Menu planning and costing

Unit reference number: H/615/0860
Level: 2
Guided Learning (GL) hours: 30

Overview
The aim of this unit is to develop learners’ knowledge and understanding of the wide range of menu styles used in the catering and hospitality industry. Learners will be able to identify different menus and the service items that are used with them; they will also be able to identify different dietary requirements of customers and how this links to menu knowledge.

Learners will examine the basic costs associated with the catering and hospitality industry and the factors that must be monitored to control them. Learners will carry out basic calculations to determine the cost and selling price of food dishes, and will investigate how agreed net profit can be achieved.

Learning outcomes
On completion of this unit, learners will:

LO1 Know menu styles and design
LO2 Know about dietary requirements and dish composition
LO3 Know how to plan and prepare menus for different situations
LO4 Know basic costs associated with menu planning
Assessment requirements

Learners must complete both assessment requirements related to this unit:

1. External examination
2. Graded synoptic assessment

1. External examination

All theory content will be tested by an external examination towards the end of the period of learning.

External examinations will test knowledge and understanding from across the whole vocational area (mandatory units). Learners should use the unit content section of this unit to aid revision since exam questions will test the full breadth of this section.

External examinations will be set and marked by VTCT and will contribute to the overall qualification grade.

2. Graded synoptic assessment

In the last term or final third of their qualification, learners will be required to undertake a graded synoptic assessment. This will require learners to design, plan and cost a menu using dishes from a number of mandatory units from across the qualification. Assessment coverage will vary year on year, although all services will be covered over time.

VTCT will set a brief for centres which will detail the food items to be used in the graded synoptic assessment. Grading descriptors for the synoptic assessment will also be provided by VTCT.

The graded synoptic assessment will be marked and graded by centre staff and externally verified by VTCT.

The graded synoptic assessment will contribute to the overall qualification grade.
Unit content

LO1 Know menu styles and design

Learners must know about menu styles:
- Commercial, e.g. length of menu, language used, type and size of establishment, customer profile, special requirements, time of year, price range
  - Hotels – room service, breakfast, lunch, dinner, afternoon high tea
  - Restaurants – breakfast, lunch, dinner
  - Cafés – snacks, breakfast, lunch
  - Fast food outlets – set meal options, individual items
  - Travel and leisure outlets – trains, airlines, cruises and coaches, snacks, meals
  - Tourism and recreation outlets – museums, historical buildings, theme parks, visitor attractions, snacks meals
  - Event management – special occasion menus, tailored menus
- Public service sector, e.g. dietary requirements, customer profile, price range, budget driven
  - Hospitals – for patients, outpatients, staff, visitors
  - Residential homes – specific diets, nutritionally balanced, variety
- Contract catering services – industrial catering, college refectory, school meals, prison services, can offer healthy options, pricing options for restricted budgets

Learners must know the different types of menu:
- A la carte
  - This menu type allows the customer to select from a number of dishes offered for each course rather than having a set menu where there is only one dish for each course. Traditionally, ‘à la carte’ menu dishes were cooked to order but today many organisations offer freshly cooked to order menus. Dishes are individually priced
- Plat du jour
  - This is the special or featured dish of the day on a restaurant menu
- Table d’hôte
  - A set menu with a set price which can be for two or three courses. There is a limited choice for each course
- Tasting
  - This is a type of meal offered in certain restaurants, consisting of sample portions of many different dishes served in several courses for a set price
- Dessert
  - To conclude a main meal. It is made of sweet dishes but can also include cheese options
- Function
  - Prepared for events or large groups usually consisting of three or four courses
- School/care home/hospital menus
  - Meet a variety of dietary requirements
  - Focus on healthy eating
  - Be able to be produced in large quantities
Learners must know the factors that impact on menu planning:

- **Seasonality**
  - The effective transportation of food items around the globe means that it is possible to get seasonal food items all year round. However, the quality, freshness, taste and price can be affected as well as the concern about the impact on the environment of moving goods around the world. Many menus are designed around locally produced, fresh and seasonal items so they are at their best when they are used in a dish.

- **Type of service**
  - The way the food is to be plated and served will affect a menu design as a chef has to consider how to present the dishes, e.g. a whole cooked salmon makes an eye catching centre piece for a buffet.
  - Equipment needed and their use is to be considered. Preparation and cooking methods should be taken into consideration when planning for large numbers. For example, the same menu for four covers will not be executed the same way if it is for 150 covers.

- **Time**
  - Preparation and cooking times need to be understood in advance for planning purposes, e.g. cooking time with available equipment should fit the menu requirements.

- **Location**
  - Menus that reflect the location of the restaurant are likely to promote the business, e.g. a seaside restaurant should offer fish and seafood on its menu.

- **Staffing**
  - Is the business able to produce the menu on offer with the staff available? e.g. a new menu would require knowledgeable staff to promote it.

- **Trends**
  - Trendy eating places offer trendy menus and dishes to attract customers and develop business. This could be about the way the menu looks or about the options available, e.g. offering a tapas style menu could be seen as on trend.

- **Costs**
  - Cost of ingredients and other costs such as additional staff or equipment. For example, a tasting menu may require the purchase of suitably sized or shaped plates.

- **Competition**
  - Offering a similar choice as the competition may not be the way forward. It is important to look at other offers as part of the planning process.

- **Occasion**
  - For a celebration or business related occasion. Consider the people to whom the menu would be offered, e.g. a business lunch should not have any heavy dishes but lighter food allowing people to be able to work in the afternoon.

- **Presentation** – when plated, en papillote, silver served, served from a trolley, buffet

- **Public sector/contract caterers**
  - Cater for large quantities or service within a short time frame.
  - Food may need to be transported to the wards or schools, so food safety and hygiene are of key importance.
  - Menu varieties for specific dietary needs.
  - Offer different portion sizes.
  - Offer choices.
  - On a tight budget.
  - May rely on tinned and pre-prepared ingredients to keep costs down.
Learners must know the information that needs to be included in a menu:

- Explanation of items – brief description of the dish to include main ingredients and allergens
- Dietary – nutrition, type, style, no nuts or wheat, no pork, sugar free, fat free
- Accurate sourcing – mentioning where the meat comes from
- Pricing – ensuring that there is no possible confusion about price
- Measurements/weight – making sure that all measurements and weight are in the same units
- To comply with current legal requirements – trade description, consumer protection
LO2 Know about dietary requirements and dish composition

Learners must know about dietary requirements:

- **Dietary needs**
  - Vegetarian – do not eat meat, fish, shellfish or food items that contain animal derivatives (e.g. Parmesan cheese as this is made using calf rennet)
  - Lacto-ovo – the most common type of vegetarian diet. Eat both dairy products and eggs
  - Lacto-vegetarians – eat dairy products but avoid eggs
  - Ovo-vegetarian – eat eggs but no other dairy products
  - Vegan – do not eat dairy products, eggs, or any other products which are derived from animals
  - Coeliac – no gluten
  - Lactose intolerant – a type of sugar found in milk and dairy products
  - Religious –
    - Jewish – food must be prepared in line with religious rules, and includes the types of food that can and cannot be eaten
    - Hindu – beef not eaten at all as the cow is a sacred animal. Many Hindus are lacto-vegetarians
    - Muslim – an Islam/Halal diet does not allow the eating of pork or blood products (e.g. black pudding). Animals have to be slaughtered following a strict code. Alcohol is prohibited
    - Buddhism – they do not have any strict dietary requirements, but they tend to be lacto-vegetarians as they believe in doing no harm
  - Diabetic – low or no sugar
  - Low fat – use foods containing good fats or low in fat content, e.g. fish
  - Allergies – celery, gluten, crustacean, eggs, fish, lupin, milk, molluscs, mustard, nuts, peanuts, sesame seeds, soya, sulphite
  - Health – published national guidelines and recommendations for specific nutrients

- **Service staff**
  - Health and safety compliance (e.g. avoid allergic reaction, food kept at correct temperature)
  - Respect of diversity – e.g. different cultural and religious beliefs
  - Give accurate information on food choices to avoid allergens, to keep to religious expectations, to help customers make the choices to meet their needs

Learners must know about dish composition:

- **Menu knowledge**
  - Cooking methods
  - Ingredients
  - Costs – cost of ingredients, equipment and staff
  - Cooking terms – when writing menu and using complex words
  - Dish composition – when using allergens and ingredients

- **Benefits of menu knowledge**
  - Levels of customer service
  - Ability to advise on menu choices – to ensure customer satisfaction
  - Cost control – to meet profit targets
• Ingredients
  - Main ingredients – meat, fish, fruit, vegetables, pulses
  - Additional ingredients in cooking – oil, sauce, coating
  - Additional ingredients in presentation – sauces, side dishes
  - Flavour combinations
• Dishes
  - Mixed salads
  - Flambé dishes
  - Filleted fish
  - Freshly cooked meat
  - Egg based
  - Vegetable based proteins
• Cooking terms
  - Roasted
  - Poached
  - Grilled
  - Baked
  - Steamed
  - Braised
  - Fried
LO3 Know how to plan and prepare menus for different situations

Learners must know how to plan and prepare menus:

- **Meal occasions**
  - **Breakfast**
    - Customers are offered a choice of breakfast items which may be serviced as a buffet, cooked to order or a mix of both. There may be a need to offer more expensive or less popular items as cooked to order, e.g. kippers
  - **Lunch**
    - A lunch menu should not be too heavy as this may not be popular. The cost should also be lower than a dinner menu in order to attract business. Lower cost ingredients are likely to be used to meet gross product target e.g. fresh and seasonal ingredients can make a lunch menu attractive
  - **Afternoon tea**
    - Traditional and popular menu which should reflect the place it is served e.g. a modern restaurant/hotel would have trendy items as part of their afternoon tea menu
  - **Dinner**
    - Probably the most popular time for eating out. A large variety of menus are available for dinner. The restaurant ethos and focus should be reflected in their menus, e.g. a healthy eating place should ensure all menus and dishes are healthy. A steak restaurant will have a good range of steak on offer at different prices
  - **Reason for eating out – business lunch, celebrations (weddings, birthdays)**
  - **Children’s menu**
    - They have become popular in recent times as they attract some parents. Healthy dishes should be part of the offer as well as the more ‘popular’ items, which may be less healthy. For example, many restaurants offer burgers or ‘fish fingers’ on their children’s menus

- **Interpret menus – to provide the right menu for the right occasion or customer profile**
  - Product knowledge to help offer the customer alternatives
  - Understanding the preparation and cooking requirements (timing, cooking methods) to ensure menu is suitable for the situation
  - Portion size – children’s, adults, cost
  - Presentation – describe to the customer what the dish looks like
  - Nutritional value – to meet specific dietary requirements e.g. low in fat, low in sugar

- **Factors to be considered in the planning**
  - Balance – variety of ingredients, light vs heavy, variety of textures, nutritional value
  - Balance of colour – by ensuring a dish is not too pale
  - Staff skills – are the staff able to produce this menu and serve the dishes
  - Variable needs of the customer – choice of meat-based and vegetable based dishes
  - Price being charged – to ensure financial targets and met and to ensure customers satisfaction
  - Equipment and space available
  - Availability and cost of ingredients – to meet gross profit targets, to meet dish requirements
  - Season – to buy products when they are at their lowest price
  - Promoting profitability – to ensure business development and growth
- Technical terminology
  - A la carte, table d'hôte
  - Menu terminology – appetisers, hors d'oeuvres, petit fours, amuse-bouche, entrée
  - Kitchen terminology, e.g.
    - Florentine – a dish that includes spinach and mornay sauce that originates from the Italian region of Florentine
    - Julienne – a French cut used for vegetables. Vegetables are cut into long, thin strips 2mm x 2mm x 4mm
    - Reduction – process of thickening and intensifying flavour of a liquid by simmering
    - Fondant – potatoes cooked in butter and stock
    - Appetisers – a small dish before the main meal, also known as a starter
    - Hors d'oeuvres – a small savoury dish severed before a meal or with drinks. Canapés are a type of hors d'oeuvre
    - Petit fours – small bite size biscuit or cake served at the end of a meal, often with coffee. Petit four means in French ‘small oven’ and can be called ‘migmardiser’
    - Amuse-bouche – bite size dish offered by the restaurant as an extra course at the start of a meal. An amuse-bouche is often used to showcase the chef’s skills at making small dishes packed with flavour to prepare the customer for their meal
    - Entrée – North American term for main courses
LO4 Know basic costs associated with menu planning

Learners must know about costs and quantities:
- Costs of resources
  - Ingredients – for the dishes, garnish and accompaniments
  - Staff – if there is a need to increase working hours to produce the menu e.g. wedding reception for 300 plus, regular service
  - Overheads – maintenance, gas, electricity, laundry, cleaning products (a contribution towards these costs need to be included)
- Recipes
  - Quantities – to ensure the right quantities are purchased and produced, over ordering results in extra cost and wastage
  - Quality – e.g. free range meat is likely to be more expensive than intensively produced meat, locally sourced may be better value
  - Type of menu – less meat is needed for a tasting menu than for a two course meal, portion size needs to be considered

Learners must know how to calculate costs:
- Basic numeracy skills
  - Addition – adding all the costs together to get total cost
  - Subtraction – taking away any discount from the original cost
  - Multiplication – cost per plate multiplied by the number of plates sold
  - Division – dividing the cost of ingredients between the number of servings to work out the cost per plate
  - Calculating percentages – what the percentage of net profit is
  - Estimating – roughly working out how much the ingredients will cost
- Costing terminology
  - Food costs – the overall cost of the food, including the waste
  - Selling price – when considering the gross and net profit
  - Gross profit – with consideration to other costs
  - Net profit – when taking into consideration gross profit and selling price

Learners must know how to control food costs:
- Factors
  - Source of food – suppliers charge different prices, organic produce and out of season produce can cost more
  - Price of food including reasons for variations – demand can increase cost, first of the season
  - Ordering and delivery systems – check deliveries to ensure all ordered good are correct
  - Quality of food – make sure products are as expected, not spoil, out of date or past best before
  - Control of stock – use oldest stock first, know how much stock there is, do not over order
  - Security of storage – to prevent theft
  - Accurate weighing and measuring – to ensure quality products, avoid waste, follow recipe
  - Control of waste – use discarded food items for other purposes, e.g. stock
  - Preparation and cooking losses – use correct tools and equipment to prevent waste
  - Portion size – weigh, measure and control
  - Consistency – every customer gets the same size and quality of product
• Importance of food costs
  - Maintain gross profit – wasted food costs money
  - Achieve targets – to be able to make a profit
  - Need for efficient use of resources, e.g. by controlling the use of energy when using ovens and stoves
  - Minimise waste, e.g. by using accurate preparation and cooking skills
  - Effectiveness of department, e.g. communicating well between staff members within department
Resources

The special resources required for this unit are access to a real or realistic working environment.

Recommended books:

Recommended website:
- www.cengage.co.uk
- www.cengagebrain.com
- http://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/Product?Product=9781471839610

Delivery guidance

Teachers are encouraged to use innovative, practical and engaging delivery methods to enhance the learning experience. Learners may benefit from:
- Meaningful employer engagement so they relate what is being learned to the real world of work and understand commercial competency as to how menus are designed and costed
- Work experience within a professional kitchen so they can practise their skills of menu planning and costing in a real environment
- Using interactive information and technology systems and hardware so they can learn about concepts and theories; research current trends; research product knowledge and produce visual aids

Links with other units

This unit provides the foundation knowledge to learners understand menu planning and costing. This unit can be delivered before, or integrated with the delivery of other mandatory units that form this qualification.

Graded synoptic assessment

At the end of the qualification of which this unit forms part, there will be a graded synoptic assessment which will assess the learner’s ability to identify and use effectively in an integrated way an appropriate selection of skills, techniques, concepts, theories, and knowledge from a number of units from within the qualification. It is therefore necessary and important that units are delivered and assessed together and synoptically to prepare learners suitably for their final graded assessment.