Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Comparative Retailing

Unit code: DL2T 35

Unit purpose: This unit is designed to enable candidates to appraise retail development through theory and in practice, and to analyse how retailers plan strategic change in response to the dynamic consumer and technological environment of the retail industry. It is primarily intended for candidates who expect to take up careers in retail management, although candidates for general management would also benefit from the learning involved.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

1.   Explain how retailers succeed and grow through responding to consumer change.
2.   Use theories of retail change to explain development of retail organisations and plan for future change.
3.   Analyse recent developments and strategy within the retailing industry.

Credit points and level: 1 HN Credit at SCQF level 8: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8*)

*SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: Candidates should have communications skills which can be demonstrated by the achievement of core skill Communication at SCQF level 6 or equivalent. Candidates should have a general understanding of the retail environment, retailer responses to change and the structure of the retail industry, which can be demonstrated through achievement of HN Unit Retail Environment.

Core skills: There may be opportunities to gather evidence towards core skills in this Unit, particularly critical thinking, although there is no automatic certification of core skills or core skills components.

Context for delivery: This unit is included as a core unit in the framework of HND Retail Management. Is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the group award to which it contributes.

Assessment: A holistic approach to assessment is to be encouraged where possible, provided the evidence requirements for each outcome are fully met.

General information for centres (cont)

Evidence for outcomes 1 and 2 can be generated through structured questions related to a substantial up-to-date (within previous 2 years) case study of a major retail organisation or organisations. Evidence for outcome 3 will require additional candidate research and investigation to complete an assignment comprising collection and analysis of at least 10 examples of current retailer strategies and/or actions. This is Approach 1 detailed in the diagram below.

Alternatively evidence for outcomes 1, 2 and 3 can be assessed through an integrated assignment which requires Candidates to study and analyse current retailer responses to consumer change, using a range of theories in their analysis.

Candidates should present evidence of understanding a range of current retailer responses to competitive, technological and/or social change within the retail industry (or those occurring in a specific sector of the industry) and which should be analysed and related to a range of cyclical, environmental and/or conflict theories. This is Approach 2 in the diagram below.

A summary of the two different approaches is represented in the diagram below:

	Approach 1	or	Approach 2
Outcome	Case Study	Assignment	Integrated Assignment
1	✓		✓
2	✓		✓
3		✓	✓
	1000 –1500 words	500 – 700 words	2000 words

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Comparative Retailing

Unit code: DL2T 35

The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, knowledge and/or skills, and evidence requirements are mandatory.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the knowledge and/or skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Outcome 1

Explain how retailers succeed and grow through responding to consumer change

Knowledge and/or skills

♦ The changing consumer:
  • Socio-economic changes
  • Lifestyle changes
  • Demographic changes
  • Technological changes
  • Political and legal influences
♦ Retailer responses to the changing consumer
♦ Online and non-store retailing
♦ Current retail developments

Evidence requirements

Candidates will need evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can identify a range of reasons for consumer change and a number of ways in which consumers have changed in the past decade. They should show they can identify a range of retailer responses to consumer change, including online and other forms of non-store retailing, which have developed to meet the changing needs of consumers.

Assessment guidelines

Case Study - 1000-1500 words

The assessment of this outcome can be integrated with the assessment of outcome 2. Evidence can be generated through analysis of a substantial up-to-date (within previous 2 years) case study of a major retail organisation or organisations.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Comparative Retailing

The assessment of this outcome can also be integrated with the assessment for outcomes 2 and 3 in the form of an assignment for which evidence will be generated through candidate research, investigation and analysis. The integrated assignment should be no more than 2000 words in length.

The assessment will be open book with the final submission being marked by the lecturer.

Outcome 2

Use theories of retail change to explain development of retail organisations and plan for future change.

Knowledge and/or skills

- Cyclical change theories
- Environmental change theories
- Conflict theory
- Use of theories to explain past and current retail developments
- Evaluation of theories

Evidence requirements

Candidates will need evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing they can use a range of retail change theories to analyse and evaluate current retailer strategies and actions. Candidates should show knowledge of 3 theories, at least one from each of the three main categories of theory below:

1 Cyclical theories: Wheel of Retailing **or** Retail Lifecycle; Accordion Theory
2 Conflict Theory
3 Environmental theories: Evolution **or** Institutional Theory

Candidates evaluate each of the theories they have used.

Assessment guidelines

Case Study - 1000-1500 words

The assessment of this outcome can be integrated with the assessment of outcome 1. Evidence can be generated through analysis of a substantial up-to-date (within previous 2 years) case study of a major retail organisation or organisations.

Alternatively the assessment of this outcome can also be integrated with the assessment for outcomes 1 and 3 in the form of an assignment for which evidence will be generated through Candidate research, investigation and analysis. The integrated assignment should be no more than 2000 words in length.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Comparative Retailing

The assessment will be open book with the final submission being marked by the lecturer

Outcome 3

Analyse recent developments and strategy within the retailing industry

Knowledge and/or skills

♦ Identification of current retailer strategies
♦ Identification of current developments within the retail industry (or sector of the industry)
♦ Analysis of current developments within the retail industry (or sector of the industry)
♦ Application of a range of retail theories to evaluate the strategies of retail organisations
• Use theory to forecast future changes in the retail industry

Evidence requirements

Candidates will need evidence to demonstrate their skills and/or knowledge by showing they can identify and analyse current developments within the retail industry, apply a range of retail theories to evaluate developments and use theory to forecast future change in the retail industry.

Candidates should be encouraged to investigate topics, organisations and sectors of retailing in which they have a genuine interest through previous study and/or work experience and to investigate strategies and actions which relate to other core and optional subjects.

Assessment guidelines

Assignment – 500-750 words

Evidence will be generated through candidate research and investigation which will be used to compile and analyse a portfolio of at least 10 current retailer strategies and actions.

The assessment of this outcome can also be integrated with the assessment for outcomes 1 and 2 in the form of an integrated assignment for which evidence will be generated through Candidate research, investigation and analysis. The integrated assignment should be no more than 2000 words in length.

The assessment will be open book with final submission marked by the lecturer

Administrative Information

Unit code: DL2T 35

Unit title: Comparative Retailing

Superclass category: AG

Date of publication: August 2004

Version: 01

Source: SQA

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Comparative Retailing

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance.   The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This unit is intended to expand and update candidates' knowledge of the main drivers of retail change, focusing on the reasons consumers are changing and identification of the main ways in which they have changed over the last decade. Candidates should learn how successful retailers grow through pro-active response to pressures for change, particularly how they have streamlined logistics and deployed technological advances to achieve growth. Due to the significance of global retailers in the domestic market, it may be appropriate to include international growth strategies.

Retail managers of the future may not be employed in a store - candidates will be encouraged to learn about current developments in the retail industry, within retail organisations and in online and other forms of non-store retailing.

Candidates should be encouraged to use self-directed learning to investigate retail developments through research and/or within the workplace. However, the development of skills of analysis, application of theory, development of scenarios, evaluation of strategies should be refined through the analysis of up-to-date case study materials and small or whole group discussion.

Outcome 1 Candidates will build upon their knowledge of the retail environment by expanding their understanding of the changing consumer and by reviewing recent technological changes which are currently impacting on the work of retail organisations. They will study logistics and learn how technology has allowed streamlining of the logistical function to drive growth in dominant retailers. Candidates will also investigate how retailers are responding to changes - including current developments in online and non-store retailing. This outcome is a vital 'building block' for achievement of the two following outcomes because it encourages candidates to address current events which are influencing retail change.

Outcome 2 This presents candidates with a range of theories of retail change which can be used to explain retail developments and to try to predict future change. Candidates will learn about the basic cyclical theories of change - including the Wheel of Retailing, Retail Lifecycle and Retail Accordion; about retail theories relating to environmental change (such as changes arising from changes in the social and technological environment) such as Evolution Theory and Institutional Theory and about Conflict Theory. Candidates should be introduced to reasons why retail theories can be useful tools in the creation of retail strategy

Unit title: Comparative Retailing

and should be encouraged through use of case studies and examples to apply the theories to real and current situations (including, where possible, organisations where they work). Candidates should be encouraged to explain possible future retailer actions according to a variety of theories. Candidates should develop their critical thinking ability through being encouraged to criticise and evaluate theories in the light of their application to real situations.

Outcome 3 This is designed to further develop the research and analytical capability of candidates through self-directed study. Candidates should be encouraged to select a topic for study which reflects an area of particular vocational interest - such as internationalisation, growth strategies, development of online retailing, retailing of music, transport retailing for example. They should be supported in finding information from a variety of sources (not just online sources) which illustrate the current strategies and actions of several retailers. Support will also be needed to direct analysis of retailer strategies and to apply retail theories to predict their possible success (or suggest alternatives).

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

A range of techniques should be used in the delivery of this unit. Some elements of knowledge, for example development of knowledge and particularly an understanding of retail theories may benefit from formal delivery and discussion. However, the unit is designed to take account of recent and current consumer, technological, competitive and retail developments. Therefore analysis of up-to-date case studies and examples should be encouraged in Outcomes 1 and 2, with small or whole group participation a useful way to build analytical and critical thinking skills, and to build confidence in applying theory to real situations. Candidates will be required to undertake self-study in Outcome 3, but should receive regular direction and support in analysing retailer strategies and applying theory to these to predict success.

Open learning

This Unit is unlikely to be suitable for delivery by open learning except for exceptional candidates with good experience of retail management that can be applied to the learning process.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Comparative Retailing

For information on normal open learning arrangements, please refer to the SQA guide *Assessment and Quality Assurance of Open and Distance Learning (*SQA, 2000)

Candidates with additional support needs

This Unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Additional Support Needs* (BA 2399, SQA, due 2004).

General information for candidates

Unit title: Comparative Retailing

The knowledge you gain in this unit will help you understand why and how retailers develop and evolve through recognising and responding to changes in consumer demands.

Firstly you will learn how successful retailers, through recognising changing consumer demands, respond to their needs to survive and flourish in a competitive retail market. Then you will learn a variety of retail theories which have been developed to explain how individual retailers, and the retail industry itself have evolved over time. You will learn that these theories can be used not only to explain past and current changes in retailing, but by retail organisations to plan future direction and strategy.

You will study current influences on consumers and current retailer responses and strategies and will be able to evaluate whether, according to theory, these are likely to contribute to future growth and success in the industry.

You may be assessed in either of the following ways:

♦ Outcomes 1 and 2 may be assessed through a Case Study (1000-1500 words) and Outcome 3 assessed separately by an assignment (500-750) words

♦ Assessment of all outcomes can take the form of an integrated assignment, for which you will undertake research into an aspect or sector of retailing in which you have developed an interest through other HND Retail Management units. The integrated assignment will be no more than 2000 words in length.