

Problem Solving

Student Introductory Guide

[INTERMEDIATE 2]

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Introduction to the unit

Why Problem Solving?

You have experience of solving problems every day of your life. You would not have 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 problems, including your ability to:

- analyse a situation or issue
- devise a plan for addressing it
- carry out that plan, and
- evaluate your work.

The aim of this pack is to enable you successfully to complete the core skill unit of Problem Solving at Intermediate 2.

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

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 the 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 in order to highlight your skills and experience.

This pack is designed to enable you to successfully complete Core Skill Problem Solving at Intermediate 2.

The pack contents are composed of the following three sections:

- *Section One*: Analysing the 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 in Attendance/tutor contact requirements on page 6.)

Tutor support

Although you may be studying Problem Solving at Intermediate 2 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 that you are having or 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. Practice assessments will take place 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 that you are investigating.

You will identify these resources for yourself. They may be, for example, in your school or college library or on the Internet.

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 differ from school to school or from college to college. 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. However you are tackling this pack, you will always be able to seek assistance from a named tutor.

Student questionnaire

Your school or college is 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
Strongly
<input type="checkbox"/> | Agree
<input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree
Strongly
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 | The content was set at an appropriate level for me | Agree
Strongly
<input type="checkbox"/> | Agree
<input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree
Strongly
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 | The language used was at an appropriate level for me | Agree
Strongly
<input type="checkbox"/> | Agree
<input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree
Strongly
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 | I understood clearly what was expected of me in each Study Section | Agree
Strongly
<input type="checkbox"/> | Agree
<input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree
Strongly
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 | The content of each Section was comprehensive enough to allow me to meet these expectations | Agree
Strongly
<input type="checkbox"/> | Agree
<input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree
<input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree
Strongly
<input type="checkbox"/> |

contd overleaf

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

Name _____ School/College _____ Date _____

Thank you once again for your assistance.

