

# Problem Solving

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## Student Introductory Guide

[HIGHER]

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## Why Problem Solving?

You have experience of solving problems every day of your life. You would have not reached this stage in your life without having solved the problems of how to learn effectively, how to manage your time and how to organise your daily life.

However, we can all improve on these important skills and this learning pack will help you to fine tune your problem solving skills.

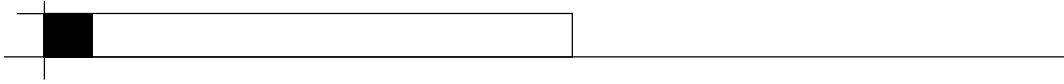
The ability to solve problems effectively is a characteristic highly valued by employers. Whether at work or in your personal and social life, the more creative you can be about solving problems the happier and more successful you will be.

The study sections that follow will help to develop your skills in solving complex problems, including your ability to:

- analyse a complex situation or issue
- plan, organise and carry out a complex task
- review and evaluate your work.

The aim of this pack is to enable you successfully to complete the core skill unit of Problem Solving at Higher.

You will be encouraged as far as possible to tackle a problem solving activity which is relevant to your course of study.



This pack is designed to enable you to successfully complete Core Skill Problem Solving at Higher.

The contents comprise the following sections:

- *Section One*: Analysing a complex problem
- *Section Two*: Planning your project
- *Section Three*: Evaluating your project

The sections should be worked through in consecutive order.

The pack is designed in a flexible learning fashion but it is recommended that you have at least three meetings with your tutor. The points at which you are required to meet with your tutor are clearly highlighted in the pack.

## Symbols used in the pack



This symbol denotes a numbered Self Assessed Activity – a short exercise that you are encouraged to do for yourself. Comment and feedback for these can be found on the page after the activity, but you should try to do the activity before reading this. Your responses don't need to be shown to your tutor.



This denotes a Tutor Assessed Activity. These are different from Self Assessed Activities because there is no comment given after them (the tools for answering Assessment Tasks are included in the section however) and you should show this work to your tutor. Your tutor will mark this work and give you feedback.



This symbol denotes a Tutor Checkpoint and alerts you to the fact that it is now time to meet with your tutor to discuss your progress. (There is further explanation of this on page 6, Attendance/tutor contact requirements.)

### Tutor support

Although you may be studying Problem Solving at Higher as a flexible learning student, this does not mean that you have no support. Please do not hesitate to contact your tutor about any problems you are having, and talk to him/her about any parts of the section that are unclear.

## Assessment information

Assessment can occur at any time when you and your tutor feel confident that you are likely to achieve success. Formative assessment will take place in a sequential manner throughout the study guide in order to allow you to:

- get feedback on your work
- agree on the next stage
- improve on your previous work.

### The conditions under which assessment will take place

Assessment will be carried out under conditions that ensure reliability and credibility. Internal assessment is likely to be supervised during normal learning and teaching activities.

## Other resources required

There are no set texts required for this unit of study.

However, you will use a wide range of resources related to the problem or issue you are investigating. Your tutor may provide some of these resources, but normally you will be expected to identify resources for yourself. You will probably need to use the library, the Internet, and may even have to undertake external visits in order to obtain all the information you need.

## Attendance/tutor contact requirements

You may be undertaking this unit as part of a scheduled class or as a flexible learning student. However you are studying, you will need to meet with your tutor at least three times during the course of this unit. In this learning pack these meetings are referred to as Tutor Checkpoints.



The first Tutor Checkpoint should establish that the task you have selected has enough breadth and scope and is non-routine.



The second Tutor Checkpoint should be an interim meeting to monitor your progress.



The third Tutor Checkpoint should check that all outcomes have been addressed and should validate and authenticate your work.

In the case of the first and second meeting, communication may take place by telephone or via e-mail. The third meeting should be face to face so that your work can be authenticated.

### **Tutor contact details**

This may vary from centre to centre. You may be studying in a classroom or in a learner centre where the tutor is always present. You may be studying on your own. But, however you are tackling this pack, you will always be able to seek assistance from a named tutor.

## **Problem Solving and the Progress File**

You may be using the Progress File to build up a portfolio of evidence about your achievements at school or college. At this stage you will probably be using the Exploring Pathways, Widening Horizons or Broadening Horizons workbook.

### **Why use the Progress File in combination with the Problem Solving unit?**

The Progress File will help you understand the importance of core skills in general and in the workplace in particular. Working through the Progress File support materials you will be identifying your personal strengths and areas you need to develop. You will also set yourself personal and work-related goals – some of which you may wish to include in your problem solving activity.

### **When will I use the Progress File in relation to Problem Solving?**

There are many areas within the Progress File that are relevant to Problem Solving. Those which are particularly relevant include:

Self-Assessment /Reviewing Progress – this exercise will help you to identify your strengths and the areas of your skills and experience that you would like to develop further.

### **Research/action planning**

The Progress File guides you through how to identify and plan a work experience placement. A work placement is worthwhile for many reasons, but may also provide an opportunity for completing a problem solving activity that can be included in this unit.

### **The end product of the Problem Solving activity**

In many cases the inclusion of the end product of a problem solving activity is a useful and worthwhile addition to the Progress File portfolio. For example, if you have produced a student newsletter, an information leaflet or a supervisor's workplace report, it would be a good idea to show this to prospective employers.

## Student questionnaire

Learning and Teaching Scotland and your school or college are very interested in the views of students who have used these learning materials. Your feedback and comments will assist us in evaluating and, where necessary, improving this pack for future student use.

We would be grateful if you would spend a little time completing this form and returning it to your tutor.

Please answer all of the questions as fully and frankly as possible. Please rate the materials by placing a tick in the appropriate box and adding relevant comments in the space provided.

Thank you for your assistance.

- |   |   |   |                                   |                                      |  |
|---|---|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Sufficient advice was given in the materials on how to use the pack                         | Agree<br>Strongly<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Agree<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree<br>Strongly<br><input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 | The content was set at an appropriate level for me  | Agree<br>Strongly<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Agree<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree<br>Strongly<br><input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 | The language used was at an appropriate level for me  | Agree<br>Strongly<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Agree<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree<br>Strongly<br><input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 | I understood clearly what was expected of me in each Study Section                          | Agree<br>Strongly<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Agree<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree<br>Strongly<br><input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 | The content of each Section was comprehensive enough to allow me to meet these expectations | Agree<br>Strongly<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Agree<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree<br>Strongly<br><input type="checkbox"/> |

*contd overleaf*

- |    |   |   |                                   |                                      |  |
|----|---|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| 6  | There were enough appropriate Activities in the pack                        | Agree<br>Strongly<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Agree<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree<br>Strongly<br><input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7  | There were enough appropriate Self Assessed Questions in the pack           | Agree<br>Strongly<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Agree<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree<br>Strongly<br><input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8  | Feedback to Activities and SAQs were included to let me monitor my progress | Agree<br>Strongly<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Agree<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree<br>Strongly<br><input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9  | All the information I required regarding assessment was included            | Agree<br>Strongly<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Agree<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree<br>Strongly<br><input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10 | Advice was included to assist me if I was having any problems               | Agree<br>Strongly<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Agree<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree<br>Strongly<br><input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11 | The pack was organised in such a way that it was easy to follow             | Agree<br>Strongly<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Agree<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree<br>Strongly<br><input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12 | Overall I would rate this pack as effective                                 | Agree<br>Strongly<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Agree<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree<br><input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree<br>Strongly<br><input type="checkbox"/> |

Name \_\_\_\_\_ School/College \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you once again for your assistance.

