**Higher National Unit Specification**

**General information for centres**

**Unit title:**   Auditing Management Systems

**Unit code:**  DW6E 34

**Unit purpose:** This Unit is designed to enable the candidate to demonstrate that s/he can audit a management system which is based on a recognised standard in the areas of quality, environmental or health and safety.

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

1      Prepare to audit a management system.
2      Conduct an audit of a management system.
3      Prepare an audit report of a management system.

**Credit points and level:** 1 HN Credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7*).

*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:** It is recommended that candidates undertaking this Unit possess good written and verbal communication skills, together with the possession of the HN Units in Management of Quality (DW6G 34) and Production of an Integrated Quality, Environmental and Health and Safety Systems Policy Manual (DW6J 34).

**Core Skills:**  There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of Communication at SCQF level 6, Problem Solving at SCQF level 6 and Working with Others at SCQF level 6 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

**Context for delivery:** If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it 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 may be taken to the assessment of all three Outcomes. The Unit may be assessed by (a) the preparation of the entire pre and post audit preparation documents and (b) the conduct of an audit either in an organisation or through simulation and role play.

# Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

## Unit title:   Auditing Management Systems

## Unit code:  DW6E 34

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

Prepare to audit a management system

### Knowledge and/or skills

♦ Reasons for an audit
♦ Audit scope
♦ Practices used in initiating, preparing and planning an audit
♦ Audit team roles and responsibilities
♦ Development of audit procedures

### Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can:

♦ identify the reasons for an audit
♦ identify the scope of an audit
♦ develop a strategy for the audit
♦ explain the roles and responsibilities of the audit team
♦ develop an audit schedule based on the strategy
♦ prepare an audit procedure based on the requirements of the system standard in use
♦ prepare suitable audit documentation

### Assessment guidelines

All Outcomes can be assessed by one integrated instrument of assessment. The Assessment Guidelines following Outcome 3 give further details.

# Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

**Unit title:** Auditing Management Systems

## Outcome 2

Conduct an audit of a management system

### Knowledge and/or skills

♦ Audit procedures
♦ Audit checklists
♦ Auditing techniques/methodology
♦ Managing audit information

### Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate the knowledge and/or skills items by showing that they can:

♦ participate in an opening meeting with the auditee
♦ conduct an audit following the requirements on an audit procedure
♦ complete an audit checklist during an audit
♦ record observations, interviews and outcomes
♦ manage all relevant data gathered during the audit

### Assessment guidelines

All Outcomes can be assessed by one integrated instrument of assessment. The Assessment Guidelines following Outcome 3 give further details.

## Outcome 3

Prepare an audit report of a management system

### Knowledge and/or skills

♦ Audit report findings
♦ Close out session
♦ Corrective and preventive actions
♦ Close audit

### Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate the knowledge and/or skills items by showing that they can:

♦ prepare an audit report based on the audit findings
♦ communicate a summary of the report to the auditee at a close out session
♦ negotiate with the auditee on corrective and preventive actions at the close out session
♦ identify actions to close out the audit

# Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

**Unit title:** Auditing Management Systems

## Assessment guidelines

All Outcomes can be assessed by one integrated instrument of assessment. The Assessment Guidelines following Outcome 3 give further details.

## Assessment guidelines for the Unit

A holistic approach can be taken to the assessment of all three outcomes. A single instrument of assessment based on a case study scenario and role play of an organisation may be used, or the candidate may be assessed by preparing for, carrying out and reporting on an audit using the candidate's own work environment. The approach involving the candidates own work environment may be particularly suitable for those candidates who already function in a quality related role within their organisation.

The scenario in the case study should state that the organisation has to be audited against the requirements of a specified Quality, Health and Safety or Environmental Management Standard. The current version of the standard should be referenced where relevant.

Where the candidate's own work environment is being used the appropriate Quality, Health and Safety or Environmental Management Standard should be referenced where relevant.

For Outcome 1, each candidate should provide evidence to show that s/he can develop an audit strategy, and develop an audit schedule based on the strategy. The strategy shall include factors such as the scope of the audit, which may be based on the content of earlier audit reports. An audit procedure, based on the requirement of the management system standard in use should also be produced, along with documentation such as notification of audit forms, checklists etc. The procedure should include the basic procedure requirements of purpose, scope, responsibilities, and detailed procedure. At the opening meeting the candidate should explain the roles and responsibilities of the audit team to the auditee.

For Outcome 2, each candidate should provide evidence to show that s/he can implement an audit strategy, and follow the requirements of an audit procedure during an audit. Audit documentation prepared to support the audit should also be completed with all records maintained and data collated in a professional manner. The evidence recorded on the audit documentation should indicate that the auditor can interpret the requirements of the standard, and relate this to the situations found in the audit.

For Outcome 3, each candidate should provide evidence to show that s/he can prepare an audit report based on the findings of the audit, and communicate a summary of the report at a closing meeting. Corrective actions should also be agreed with the auditee at the meeting.

At all stages in the audit process the auditor should adopt a professional manner.

# Administrative Information

**Unit code:**            DW6E 34

**Unit title:**            Auditing Management Systems

**Superclass category:**       AG

**Date of publication:**       August 2006

**Version:**             01

**Source:**             SQA

# Higher National Unit specification: support notes

## Unit title:   Auditing Management Systems

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 likely to form part of a Group Award designed to provide candidates with knowledge in the field of quality.

The Unit considers the planning, carrying out, reporting, and corrective actions carried out during the audit cycle.

Outcome 1 requires the candidate to analyse a Standard and plan an audit.  There is opportunity for the candidate to develop communication and problem solving core skills

Outcome 2 requires the candidate to carry out an audit to specified Standard.  There is opportunity for the candidate to develop oral communication and working with others core skills.

Outcome 3 requires the candidate to complete the audit, hold a closing meeting, negotiate corrective and preventive actions and report audit findings.   There is opportunity for the candidate to develop oral and written communication, problem solving and working with others core skills.

## Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

Candidates should have access to current version of the standards that will be adopted in the case study scenario or by their own organisation. The standards shall be interpreted by candidates to suit the type of business they are being assessed on.

Teaching should be supported with current literature, textbooks, case studies and role plays to simulate a realistic working environment. Reference should be made to ISO 10011.

The minimum documents which are required to be produced to meet the written requirements of the Unit are:

1    An audit strategy
2    An audit schedule
3    An audit procedure
4    An audit checklist
5    An audit report

*Opportunities for developing Core Skills*

The delivery and assessment of this Unit may contribute towards all components of the Core Skill of Communication at SCQF level 6 because of the requirement to read Quality Management System documentation, communicate orally throughout the Audit including  the opening and closing meetings and to write an Audit Report that is to a standard acceptable in industry.

**Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

**Unit title:**  Auditing Management Systems

The delivery and assessment of this Unit may also contribute to all components of the Core Skill of Problem Solving at SCQF level 6 because of the requirement to critically analyse a Quality Management System, plan and organise a Quality Audit and to review and evaluate the findings of the audit.

The delivery and assessment of this Unit may also contribute towards the Core Skill of Working with Others at SCQF level 6 because Quality Audits are often carried out by Audit teams.  This offers opportunity to improve teamwork skills.  In addition, during the audit, auditors must work with the auditee to gather information.

## Open learning

If this Unit is delivered by open or distance learning methods, additional resources will be required for candidate support, assessment and quality assurance. For further information and advice please refer to the SQA guide: *Assessment and Quality Assurance for Open and Distance Learning* (A1030, February 2001)

## 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 Alternative Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs,* which is available on the SQA website **www.sqa.org.uk.**

# General information for candidates

## Unit title:   Auditing Management Systems

This Unit is a one credit Unit at SCQF level 7. It is recommended that prior to undertaking this Unit you have knowledge of management systems within an organisation. It is recommended that candidates undertaking this Unit possess good written and verbal communication skills, together with the possession of the HN Units in Management of Quality (DW6G 34) and Production of an Integrated Quality, Environmental and Health and Safety Systems Policy Manual (DW6J 34).

The Unit is designed to:

♦   enhance your ability to plan, carry out and report on an audit
♦   improve your understanding of the role of management system standards and their application in organisations
♦   improve your core skills of communication, problem solving and working with others

The Unit has three Outcomes. The first addresses the practices which are necessary when planning an audit. The second looks at putting the audit plans into action by carrying out an audit. The third explores the area of audit reporting and feedback to the auditee.

All subject content in all three outcomes is strongly linked.

The content of the Unit will be kept relevant through the use of appropriate examples which may be covered by case studies, simulation and role play. This should provide a realistic environment for you to gain confidence in your ability to participate in the audit process.

For a successful completion of this Unit, you will be required to achieve a satisfactory level of performance on the assessment work. This will require you to plan an audit, carry out an audit, either with the use of a case study scenario or in your own organisation, and report on the audit findings. To do this you will be expected to apply the concepts that you have learned during the course to the situation in the organisation to be audited.