

preface

The fourth edition of *Office Skills: A Practical Approach* has been restructured into three separate levels of learning, in line with the competency-based training and implementation of the National Competency Standards Curriculum within TAFE. Levels 1, 2 and 3 of this book cover the Business services training package (BSB01) from the National Training Information Service, incorporating forty common elements of competency and five elements from the specialist administration stream.

The competencies included in the book run in numerical order through each certificate level. This makes it easier for trainers and students to track the competencies and follow the curriculum.

The finance section has been totally rewritten and is concentrated in a separate section at the end of the book.

Some colleges use flexible delivery, with compulsory core subjects and elective units chosen by each student. The content requirements of many of the competency units overlap or are repeated in the different levels. It is impossible to repeat text outlined in Level 1 again in Levels 2 or 3 in a single text. Therefore, wherever the content of a competency has been covered elsewhere in the book, we have included a cross-reference to the related unit so that it can be located easily and the competency completed. The information and work tasks in these other levels may be required in order to pass the units of a competency.

Assessment

Each chapter of the text uses the competencies as the main headings, with the elements of competency as sub-headings. This links the text closely to the performance criteria of the national training package. The text also has the following features:

- An introduction at the beginning of each competency provides insight into how the topic relates to situations in a real work environment.
- Objectives and related units are included at the beginning of each chapter. These provide a description of the aims of the unit and the numbers and titles of other units which relate to the initial unit. The information in the text and work tasks of these related units may also be used by students.

- Essential theory to complete work activities and tasks is provided for each learning outcome, and students are also required to research industry and government legislation from the Internet, newspapers, journals and other publications.
- An example is given after the theory to clarify how this relates to a real-life work situation.
- A work competency activity placed immediately after the example should be completed by all students to ensure that they understand the topic.
- A case study, to be completed by all students, presents an office scenario that provides students with the opportunity to display problem-solving and decision-making skills.
- Practical work tasks are provided in the workbook for students who have no practical experience in the workforce, and for those who need further practical experience. (As stated in the context of assessment by the National training information service, assessment of performance should be undertaken in an actual workplace or simulated environment.)
- Extra work tasks have been provided in the workbook for all students (if these are required).

For instance, the work competency activities following the examples in the text ensure that students understand the text before they perform practical group work tasks. Extra work tasks may be needed for students who do not perform the group work tasks in the workbook, or for self-directed learning students.

- A summary is provided at the end of each unit for revision purposes.
- Review questions are provided at the end of each unit. These may be required if a student has not reached a sufficiently high level of competency in the work competency activities in the textbook, or in the practical work tasks in the workbook.
- Career opportunities: people at work are placed at strategic locations in the text. These are real interviews with people in the workforce in positions related to the topic covered in the text. They show the career opportunities available to students and real-life applications of the competencies achieved at the completion of the course.

This is a complete learning and assessment package for all types of students, including:

- distance/self-directed learning
- group activity practical learning
- peer/co-assessment learning
- theoretical/lecture/tutorial learning.

Final assessment

A work activity 'to do' checklist appears at the end of each chapter in the workbook for students to tick as they complete each learning outcome. This ensures that students cover every element of competency and performance criteria. There is also a second column for final assessment by a trainer.

As each student completes all competency activities and practical work tasks, completed sheets and documents should be placed in a folder to hand to the trainer for final assessment.

Instructor resource manual

An instructor resource manual to accompany the text and the workbook is provided on the website <www.mhhe.com/au/horsfall4e> with an Online Learning Centre, containing student and teacher resources such as relevant weblinks and career resources. This also provides:

- a wide range of further work tasks, which may be preferred by the trainer or used for extra assessment
- solutions to practical work tasks and case studies
- suggestions on how to set up equipment for practical assessment work tasks
- an information centre incorporating supplements, training package coverage, PowerPoint® slides, case studies, table of contents and sample chapters.

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