RETAIL CERTIFICATE WORKBOOK

City and Guilds Co-publishing Series

City and Guilds of London Institute has a long history of providing assessments and certification to those who have undertaken education and training in a wide variety of technical subjects or occupational areas. Its business is essentially to provide an assurance that pre-determined standards have been met. That activity has grown in importance over the past few years as government and national bodies strive to create the right conditions for the steady growth of a skilled and flexible workforce.

Both teachers and learners need materials to support them as they work towards the attainment of qualifications, and City and Guilds is pleased to be working with several distinguished publishers towards meeting that need. It has been closely involved in planning, author selection and text appraisal, although the opinions expressed in the publications are those of the individual authors and are not necessarily those of the Institute.

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Peter Riley (consultant editor), *Computer-aided Engineering*, Macmillan

Barbara Wilson, *Information Technology: the Basics*, Macmillan

Caroline Wilkinson, *Information Technology in the Office*, Macmillan

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City and Guilds

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FOREWORD

In 1986 the Government set up the National Council for Vocational Qualifications and asked it to oversee the creation of a new system of awards, called National Vocational Qualifications, or NVQs.

NVQs are different from qualifications such as GCSEs, because they are awarded on the basis of what you can do, rather than how much you know. We are all used to the school system of periods of learning, followed by exams, where your success depends on how well you are able to answer a set of questions. Now we need to get used to a different sort of test, called assessment. NVQs are assessed, either by observing how you work and measuring your performance against a given set of standards, or by you being able to produce evidence that you can demonstrate your competence. This is called the accreditation of prior learning, and by using one or the other or both, you can build up a number of unit credits towards a full NVQ.

NVQs are really about competence, which is the ability to do a job to defined standards. In this instance, the standards are set, not by an examining body or a college, but by the industry in which they are to be used. Of course there are some standards, notably secretarial and business administration, which are used in all types of work, and there are special arrangements whereby one standard-setting organisation can use the work of another, so that many NVQs have interlinking modules, or units. This is especially useful when changing from one job to another, because you are able to count the units you have already gained in your last job, provided they are relevant to the new one.

The National Retail Training Council (NRTC) is the standard-setting organisation for the Retail NVQ. It is made up by employers from all types and sizes of retailing, by representatives of trade unions, and by educationalists, so we have between us a wide range of retail know-how. This is important because it means that retail standards are practical and are based on work experience, and reflect the way in which jobs are carried out.

This doesn't mean that retailing is only about demonstration. There is a lot to learn, for example, about hygiene, especially in food shops, about health and safety, cash handling, stock-keeping, and the laws relating to employment, the sale of goods and even complaints from customers!

Because the NVQ system is new, there has been a shortage of suitable learning material designed to meet the requirements of the Retail Certificate. The Retail Certificate Workbook, which is published by Macmillan in association with City and Guilds, is the first general primer of its sort. It will lead you through the knowledge and skills needed to be a competent retail worker.

Even if you do not intend to make retailing your career, you will still find this book informative and entertaining to use, and it will certainly help you to understand the skill of your sales assistant next time you go shopping.

If you are entering the world of retailing for the first time, it is a lively, demanding and highly rewarding industry. It thrives on the success of those who work in it. This book will help you towards that success.

Peter Morley, Chairman NRTC

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Finally, the authors would like to express gratitude to the retail industry of Great Britain for providing lifelong interest and inspiration, and thanks to the many trainees at all levels with whom they have had the pleasure of working.

G.M. and L.R.

INTRODUCTION

You are probably reading this book because you have recently started to work in the retail industry (or perhaps you hope to do so one day). If so, welcome to the book, and welcome to an industry that can be exciting, dynamic and satisfying. Retailing is one of the largest industries in the United Kingdom, and one of the most important economically. About 2½ million people are responsible for distributing all the goods we use in our daily lives – food, clothes, records, books, gardening equipment, washing powder, jewellery, birthday cards, and so on and so on. Just stop for a moment – try to imagine a world without shops and retailers (the people who work in shops). Life as we know it could not exist.

The retail industry, like other industries, needs efficient and competent staff. Your interest in this book probably means you are hoping to achieve recognition for your competence by gaining a qualification – the Retail Certificate.

NATIONAL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS (NVQs)

The Retail Certificate is the name given to the Retail National Vocational Qualification, or Retail NVQ for short. You can be awarded this qualification at either level 1 or level 2, and both are covered in this book. When you gain the Retail NVQ, your ability (competence) in performing the tasks you meet as part of your job is recognised. You will be assessed at work, over a period of time, by your supervisor or other qualified person. This book will help you gain your qualification as quickly and easily as possible.

The way in which the scheme will work in your particular case will be explained to you, but the person assessing you will always need to be sure that

- ☆ you can show practical ability in your work tasks
- ☆ you have the knowledge and understanding related to these tasks, which may not be obvious just from observation.

The standards by which you are assessed are those laid down by the National Retail Training Council (NRTC), after consultation with the retail industry. The NRTC is the leading body responsible for training and development within the industry. The standards are described as ‘competences’, and these are grouped into ‘units’ and ‘elements’ with supporting ‘performance criteria’. Your assessor will know the units and elements involved, and will discuss with you those that you need.

Good luck in your progress towards gaining competence. We look forward to meeting you in a shop one day soon!

HOW TO USE THE WORKBOOK

To gain a Retail National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) you will need to have skills, knowledge and understanding, and show that you can apply them while working. The workbook is intended to help you gain this knowledge and understanding, and to help you in using them in the workplace.

The Retail Certificate is very flexible: your work does not have to be assessed in any particular order. You will be entitled to a qualification at level 1 when you have satisfactorily shown competence in level 1 Foundation units (you *must* do these) and a number of Optional units. The same is true for level 2. At both levels, units are divided into smaller sections or 'elements'. Your assessor will have details of all the units and elements at levels 1 and 2, and will discuss with you those that you need.

We have arranged the content of the book in chapters which cover subject areas such as customer skills, display, and stock handling. You will be able to relate these subject areas to the particular units of the Retail NVQ which you are tackling.

All the elements that make up the Foundation units and most of the elements that make up the Optional units are covered in this workbook. We have chosen not to include units which relate directly to specialist types of retail outlet such as newsagents or chemists, but have included material which will be of use to you wherever you may work. You will usually be able to apply any tasks or activities in the book to your own situation.

There is no need to attempt units of the Retail Certificate in any particular order, or to keep to the order given in this workbook. Take the units and elements, and the parts of the book which relate to them, one at a time, in the sequence which is suitable for you and your own particular needs. The chapters of the workbook cover everything required at levels 1 and 2 in their subject areas. This allows each area to be developed in a logical and progressive way, and also reflects the flexibility of the Retail Certificate.

The information and knowledge you will need are to some extent different for different companies. This is taken into account in the way in which you are assessed for the Retail Certificate and in the way in which we have written this workbook. In the book you are often asked to 'check with your supervisor'. There are 'Find out' and 'To do' activities which will help you to gain information about the procedures and policies which your employer uses. Keep a record of what you find out in your personal training record. Always use the workbook with your own company's methods in mind.

Health and safety matters – what to do if there is an accident or a fire, how to lift things without harming yourself or others – are important as soon as you start work in retail. They are covered in one chapter, 'Health and safety' – but should be kept in mind at all times and whatever you are doing.

Important

Before you start to use this book, make sure that you have a notebook, or a file and file paper. Use this to make a record of the work you have done and information that you find out. In this workbook, we call this notebook or file your personal training record. We suggest that you get into the habit of writing down in it information that you find out about your company or your job. Keep your answers to the activities in the workbook in this personal training record. In this way you will build up a source of information and reference which will help you in your training and assessment.