

## **CfA Specialist Business & Administration Standards**

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### **CfA Supplementary Guidance**

#### **CfA Specialist Business & Administration Standard 334, Provide administrative support in schools**

##### **Background information**

Throughout the United Kingdom, the trend in today's schools is to enable teachers to focus more on teaching by deploying a wide range of support staff. A key aim of this reform is to help schools to work smarter not harder. School administrators have a vital role to play in achieving this, by developing their occupational skills and knowledge in order to respond to this changing environment.

The functions within the CfA Business & Administration Standards are highly relevant to administrative support staff, particularly as schools continue to modernise and adopt more efficient administration practices. The standards provide opportunities for schools to develop their administrative staff and address skills gaps; and for staff to gain skills that are transferable within and beyond the school sector.

Draft Standard 334 has been developed specifically for school administrators to cover functions that were not contained within the current standards. The standard is written to be applicable to all administrators working in schools. However the standard would be applicable for administrators in other educational settings. During the development of the unit, school administrators have made it clear that the activities they undertake vary according to the nature of their school and the way that individual roles within their school are defined.

This means that the standard is written in such a way to cover all these activities without providing the kind of detail that would be found within individual job descriptions. This guidance gives some specific examples of activities undertaken, in order to help administrators, line managers and assessors use this unit.

Unit 334 is an optional unit within the N/SVQ for Business & Administration at level 3. As mentioned above, the unit covers functions that were not included within the current B&A standards. This means that functions such as health & safety; IT and finance are covered in other units that already exist within the N/SVQ.

## Progression

Standard 334 will be available to awarding bodies who wish to add a school based optional unit to their current level 3 Business & Administration S/NVQ. The standard will support progression to higher level qualifications for school administrators and managers, such as the Certificate and Diploma of School Business Management (C/DSBM) offered by the National College for School Leadership (levels 4 and 5 respectively).

An increasing number of universities and associations are developing degrees at level 6 which accept the C/DSBM in lieu of the first and second years of these courses.

These levels are based on the revised National Qualifications Framework — a fact sheet for which is available on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority website ([www.qca.org.uk/493.html](http://www.qca.org.uk/493.html)).

Information about the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework can be found on the following link: [www.scqf.org.uk](http://www.scqf.org.uk)

## Skills

The standard includes a list of the skills that administrators will use in their roles. During the course of the consultation on the content of the standard, feedback from administrators indicated that there are also a number of personal attributes that are required for the role. Whilst these are linked to the skills, these personal attributes do not form part of the standard and are provided here for information only.

Those personal attributes that were commonly mentioned by administrators working within the school environment include:

- Coping and dealing with stressful situations
- Use of tact and diplomacy
- Flexibility
- Reliability
- Integrity
- Using initiative, including making suggestions for improvements to existing processes

## **Guidance on specific performance indicators within the Specialist Business & Administration Standard**

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### **Performance Indicator 1: Build positive working relationships**

Examples may include, but are not limited to, the contacts described in the Unit Summary

### **Performance Indicator 2: Present a positive image of yourself and your school**

Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- Reception duties
- Answering queries on the telephone and in person
- Liaising with all external and internal contacts in the course of your work

### **Performance Indicator 3: Communicate effectively with contacts**

Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- Selecting the most appropriate method of communication for the audience
- Taking account of the needs of the audience
- Giving others the opportunity to ask questions and check their understanding
- Focusing on information that other people are communicating and questioning any points for clarification
- Ensuring that the communication has met its purpose

### **Performance Indicator 4: Follow school policies and procedures for dealing with parents, guardians and carers**

Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- Liaising with parents and guardians when a child is unwell or is late for school
- Arranging meetings and events
- Communication regarding school trips or taking messages for colleagues
- Writing letters and progress reports

### **Performance Indicator 5: Follow school policies and procedures for dealing with pupils and students**

Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- Operating pupil registration systems; administering systems for sales of products, such as uniforms or meals; entry and filing of pupil data; administering detentions; attendance monitoring; provision of timetables; dealing with post; and production of daily bulletins; organisation of photographs; writing reports; administration of school transport system; managing unplanned school closure, conditions that affect the school
  - The policy and procedures for dealing with pupils that require First Aid, welfare support or pastoral care
  - Information clashes; examination problems; illnesses; after school activities; general advice and guidance.
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### **Performance Indicator 6: Follow school policies and procedures for dealing with colleagues and the wider community**

Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- Liaise with colleagues in relation to specific activities
- Provide information to health, social services and justice officials, the police and other interested parties
- Respond to general public inquiries
- Recruitment procedures, such as advertising for staff, inviting applicants for interview, obtaining references and making appointments
- Ensure your communications reflect school policies and procedures
- Liaise with feeder schools, such as to arrange inductions weeks for pupils or students
- Liaise with local authorities
- Dealing with current initiatives, for example, those originating from relevant authorities, such as the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), Dept of Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, (DELLS) Scottish Executive Education department (SEED); other government departments, local authorities, local educational authorities and unitary authorities, etc

### **Performance Indicator 7: Provide appropriate administrative and organisational support to school contacts and the wider community**

Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- Preparing papers and minuting meetings for the school governing body or a federation of schools
- General meeting arrangements, including: taking minutes; passing on information to the right contacts; preparing reports; dealing with requests for information
- Administering uses of school premises by community organisations
- Administering the provision of extended services, such as child care; sport and music clubs; adult learning; children's centres
- Supporting regulatory inspections
- Compiling staff timetables and dealing with staff cover arrangements
- Dealing with staff enquiries
- Providing administrative support within the scope of your role

### **Performance Indicator 8: Operate school administration systems**

This means the administrative and organisational systems and procedures used within your school for your particular role

Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- Specific packages that support information management in your school, such as SIMS.NET
- Systems for monitoring attendance and/or timetabling

### **Performance Indicator 9: Analyse and evaluate information**

Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- Information that you may be required to collate, analyse and evaluate within the scope of your role
  - Information that relates to pupils, staff, parents, visitors, etc.
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### **Performance Indicator 10: Produce reports in line with school procedures**

Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- Reports compiled from your school's pupils database, such as attendance, class lists, and data checks
- Financial reports
- Academic reports for parents

### **Performance Indicator 11: Safeguard confidential information**

This relates to identifying and safeguarding confidential information in line with your school's procedures

Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- Pupil and student records
- Staff records
- Financial information
- Commercial contracts

### **Performance Indicators: 12 Act within the limits of your authority; and 13 Refer issues beyond your authority to the appropriate person**

These performance indicators relate to knowing the extent of your responsibilities, when to refer matters beyond your authority to the appropriate person and who this is in your school

## Using the CfA Business & Administration Standards

The CfA Business & Administration Standards are written to be applicable to administrators working in a wide variety of contexts. However, school administrators have identified a small number of terms contained within the standards that are not usually used within a school setting.

The following list highlights these terms and provides alternatives that should be substituted when the standards are being used within the school.

- 'Business'; found in units 202; 205; 302; substitute 'school' or 'organisation'
- 'Customer'; found in units 204; 207; 208; 305; substitute 'contact' or 'school contact' or 'wider community contact'
- 'Industry'; found in units 202; 302; substitute 'sector'
- 'Notes'; found in units 211; 311; this can also mean 'minutes' depending on the specific situation in which notes are being taken.
- 'Mission'; found in units 202; 302; this can also mean 'ethos'