A scheme of work can be for a whole programme, a series of work tasks, or a unit of a qualification. You will need to prepare one whether you teach groups or individuals. If you teach the same subject as your colleagues, you could all work together to produce a standardised scheme of work. This will enable all learners to have the same learning experience no matter who they are with. Templates or pro-formas for schemes of work and session plans, and the amount of detail you are expected to include, will vary depending upon the context within which you teach. The requirements of your organisation and external inspectors might also need to be taken into account.

What details should it include?

Various details will need to be included to help you plan what you will teach and when. As soon as you find out what you will be teaching, you can create your scheme of work. The starting point for this will usually come from the content of a qualification which will

be stated in the awarding organisation's handbook, specification or syllabus. Alternatively, it could be from a programme of learning, work tasks, a job specification or a set of standards. These might be produced in sections i.e. units or modules which relate to different subjects or topics. Whilst these might be written in a certain order, you can usually decide the order in which you teach them.

Example headings in a scheme of work:

Teacher/trainer		Venue			
Programme/qualification		Group composition		Dates from: to:	
Number of sessions		No of hours			
Aim of programme					
Dates	Learning outcomes/objectives <i>Learners will:</i>	Teacher activities	Learner activities	Assessment activities	Resources

What influences the content?

Influences upon the content include:

- Internal and external organisational requirements
- The requirements of the programme, job tasks or qualification
- The time available
- The environment, facilities and resources available
- How aspects will be assessed i.e. assignments, on the job observations etc
- Time management – will anything need to be set as homework or uploaded to an online resource website?
- Learners' age range, ability, prior knowledge, learning preferences and particular needs
- Teacher's ability and knowledge – is any training required before a particular topic can be taught?
- The induction and initial assessment process (is it carried out prior to the programme starting or will it be during it?)
- Do skills such as English, maths and ICT need to be embedded?
- Inclusivity and differentiation.

You might like to put yourself in the place of your *learner* when planning the order of what you will teach. This way you can see things from a beginner's perspective to

ensure you *keep things simple* during the earlier sessions. Always ask yourself *what* are you going to do and *why*?

Aims and objectives

These are terms used to express *what* you want your learners to achieve and *how* they will go about it. The aim is a broad statement of intent of *what* you want your learners to achieve: for example, *to enable learners to use a computer*. The objectives are *how* your learners will achieve the aim, for example, *switch on a computer, use a keyboard etc.* Once you have your aim for a particular session, you can plan what you want your learners to achieve i.e. the objectives.

When writing objectives, try not to use words such as *know, learn* and *understand* i.e. don't say... *Learners will know how to use a computer* because *how do you know they know?* The only way you will know, is if your learners can do something to prove it i.e. they can *use* a computer. The key to good writing of aims and objectives is to use words which are *verbs* i.e. things that the learner has to *do* to prove their understanding.

Objectives should always be SMART to enable you to deliver and assess learning effectively. This is an acronym for:

Specific – the objectives are clearly defined to meet the required aim

Measurable – they can be achieved at the right level for the learner

Achievable – they can be met by all learners

Relevant – they relate to the programme of learning or the qualification requirements

Time bound – the agreed target dates and times can be met.

SMART objectives enable you to teach and assess learning effectively. Always make sure the words you are using are of the right level for your learners, e.g. *list* is easier than *evaluate*. Objectives should be challenging enough to ensure learning is progressive, yet inclusive to all learners.

When writing objectives, try not to use the words *know, learn, or understand*. These are not SMART and you would find it difficult to assess that learning has taken place.

Devising a rationale for a scheme of work

A rationale such as using the *five Ws and one H* format of **who, what, when, where, why** and **how**, will help you plan your scheme of work, for example:

- who: the learners
- what: the aims and objectives you want your learners to achieve
- when: the number of sessions and hours, dates and times
- where: venue or environment
- why: the programme or qualification learners will be working towards
- how: the teaching and learning approaches, resources and assessment methods.

Creating a scheme of work

Your scheme of work should follow a logical order, which might not be the order printed in the qualification specification or job tasks. Your sessions should utilise a variety of teaching and learning approaches. Assessment activities should be formative (ongoing and usually informal) and summative (at the end and usually formal). Formal assessment activities count towards the achievement of something, whereas informal assessment activities check ongoing progress.

When creating a scheme of work, you should check all dates carefully in case there are any bank or public holidays on the dates you would normally teach.

The first session should include an induction to the programme and organisation, an icebreaker and the setting of ground rules. You might also need to assess prior learning in this session, or before your learners commence.

All subsequent sessions should begin with a recap of the previous session and time for questions, and end with an explanation of the next session. The final session should include an evaluation activity to obtain feedback from your learners which will help you improve in future; along with details of how learners can progress further, i.e. what steps they can take to further their development.

You may need to check if you will have the same venue for all the sessions, and what facilities, equipment and resources will be available. The more time you take to plan your scheme of work, the easier it will be to create your individual session plans.

Using a scheme of work

A scheme of work should be created prior to the programme commencing, and can be updated or amended at any time. For example: moving, adding or removing aspects, changing dates/sessions perhaps to accommodate a visiting speaker. It is best kept electronically so that it can be easily revised and shared with others.

It should be used as a basis for planning individual sessions. Usually, the scheme of work will need to be seen by managers and/or external auditors. A session plan should be created based on the content of the scheme of work. It is a more detailed document outlining what will be covered in each particular session from the scheme of work. All the session plans will not need to be created prior the programme, as aspects may change.

Reading list

Anderson, L., & Krathwohl, D. A. (2001). *Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. New York: Longman.

Bloom, BS (1956) *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The classification of educational goals*. New York: McKay.

Bruner JS (1966) *Towards a Theory of Instruction* New York WW Norton

Curzon LB & Tummons J (2013) *Teaching in Further Education* (7th Edn) London Bloomsbury

Gravells A (2017) *Principles and Practices of Teaching and Training* London Learning Matters SAGE

Gravells A (2013) *Passing Assessments for the Award in Education and Training* London Learning Matters SAGE

Reece I & Walker S (2007) *Teaching, Training & Learning: A practical guide* (6th Edn) Tyne & Wear Business Education Publishers

Tummons J (2012) *Curriculum Studies in the Lifelong Learning Sector* Exeter Learning Matters

Tyler RW (1949 2013) *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* University of Chicago Press

Wallace S (2011) *Teaching, Tutoring and Training in the Lifelong Learning Sector* (4th Edn) Exeter Learning Matters

Website list

How to write a scheme of work - <http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Scheme-of-Work>

Objective writing (from TeachOnline) - <http://tinyurl.com/ge5r3t6>

Ofqual's Qualification and Component Levels (2015) - <https://tinyurl.com/j6sw9pc>

Post 16 Skills Plan - <https://tinyurl.com/h6ukgbf>

Reading list for teaching and learning - www.anngravells.com/reading-lists/teaching

Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) - <https://tinyurl.com/lssm74y>

The Report of the Independent Panel on Technical Education (Sainsbury Report) - <https://tinyurl.com/zzkl9vu>