

PCER GUIDANCE NOTES

# Practice development

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### Unit PC5 – Set fees and secure income

This unit is about contributing to the fee generation of the organisation and ensuring that monies are collected from clients. It entails agreeing fees with clients for activities as well as any credit policy in relation to specific accounts. It also requires you to monitor work in progress and to calculate the fees that can be claimed from clients at specific intervals.

Element reference	Demonstrated behaviour and examples
<b>Element 12</b> <b>Set fees and credit limits for activities</b>	Cost activities so that they provide an acceptable level of profit for the organisation Develop pricing methodologies  Clearly explain the fees and charges that apply to specific activities to clients Negotiate fees with clients where necessary and where you have the authority to do so  Outline the payment terms that apply to fees claimed from clients
<b>Element 13</b> <b>Collect fee income from clients</b>	Analyse work in progress to determine fees which can be claimed immediately, the future worth of activities and when claims can be scheduled  Analyse timesheets and other relevant documentation and provide sufficient information to enable invoices to be prepared  Prepare invoices  Sensitively handle client queries or complaints about invoices sent to them Follow up invoices where clients have failed to meet payment terms  Decide if client relationships need to be terminated owing to a poor payment record

### Unit PC6 – Monitor resources to ensure service delivery

This unit is about cost and budget management. You are expected to take responsibility for others as well as informing subordinates about cost awareness and encouraging them to take responsibility for cost management.

Element reference	Demonstrated behaviour and examples
<b>Element 14</b> <b>Monitor and control activities against budgets</b>	Ensure expenditure is kept within agreed limits wherever possible  Analyse variations between actual and budgeted figures  Phase expenditure in accordance with a planned timescale  Report variations to management in a timely fashion giving adequate explanations and interpretations of the data
<b>Element 15</b> <b>Control costs to improve services to clients</b>	Informing others of their role in controlling costs  Recommending ways to improve efficiency and make cost savings  Assess cost information and take action to reduce costs where practicable Identify both profitable and unprofitable business and communicate this to relevant people

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### Unit PC7 – Monitor and maintain the security of property, information and people

This unit is about the crucial role of maintaining health, safety and security within the workplace. It has two elements which relate to the security of high value items and the health, safety and security of the working environment. You are expected to follow organisational procedures at all times including reporting any breaches of security that are suspected.

Element reference	Demonstrated behaviour and examples
<b>Element 16</b> <b>Monitor and maintain the security of high value items</b>	Follow organisational procedures relating to the security of high value and other 'attractive' items Store high value and other 'attractive' items securely when unattended Take appropriate action where breaches of security are suspected Accurately record the inputs and withdrawals of cash, high value and other 'attractive' items
<b>Element 17</b> <b>Maintain the health, safety and security of the working environment</b>	Monitor legislation to ensure that staff working conditions satisfy current requirements Follow organisational procedures relating to the health, safety and security of the workplace Arrange workplace health and safety assessments Report any accidents, incidents or defects in security equipment to the appropriate person(s) without delay and maintain appropriate records Feedback any problems identified and make recommendations for improving the health, safety or security of the working environment

### Unit PC8 – Develop and maintain the employer's information systems

This unit relates to the development and maintenance of information systems for use within your employer's organisation. The focus is on identifying and meeting the information needs rather than the technical solution that may be provided by specialists. Examples of the type of information systems that this module applies to are those used for billing purposes, external monitoring, taxation and personal information. This unit does not relate to the development and implementation of accounting systems for clients, which is covered within unit PC17.

Element reference	Demonstrated behaviour and examples
<b>Element 18</b> <b>Develop and maintain information systems to meet the employer's requirements</b>	Identify the information system requirements for your area of operation Provide input to discussions and consultation on information systems design Ensure minimum disruption to working when implementing new/changes to information systems Ensure any systems designed specifically for your own area of operation are compatible with other organisational systems Ensure all users of information systems have sufficient guidance and training to use them
<b>Element 19</b> <b>Monitor and control the employer's information systems</b>	Regularly monitor the ongoing capability of the organisation's information systems to meet requirements Note opportunities to improve the organisation's information systems and report your ideas to the relevant people Seek feedback from users about the value and usage of information systems Take all necessary precautions to avoid system failures Seek help on the use of information systems from the appropriate specialists

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## EXAMPLE 1

An existing client introduced me to a haulage company who was experiencing some issues with their previous accountant. They felt they were not getting value for money and were looking to move. I met the contact to discuss their business, gain insight and explain the services we could offer. I produced a fee proposal, explaining our structure for fees and the additional support we could offer. I also agreed a manageable monthly direct debit to ensure our fee recovery.

During the audit of my construction client, an issue with their software was identified which resulted in several duplicate and mis-posted invoices. This incorrect bookkeeping was discussed during the prior year audit and the client had agreed to implement changes. However, due to staff changes at the client, the issues continued. As such, there remained a risk of misstatement and I therefore instructed my team to increase the testing.

I discussed the matter with the client, clearly explaining the issue and that

the time spent would incur an additional fee. While annoyed, the client agreed to pay the increased audit fee in two installments.

Following the audit, my management letter included a recommendation to improve this area and provide further training for staff. It was agreed that I would introduce the firm to a cloud consultancy team to provide software training and support to the firm, as well as some basic bookkeeping to avoid additional fees in future. The client was thankful, and this led to an improved relationship going forward.

## EXAMPLE 2

Part of my role as accounts manager was to get more involved in the day to day running of the firm.

- A recent new client had been taken on by the firm and a quote provided at time of onboarding which the client accepted, and terms were agreed. When the client provided their records, it was clear that the job was going to be more complex than the client initially led us to believe. I contacted the client to explain the issue and advised we would need to issue a revised fee quote. The client, whilst not happy, understood the position and my explanation and accepted the new quote. I issued an updated invoice.
- Our credit control team advised me they were having issues reaching one of clients for an outstanding invoice. I contacted the client by telephone as this was unlike them. The client explained that their accounts payable assistant was off unexpectedly on long term sickness and that they were trying to catch up with the outstanding work. The client asked me to email them the invoice directly and they would ensure prompt payment. I emailed the invoice, which was subsequently paid within the week.
- During Covid-19 I ensured I followed H&S guidance that our office provided for working from home. I conducted a desk assessment of my home office space and ensured my desk and chair was set up correctly. I identified that I needed a footrest which I subsequently bought to make sure I was sitting correctly.