



Use office equipment

What you will learn

- Know about different types of office equipment and their uses
- Understand the purpose of following instructions and health and safety procedures
- Understand how to use equipment in a way that minimises waste
- Know about the different types of problems that may occur when using equipment and how to deal with them
- Understand the purpose of meeting work standards and deadlines
- Understand the purpose of leaving equipment and the work area ready for the next user
- Be able to use office equipment

Introduction

At work, you will come across and be expected to use a variety of different types of office equipment. Following manufacturers' instructions and organisational guidelines is an essential part of effective working and in this unit you will look at the reasons why you must always follow the correct procedures when operating equipment.

Correct use of equipment ensures a safe and healthy working environment and also minimises waste. You will investigate possible sources of waste in an office environment as well as look at ways in which waste can be reduced.

Problems can sometimes occur in the smooth running of equipment and you will need to know some of the key problems to watch out for and ways of dealing with them.

Work standards and deadlines impact directly on the quality and time available for you to complete your work. You will explore the reasons why it is important to strive to achieve and even exceed these.

Working in a clean and hygienic environment is vital to ensure a safe, happy and motivated workforce. You will investigate ways to help you maintain good standards of cleanliness and tidiness in your work area.

Know about different types of office equipment and their uses

Identifying office equipment and their uses

There are many different types of office equipment (see Figure 221.1). The main ones found in most offices are:

- computers
- printers
- photocopiers
- faxes
- telephones.

Some offices and other business premises may use additional specialist equipment, depending upon the nature of the business and the needs of the staff. Examples include:

- dictaphone equipment for recording the text of letters and reports
- scanners
- video recording and presentation equipment
- specialist printing and binding equipment
- special telephone headsets for telemarketing staff.



Figure 221.1: Some of the different types of office equipment you will see in most offices

Activity 1

What equipment do you have in your office? In the table below, write down six different types and, for each one, say who uses it and for what purpose. Keep your work safe as it will help you to complete Portfolio task 221.1.

Type of office equipment	Who uses it?	Purpose

A version of this table, ready for you to complete, is available to download from www.contentextra.com/businessadmin



Portfolio task 221.1

→ Links to L01: assessment criterion 1.1



Identify *four* different types of equipment and their uses.

Refer to the table that you compiled in Activity 1 to provide the information that you will need to write your answer.

Features of different types of office equipment

Different pieces of office equipment serve different purposes and each will have different features.

Let's begin by looking at what we mean by the term 'feature.' A feature of a piece of office equipment is a characteristic or something which it can do. For example, a feature of many printers in offices today is that they can:

- produce high volumes of printouts very quickly
- produce printouts in a choice of either black and white or colour
- produce double-sided printouts



- produce collated printouts
- staple the finished printouts into ready-made sets.

Did you know that some printers can even produce an electronic PDF file of your documents and email them directly from the printer to your inbox?

Activity 2

Are there any other features of printers that you have come across in your work experience or at home?

Using an Internet search engine, key in the term 'best office printers', and have a look at some printer features.

Activity 3

In the table below, identify *three* different pieces of equipment that you have in your office and, for each one, describe its key features. Keep your work safe as it will help you to complete Portfolio task 221.2.

Type of office equipment	Features

A version of this table, ready for you to complete, is available to download from www.contentextra.com/businessadmin



Portfolio task 221.2

→ Links to LO1: assessment criterion 1.2



Describe the different features of *three* different types of office equipment.

Refer to the table that you compiled in Activity 3 to provide the information that you will need to write your answer.

Using different types of equipment for office tasks

The equipment that you select to do a particular job will depend on a variety of factors, for example:

- The size of the document. For example, it would not be practical, cost-effective or time-efficient to fax a 50-page document.
- The amount of time which you have to complete the task. If you are short of time, it is quicker (and cheaper) to email a document instead of printing and posting it.
- Who the intended recipients of the document are. If the finished document is for clients or important customers, it should be printed. Memos to staff, where quality of printing is not an issue, can be quickly photocopied.
- Where a signature is required on a document. In this case, scanning, faxing or posting are usually the best options.
- The document is confidential. In this case, faxing is not a suitable option.

Selecting the right equipment for the task

Suppose that you need to send some information to ten people in advance of a meeting which is scheduled for next week. The document is 30 pages long and each person must read it before the meeting. Your task is to get the information to everyone quickly and with minimum fuss.

What do you think would be the best way to achieve this? Here are some of the options. You could:

- print out ten copies of the document and post a copy to each person
- fax the document to each of them
- make ten photocopies of the document and post it to each person
- telephone each person and tell them the information yourself
- email the document to everyone.

Activity 4

For each of the options described above, you are now going to identify the advantages and disadvantages, based upon the type of office equipment selected. This will enable you to think about the choices available to you in the office and the benefits as well as the consequences of using different pieces of office equipment.

In the table below, complete as many of the blank squares as you can. For those where you cannot complete a square, ask your assessor to help you. Some of the boxes have already been completed for you. Keep your work safe as it will help you to complete Portfolio task 221.3.

A version of this table, ready for you to complete, is available to download from www.contentextra.com/businessadmin

Type of office equipment	Advantages	Disadvantages	Best used for ...
Printer	Produces high-quality printouts suitable for presentations.	Slower than photocopiers and more expensive per sheet produced. Printing can waste a lot of paper.	Short print runs or where presentation is especially important, such as client meetings.
Photocopier	Quick and cheap option for producing a large number of copies of documents.	Quality is not as good as with printing.	
Fax		Faxes can use a lot of paper and can easily get lost once they are received by the recipient.	
Telephone	Instant two-way communication.		Conversations between two people.
Email		Emails may go into the recipient's spam folder – important information may be lost.	
(Your own example here)			

Portfolio task 221.3

→ Links to LO1: assessment criterion 1.3



Explain why different types of equipment are chosen for tasks.

To complete this portfolio task you need to write a short summary in your own words which shows that you understand the main reasons why you would select a certain type of equipment for a particular task.

Refer to the table that you compiled in Activity 4 to provide the information that you will need to write your answer.

Understand the purpose of following instructions and health and safety procedures

Instructions are provided to staff to help them carry out tasks in the correct way and in a manner that ensures they are kept safe from harm. You will explore this issue in this section.

The purpose of following the manufacturer's instructions when using equipment

Manufacturers always provide instructions for each piece of equipment. These instructions are very important because they tell the user:

- exactly what to do to be able to operate the equipment correctly
- what to do and the precise steps to take if the equipment breaks down.

The key thing about a manufacturer's instructions is that they are specific to a certain piece of equipment and they are also the most detailed instructions available to you. They will give you much more in-depth and technical information than is available from any other source.

Portfolio task 221.4

→ Links to LO2: assessment criterion 2.1



Explain the purpose of following the manufacturer's instructions when using equipment.

To complete this portfolio task you need to prepare a short written summary which shows that you understand why it is important to follow the manufacturer's instructions when using equipment. Your assessor may also wish to discuss this with you, to help you collect the evidence which you need for this task.

The purpose of following organisational instructions when using equipment

Organisational instructions for using equipment are different from manufacturers' instructions. They are not technical in nature. Instead, they relate specifically to your own company and will usually set out the company's rules for operating various pieces of equipment. For example, organisational instructions will state:

- who is allowed to operate certain types of equipment
- whether any authorisation is needed
- who must be informed of any equipment breakdowns
- who is allowed to undertake technical repairs to equipment.

Portfolio task 221.5

→ Links to L02: assessment criterion 2.2



Produce a short written summary which explains the purpose of following organisational instructions when using office equipment.

Health and safety procedures for using different types of equipment

Every employer sets out their health and safety policy, procedures and working practices in a health and safety manual. You can ask for a copy of this from your manager. Procedures are a set of instructions on how to operate office equipment and these instructions may be displayed next to the equipment.

Activity 5

Find out which health and safety procedures apply to the equipment in use in your office. Make notes of your findings under the heading 'Health and safety procedures which apply to the equipment in use in my office'. Keep your work safe as it will help you to complete Portfolio task 221.6.

Portfolio task 221.6

→ Links to L02: assessment criterion 2.3



Produce a short written summary which identifies health and safety procedures for using *three* different types of equipment in an office.

Refer to the notes that you compiled in Activity 5 to provide the information that you will need to write your answer.

The purpose of following health and safety procedures when using equipment

Health and safety procedures are there to protect you at work. They are designed to make sure that you do not suffer injuries while carrying out your work. When using equipment, you must always follow the relevant health and safety procedures.

Remember, too, that you are responsible under health and safety legislation to take adequate precautions for your own safety and that of others while at work. This includes following any particular health and safety procedures which apply.

Portfolio task 221.7

→ Links to LO2: assessment criterion 2.4



Produce a health and safety poster to be displayed around your office which explains the purpose of following health and safety procedures when using office equipment.

If you wish, you could present the information as a bullet point list on the poster. Be prepared to discuss your poster with your assessor and to explain the information which you have presented in it.

The purpose of keeping equipment clean and hygienic

When using equipment, it is important to keep it clean and hygienic which means free from dirt, germs and bacteria. For example, food and drink should be kept well away from any equipment in case anything gets knocked over and causes damage. If you spill something on or near a piece of equipment, you should clean up the spillage straight away. Make sure you know where cleaning products are located in your office and are familiar with the correct way to use them.

Activity 6

- Ask your colleagues or line manager about the organisational procedures concerning the maintenance of clean and hygienic equipment in your business. Make notes of your findings under the heading 'Organisational procedures for keeping office equipment clean and hygienic'. Keep your work safe as it will help you to complete Portfolio task 221.8.

Portfolio task 221.8

→ Links to LO2: assessment criterion 2.5



Write a short summary which explains the purpose of keeping office equipment clean and hygienic.

Refer to the notes that you compiled in Activity 6 to provide the information that you will need to write your answer.

Understand how to use equipment in a way that minimises waste

Waste is an unfortunate consequence of businesses everywhere. However, all businesses can take action to reduce the amount of waste they produce as waste costs the business money to dispose of (more waste equals less profit) and it ultimately harms the environment.

Examples of waste when using office equipment

Printer waste

Next to your printer at work, you are likely to find a waste paper box. This is because printers at work generate a lot of waste paper.

Photocopier waste

Similarly, photocopiers also generate large amounts of paper waste. Waste can occur for a variety of reasons. For example, users may:

- place the original paper to be copied on to the glass the wrong way round
- forget to set the size of printout to A3 instead of the default A4
- select 100 copies instead of 10 and only realise after they have seen the first 50 sheets come flying out of the copier.



Photocopiers and printers account for vast amounts of waste paper so it's important to recycle where possible

Computer waste

Computers at work are a large drain on electricity, which is a huge waste if they are left on when they are not being used. Wasted power means additional costs to the business – this is money which could be better channelled into worthwhile investments which will provide a return (give something back) to the business. Wasted power also means increased carbon emissions into the atmosphere – which is bad for our planet.

Activity 7

What examples of waste can you find in your office? Make notes of your findings under the heading 'Examples of waste in my office'. Keep your work safe as it will help you to complete Portfolio task 221.9.

Portfolio task 221.9

→ Links to LO3: assessment criterion 3.1



Write a short paragraph identifying *three* examples of waste which is produced when using office equipment.

Refer to the notes that you compiled in Activity 7 to provide the information that you will need to write your answer.

Ways to reduce waste

The main types of waste produced by office equipment include:

- paper
- ink
- toner
- electricity.

Every member of staff can take action to reduce the waste which they produce while using office equipment.

Reducing waste paper

You can reduce waste paper by limiting the quantity of paper loaded into printers and copiers to the amount that will be used each day. Paper left in the machines for longer than this tends to become damp and is often thrown away.

Probably the single largest source of waste paper results from user error, where the job has not been set up correctly before running it. Before printing or copying jobs that require more than five sheets of paper, you should print a test page to check the settings are correct.

Another way to reduce waste is only to print or copy essential items. Remember, most emails do not need to be printed.

Reducing waste ink and toner

Ink and toner are used up each time you print or photocopy a document. Therefore, only print and copy essential documents.

Reducing waste electricity

Electricity is being used up all the time any electrical equipment is turned on. Leaving equipment running when nobody is using it, especially overnight, is wasteful. Many types of electrical equipment have power-saving modes which can be set to activate as soon as a machine is idle for any length of time. Computer monitors should always be turned off at the end of the day as they use a large amount of energy.

Activity 8

In your work area, count how many different pieces of electrical equipment are currently switched on and not in power-save mode. How many of these are not currently being used? Complete the table below to list your findings for *three* pieces of equipment.

Find out whether the machines in your office are switched off overnight or put into power-save mode and, if so, whose job it is to ensure this is carried out.

A version of this table, ready for you to complete, is available to download from www.contextextra.com/businessadmin



Piece of electrical equipment currently switched on and not in power-save mode	Is this piece of equipment currently being used? (Yes/No)	Make your own notes in this column to explain, for example, why machines may need to be left on
1		
2		
3		
Overnight, the electrical equipment in the office is (switched off/put into power-save mode/left on) _____		
Where machines are switched off, or into power-save mode, it is the job of _____ to make sure this happens.		



Portfolio task 221.10

→ Links to LO3: assessment criterion 3.2



For each example of waste that you identified in Portfolio task 221.9, give *one* way in which this type of waste can be reduced. Remember to say what people must do in order to reduce the waste.



What do you think are the benefits of reducing the amount of waste which we produce?

The purpose of minimising waste

We are currently producing too much waste, and need to take urgent steps to reduce this, either by cutting down on what we use or recycling whatever we can, not just at work but in every area of our lives. Much of our waste ends up in landfill sites – huge holes in the ground into which rubbish is tipped. As the waste breaks down, it gives off carbon emissions, which are bad for the environment. It also costs money to dispose of waste. The government has imposed a landfill tax to discourage the use of landfill, so the more we can cut down our waste, the less is left to go into landfill.

By reducing waste, a business can reduce its **carbon footprint**, which will help to decrease the negative impact that the business has on the environment

Key term



Carbon footprint – the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) being produced by a business or individual.

Activity 9

Carry out some research to find out the types of waste reduction activities that take place in your office. Make notes of your findings under the heading 'Types of waste reduction activities that are carried out in the office where I work'. Keep your work safe as it will help you to complete Portfolio task 221.11.

Portfolio task 221.11

→ Links to LO3: assessment criterion 3.3



Prepare some notes which will help you explain in a discussion with your assessor the purpose of minimising waste.

It may help you to make a short bullet point list of the main points which you want to mention in your discussion. Refer to the notes that you compiled in Activity 9 to provide the information that you will need to write your answer.

Make sure you also carry out some Internet research to find out about business and household waste in the UK. Include information from your findings in your answer.

Equipment problems and how to deal with them

Sometimes, when you use equipment, things do not go as smoothly as you would like. Problems arise which may cause you frustration and delay your work. In this section, you will investigate some of the key issues which you may face when using equipment and look at ways in which you can deal with them.

Examples of equipment problems and how to deal with them

Some of the problems that you are likely to come across relate to printers, photocopiers and fax machines. It is important for you to learn about these, and their solutions, as you will need to produce examples of equipment problems and solutions of your own in order to complete Portfolio task 221.12.

Photocopier problems

Some of the main problems you may encounter when using photocopiers include:

- the toner cartridge runs out – you will notice the copies becoming lighter and lighter
- the image is poor
- there are constant paper jams
- the paper comes out of the photocopier creased.

Activity 10

Can you think of any other problems which sometimes occur with photocopiers? Make a list of *three* problems in the table below. Keep your work safe as it will help you to complete Portfolio task 221.12.

Problems that sometimes occur with photocopiers

A version of this table, ready for you to complete, is available to download from www.contentextra.com/businessadmin

One particular problem involves the user putting the paper in the wrong position on the copier with the result that the image is only partly captured. Imagine the amount of wasted paper which would result if you had set the photocopier to print a large number of copies before you checked this.

Solutions to photocopier problems

Each of the problems identified above has a simple solution. If you are familiar with these issues – as well as what you can do to resolve them – it will make your office life much less stressful! Table 221.1 summarises solutions to some common photocopier problems.

Problem	Solution
The toner cartridge runs out – the copies become lighter and lighter	The toner cartridge can be replaced easily by any user – the instructions for doing so appear on the display screen. Your office should keep a supply of cartridges, especially if it is a high-volume user of the photocopier, and you will need to know where they are stored.
The image is poor	Poor image quality is often due to the glass pane inside the photocopier becoming dirty. Regularly clean the glass with a cloth and a glass-cleaning product in order to avoid this problem.
There are constant paper jams	These are usually caused by the copier paper becoming slightly damp. Paper begins to absorb water from the air as soon as you open a new ream. So, if you do not use much paper (and the opened ream is likely to remain unused for some time), it is better to store it in an air-tight container. Remember, to load the photocopier with small amounts of paper at a time.
The paper comes out of the photocopier creased	This is another typical symptom of damp paper. Follow the advice given above to avoid this problem occurring.

Table 221.1: Common photocopier problems and their solutions

Fax machine problems

Some of the main problems you may encounter when using fax machines include:

- receiving a large number of unwanted ‘junk’ faxes
- not receiving confirmation that a fax you have sent has been received
- not all of the pages of a fax sent to you have been received
- a lot of waste paper is generated.

Activity 11

Can you think of any other problems which sometimes occur with fax machines? Make a list of *three* problems in the table below. Keep your work safe as it will help you to complete Portfolio task 221.12.

A version of this table, ready for you to complete, is available to download from www.contentextra.com/businessadmin



Problems that sometimes occur with fax machines

Solutions to fax machine problems

Table 221.2 summarises solutions to some common fax machine problems.

Problem	Solution
Receiving a large number of unwanted 'junk' faxes	Adjust the settings on the fax machine to stop it printing out 'junk' faxes. You will find this option within the main instructions menu on the display screen.
Not receiving confirmation that a fax you have sent has been received	Make sure the fax machine is set to provide you with a confirmation slip upon successful delivery of your fax. You may also have to speak to the recipient by phone to ask for confirmation that they have received the fax.
Not all of the pages of a fax sent to you have been received	This could be due to a transmission error, in which case you will have to speak to the sender to ask them to resend.
A lot of waste paper is generated	Faxes should always be short, i.e. containing no more than one or two sheets. Only send documents by fax if they cannot be conveniently sent by another method.

Table 221.2: Common fax machine problems and their solutions

Printer problems

Some of the typical problems which you may encounter when using printers include:

- the printed document is smudged
- you send a document from your computer to the printer, but it fails to print
- the printer fails to print documents from any of the office's computers
- there is a paper jam.

Activity 12

Can you think of any other problems which sometimes occur with printers? Make a list of *three* problems in the table below. Keep your work safe as it will help you to complete Portfolio task 221.12.

Problems that sometimes occur with printers

A version of this table, ready for you to complete, is available to download from www.contentextra.com/businessadmin

Solutions to printer problems

Table 221.3 summarises solutions to some common printer problems.

Problem	Solution
The printed document is smudged	The ink cartridge in the printer is running low and needs to be replaced.
You send a document from your computer to the printer, but it fails to print	Make sure the printer lead is connected. Check in the Control Panel of your computer that your PC is connected to the printer.
The printer fails to print documents from any of the office's computers	Contact the IT technician who is responsible for the network settings for the computers in your department.
There is a paper jam	Manually remove the jammed paper from the printer. Always follow the on-screen instructions given on the printer for doing this and to open the sections of the printer in the correct order as shown.

Table 221.3: Common printer problems and their solutions

Computer problems

It is perhaps computers which give rise to the most problems at work and which seem to take up so much of our time to sort them out. If you know what to do, some computer problems are easily resolved. Others, however, will need to be resolved by an IT technician. Let's take a look at some of the typical problems which you may experience with your computer.

- My computer has crashed – have I lost all of my work?
- My computer will not connect to the Internet.
- One of my software programs will not run – when I try to open it, it freezes.
- My computer is running really slowly.

Activity 13

Can you think of any other problems which sometimes occur with computers? Make a list of *three* problems in the table below. Keep your work safe as it will help you to complete Portfolio task 221.12.

A version of this table, ready for you to complete, is available to download from www.contentextra.com/businessadmin



Problems that sometimes occur with computers

Solutions to computer problems

Table 221.4 summarises solutions to some common computer problems.

Problem	Solution
My computer has crashed – have I lost all of my work?	It is possible that you may have lost the work you have done since the last time you saved it, so make sure your programs are set to auto-save every 10 minutes to prevent loss of work in these situations. Your IT technician probably has a backup file containing copies of each day's files for more serious loss of work. If you work on a stand-alone computer (i.e. not part of a network), remember to back up your work at the end of every session or at the end of the day.
My computer will not connect to the Internet	If it is only your PC which will not connect to the Internet (whereas your colleagues' connections are fine), then the problem is likely to lie with your machine. It may be that your computer needs to be reconnected to the Internet, either by yourself (if a stand-alone computer) or the IT technician. If you have an Internet cable, check it is connected to your computer (wireless connections do not have a cable).
One of my software programs will not run – when I try to open it, it freezes	This is likely to be something you need to get help with, especially if it happens regularly. Your IT technician, or an IT specialist, may have to reinstall the program.
My computer is running very slowly	Computers can run slowly for a number of reasons. If you are working from files stored on a network, it may well be that the network has many users on it causing your computer to run more slowly than you would like. If you are working on a local hard drive or a stand-alone computer, it may be that your computer is in need of an update. Contact your IT technician, or an IT specialist, who will be able to examine your computer and identify the cause of the problem.

Table 221.4: Common computer problems and their solutions

Portfolio task 221.12

→ Links to L04: assessment criteria 4.1 and 4.3



Using the work which you completed in Activities 10–13, produce a table that identifies *four* examples of equipment problems. For each of the problems, include an example of how to deal with that issue.

You can use real examples of office equipment problems and solutions from your own experience at work if you wish. Remember to say whose job it is to deal with each of the problems you identify.

The purpose of following the manufacturer's instructions and organisational procedures

Imagine there is a fault with the department's printer. You have checked that the toner has not run out, but in the absence of a qualified engineer, neither you nor your colleagues have the expertise to diagnose the problem. So, what should you do? The first step is to look at the manufacturer's instruction book, which will probably be located near to the printer.



You need to follow the manufacturer's instructions for the following reasons:

- Failure to do so can invalidate the warranty of the piece of equipment – this could be very expensive for your company.
- The manufacturer knows the likely problems and sets out the instructions to help you find the solution in the quickest way possible.
- Following the instructions means that everyone will follow a set procedure.
- The engineer will then be able to work out what you have done and in what order.

You will also need to be aware of organisational procedures relating to solving equipment problems. This is because they may:

- set out who you must inform of the problem
- give instructions as to who is and is not allowed to take action
- limit what staff may do.

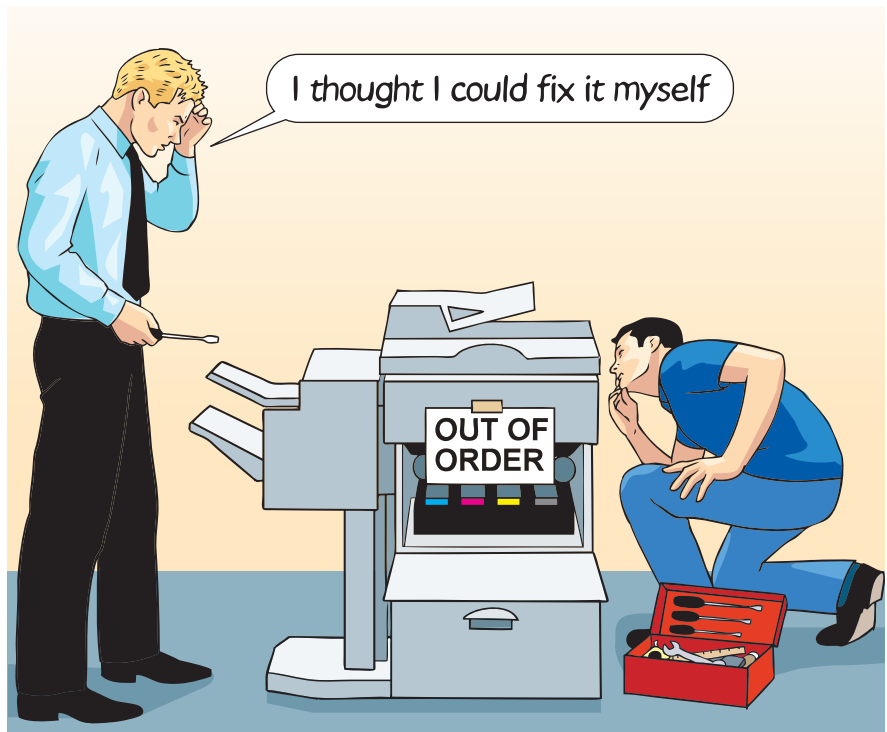


Figure 221.2: Never attempt to fix a piece of equipment yourself. Look at the organisational procedures as well as the manufacturer's instructions to be sure that your actions comply with both of these

Office life

Mina's story

My name is Mina Ibrahim. I'm 19 and have recently started work as an administrative assistant for an insurance firm. My job involves a lot of photocopying of important documents and filing them ready for the insurance agents to deal with.

However, I am often held up from doing my work by frequent breakdowns of the photocopier. I use the manufacturer's instruction manual so I can attempt to fix the problem myself, but sometimes I'm not always sure what to do, and there doesn't seem to be anybody available to help me. I have asked some of my colleagues, as I really do need the copier to work! But nobody seems to know what to do or who to go to for technical assistance.

I am becoming increasingly worried by this situation, as work is piling up on my desk and I'm getting more and more behind. I am concerned that my lack of progress in my work will soon be picked up by the managers which will reflect badly on me.



Ask the expert



Q The photocopier in my office regularly breaks down, but there seems to be nobody to go to for technical assistance or any advice available as to what I should do.

A Ask your office manager to provide this information to you and all of your colleagues. This will prevent any future delays in getting the photocopier repaired, as everyone will be aware of the correct procedure to follow.

Top tips

If your job involves regular use of certain types of office equipment, your employer should provide you with organisational procedures which detail whose responsibility it is to organise the fixing of equipment when it needs technical attention.

Portfolio task 221.13

→ Links to LO4: assessment criterion 4.2



Produce a short report that will be used to train new staff at your office, which explains the purpose of following when dealing with problems:

- manufacturer's instructions
- organisational procedures.

It may help you to set out your work under the two headings above and write a short paragraph for each one.

The purpose of meeting work standards and deadlines

Meeting work standards

A good example of the importance of meeting work standards when using office equipment concerns the use of company email. Most office staff use email regularly throughout the day to contact other members of staff, as well as external customers and suppliers. There are company standards on the use of email which will indicate the correct language to be used – slang, text speak and bad language are never acceptable when emailing at work. The use of personal email during work times will also be subject to limits and will almost certainly be monitored. Companies can and do monitor staff use of email using special software programs which will flag up certain words or phrases – so, beware, and never assume anything you put in an email is private.

Meeting work deadlines

Companies always have deadlines by which certain tasks must be completed. Deadlines are important for staff as they tell them when things need to be completed in order that the business can meet its targets.

The use of office equipment may be the subject of deadlines in order to allow sharing of resources by different teams. For example, conferencing facilities may be shared between different departments and so each department will be allocated a certain time slot for using them. Going beyond the deadline will mean that another team cannot access the facilities and may have to miss an important business meeting.

Portfolio task 221.14

→ Links to LO5: assessment criterion 5.1



Write a short summary to explain the purpose of meeting work standards and deadlines when using office equipment.

Try to include examples from your own experience as this will help you provide the evidence needed to complete this task. Be prepared to answer questions from your assessor to demonstrate your understanding of this task.

The purpose of leaving equipment ready for the next user

Whenever you finish using office equipment it is important that you leave the work area exactly as you found it. This means:

- not leaving any mess lying around
- not leaving the work area in such a way that someone else has to clear up after you before they can begin using the equipment.

Imagine that you had to print and bind 100 copies of a presentation report for an important meeting. When you arrive at the printer ready to collect your printouts, you find that your work is all mixed up with someone else's, which has simply been left on the printer, seemingly forgotten and, worst of all, in your way. Then you go to the binding machine, only to find that someone has left it with an unfinished job taking up all of the work space. This example highlights the point that taking care to tidy away after yourself is a necessary part of working with others and sharing equipment. If everyone simply left their work lying around, it would not be long before the whole office was totally unusable.

Remember, when you work alongside others in an office environment and share equipment you need to show:

- care
- attention
- respect for others
- a neat and tidy approach.

Portfolio task 221.15

→ Links to LO6: assessment criterion 6.1



Write a short summary to explain the purpose of leaving office equipment and the work area ready for the next user.

You may wish to set out your notes as a bullet point list containing the main issues that you want to mention. Be prepared to answer questions from your assessor to demonstrate your understanding of this task.

Evidence collection


In order for you to complete the remaining assessment criteria to successfully pass this unit, you will need to carry out various tasks at work and then produce evidence to show that you have demonstrated the required skills and competence.

Evidence can be collected in a number of different ways. For example, it can be in the form of a signed witness testimony from a colleague or line manager, a copy of any related emails or letters you have produced, or a verbal discussion with your assessor.

Speak to your assessor to identify the best methods to use in order to complete each portfolio task and remember to keep copies of all the evidence which you produce.


Use office equipment

The portfolio tasks which follow are practical in nature and require you to gather evidence of your competence in certain areas of your work.

Portfolio task 221.16 → Links to L07: assessment criteria 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6, 7.7, 7.8 and 7.9 

Gather evidence of your work to show your assessor that you have successfully carried out the tasks outlined in the table below. Check with your assessor on the best ways of gathering evidence for each of the tasks before you begin.

Task	Evidence collected
7.1 Locate and select equipment needed for a task.	
7.2 Use equipment following manufacturer's and organisational guidelines.	
7.3 Use equipment minimising waste.	
7.4 Keep equipment clean and hygienic.	
7.5 Deal with equipment problems following manufacturer's and organisational procedures.	
7.6 Refer problems, if required.	
7.7 Make sure final work product meets agreed requirements.	
7.8 Make sure that product is delivered to agreed timescale.	
7.9 Make sure equipment, resources and work area are ready for the next user.	

A version of this form, ready for you to complete, is available to download from www.contentextra.com/businessadmin 

Check your knowledge

- 1 Why is it important to read the manufacturer's instructions for office equipment?
 - a. Because you will be tested on this.
 - b. Because you must become an expert on the operation of all office equipment.
 - c. Because the instructions tell you how to operate the equipment correctly, as well as how to go about problem solving in the correct way if it breaks down.
 - d. Because nobody else can understand them.
- 2 Why do companies have health and safety procedures for using office equipment?
 - a. To make sure staff are kept safe from injury at work.
 - b. To make sure staff follow the rules.
 - c. To allow anyone to use equipment in any way they like.
 - d. To save money.
- 3 Why is it important to keep office equipment clean and hygienic?
 - a. To show your manager how tidy you are.
 - b. To maintain an orderly and well-kept office environment.
 - c. To stop your manager complaining about your mess.
 - d. To keep you busy.
- 4 What is the main type of waste produced by printers and photocopiers in an office?
 - a. Carbon emissions.
 - b. Broken parts.
 - c. Paper.
 - d. Water.
- 5 How can you try to minimise waste when printing and copying?
 - a. Only work at night.
 - b. Keep the printer and copier turned off at all times.
 - c. Take care to set up your print or copy job correctly and print out a test sheet before you produce the main job.
 - d. Write your copies out by hand instead.
- 6 Why is it important to reduce the amount of waste produced?
 - a. Because the bins will overflow.
 - b. Because waste is expensive to dispose of, goes into landfill sites and is bad for the environment.
 - c. Because the business will get into trouble with the government if it produces too much waste paper.
 - d. Because waste gives off a bad odour.
- 7 What is the main benefit to the environment of recycling?
 - a. Recycling is a fad and will soon go out of fashion.
 - b. Recycling means carbon emissions will double in the next five years.
 - c. Recycling reduces the amount of waste which has to be sent to landfill sites to be processed. It also slows down the use of raw materials such as trees being felled to produce paper.
 - d. Recycling means we will be able to have cheaper paper and plastic.
- 8 What is the correct thing to do if you discover a serious problem with the office printer?
 - a. Use a screwdriver to dismantle the printer to find out what is wrong.
 - b. Walk away and ignore the problem.
 - c. Look at your organisation's instructions for use of the printer to see who you need to report the problem to.
 - d. Leave a note on the printer saying that it is broken and hope someone else will sort it out.
- 9 Why is it important to meet work deadlines?
 - a. Because you will get into trouble if you do not meet your deadlines.
 - b. Because you will get a large pay rise if you meet your deadlines.
 - c. Because failing to meet your deadlines may cause delays for other staff in the department.
 - d. Deadlines are not too important and your manager is sure to understand if you are a bit late with your work.
- 10 Why is it important to leave your work area clean and tidy after use?
 - a. In order to keep the area clean for the next person to use it.
 - b. In order to follow manufacturer's instructions.
 - c. In order to make a bad impression.
 - d. The cleaners will tidy up your work area.

Answers to these questions can be found on the website.

What your assessor is looking for

In order to prepare for and succeed in completing this unit, your assessor will require you to be able to demonstrate competence in all of the performance criteria listed in the table below.

Your assessor will guide you through the assessment process, but it is likely that for this unit you will need to:

- complete short written narratives or personal statements explaining your answers
- take part in professional discussions with your assessor to explain your answers verbally
- complete observations with your assessor ensuring that they can observe you carrying out your work tasks
- produce any relevant work products to help demonstrate how you have completed the assessment criteria
- ask your manager, a colleague or a customer for witness testimonies explaining how you have completed the assessment criteria.

The evidence which you generate for the assessment criteria in this unit may also count towards your evidence collection for some of the other units in this qualification. Your assessor will provide support and guidance on this.

The table below lists the portfolio tasks which you need to complete for this unit, mapped to their associated assessment criteria.

Portfolio task and page reference	Mapping assessment criteria
221.1 (page 3)	1.1
221.2 (page 4)	1.2
221.3 (page 6)	1.3
221.4 (page 6)	2.1
221.5 (page 7)	2.2
221.6 (page 7)	2.3
221.7 (page 8)	2.4
221.8 (page 8)	2.5
221.9 (page 10)	3.1
221.10 (page 12)	3.2
221.11 (page 12)	3.3
221.12 (page 17)	4.1 and 4.3
221.13 (page 20)	4.2
221.14 (page 21)	5.1
221.15 (page 21)	6.1
221.16 (page 22)	7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6, 7.7, 7.8 and 7.9