Higher National Unit specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Project Management: An Introduction

Unit code: F1NH 34

Unit purpose: This Unit will enable candidates to develop the basic knowledge and skills required to plan, implement, monitor, review and evaluate a small scale project.

The Unit is intended for candidates who are working or preparing to work in a supervisory or management capacity in the public, private or voluntary sectors. Candidates will be competent in their own field of operation and be seeking to gain a formal project management qualification.

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

1   Plan a project.
2   Implement, monitor and review a project.
3   Evaluate a project.

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: Access to this Unit will be at the discretion of the centre. However, it would be beneficial if the candidate had good communication, numeracy and information technology skills as might be demonstrated by the achievement of Units in these subject areas at SCQF level 6. In the absence of such evidence, equivalent experience within a work environment would be desirable.

Core Skills: There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of Communication, Working with Others and Problem Solving at SCQF level 6 and the component 'Using Graphical Information' of the Core Skill of Numeracy SCQF level 5 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.

General information for centres (cont)

Assessment: Outcomes 1–3 can be assessed by the development of project management documentation, for a workplace project for which the candidate has responsibility. Alternatively, a simulated case-study based project can be provided by the centre.

Outcomes 1–3 can be delivered as a single assessment or as a series of assessment events matching the progression of the Outcomes.

Assessors should assure themselves of the authenticity of each candidate's submission.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Project Management: An Introduction

Unit code: F1NH 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

Plan a Project

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ♦ Project Definition
- ♦ Project Feasibility
- ♦ Project Planning
- ♦ Project Management Techniques
- ♦ Resource Allocation
- ♦ Risk Analysis

Evidence Requirements

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

- ♦ explain the key features of a project
- ♦ identify a project which has been assessed for its feasibility
- ♦ produce a project plan which includes details of scope, resources, cost, implementation, completion, evaluation and dissemination
- ♦ develop one project management technique — Action Plan, GANTT chart or PERT diagram
- ♦ allocate a minimum of three project resources
- ♦ identify potential risks to the project, estimate their probability and likely impact on the project

Assessment Guidelines

This Outcome can be assessed in conjunction with Outcomes 2 and 3 or as a separate assessment event. Details can be found in the Assessment Guidelines for Outcome 3.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Project Management: An Introduction

Outcome 2

Implement, monitor and review a project

Knowledge and/or Skills

- Implementation
- Monitoring
- Managing Problems
- Internal and external communication strategies
- Reviewing progress
- Completion
- Dissemination

Evidence Requirements

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

- describe the process of implementing the project
- explain how the project is monitored in terms of roles, importance and process
- discuss potential problems which may arise, including slippage, quality and budget
- develop strategies to manage problems
- discuss internal and external communication strategies
- explain how progress of the project is reviewed
- explain how the project is brought to a conclusion
- explain how results of the project will be made available to stakeholders

The Evidence Requirements should be generated during the implementation, monitoring and review phases of a project.

Assessment Guidelines

This Outcome can be assessed in conjunction with Outcomes 1 and 3 or as a separate assessment event. Details can be found in the Assessment Guidelines for Outcome 3.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Project Management: An Introduction

Outcome 3

Evaluate a project

Knowledge and/or Skills

♦ Measures of success
♦ Results appraisal
♦ Areas for improvement

Evidence Requirements

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

♦ identify measures by which to evaluate the success of a project, including quality, whether it was on time, within budget and met its objectives
♦ evaluate whether the project has met measures of success
♦ explain a minimum of two areas for improvement

Assessment Guidelines

This Outcome can be assessed in conjunction with Outcomes 1 and 2.

In the assessment, candidates may be required to produce a report or reports based on a project from their workplace situation or a simulated case study covering the Evidence Requirements for all Outcomes. The report could be circulated to project stakeholders.

If a workplace situation is used care may be necessary to ensure that this will provide candidates with sufficient opportunity to meet the Evidence Requirements. It may be appropriate for tutors to ensure in advance that a particular workplace will allow candidates to generate sufficient and suitable evidence.

Administrative Information

Unit code: F1NH 34

Unit title: Project Management: An Introduction

Superclass category: AG

Original date of publication: May 2007

Version: 01

History of changes:

Version	Description of change	Date

Source: SQA

SQA acknowledges the valuable contribution that Scotland's colleges have made to the development of Higher National qualifications.

Additional copies of this Unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Please contact the Customer Contact Centre for further details, telephone 0845 279 1000.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Project Management: An Introduction

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

The Unit is designed to enable candidates to successfully plan, implement and evaluate a project. The Unit will enable candidates to do so by giving them the essential underpinning knowledge and skills for the successful management of projects.

Outcome 1 develops candidates' knowledge of what project management is, how to identify a project and plan how that project will run. Candidates could identify a project in their own work environment or be given a case study which will allow all the Evidence Requirements to be covered. Candidates could consider the differences between running a project and dealing with operational issues. Problems may arise in the implementation of a project and will be addressed in Outcome 2. Candidates may study a range of project management techniques such as Action Plans, GANTT charts and PERT diagrams and select from these to plan their own project. These could be included in the assessment report for Outcome 1. Candidates could also consider the issue of resource allocation in project management and apply this to their own project. The theory of risk analysis could be covered in this Outcome. Candidates should identify the risks associated with their own project.

In Outcome 2 candidates may implement their project plan. Candidates could consider the role, importance and process of monitoring a project. They could also consider how they are going to monitor their own project. Candidates could consider how to spot potential problems such as slipping timescales, quality, availability of resources, or going over or under budget. They could consider the impact of a problem, who it will impact and how it will impact the project. Candidates could then consider how to react to problems which do arise, such as changing the timescale, scope, quality, resources. If no problems arise in the duration of the candidate's own project they could consider how problems were prevented. Candidates could consider the communication process in a project team and what communication processes they are using with project stakeholders. Candidates could consider the process of reviewing progress in a project and how they review progress in their own project. Candidates could consider the range of tasks involved in bringing a project to a close such as preparing a checklist for closing the project, preparation of final reports and how these will be disseminated to stakeholders, which may include report documentation, presentations, publishing on the web, and/or journal articles.

In Outcome 3 candidates evaluate a project. Candidates could consider other completed projects and decide whether a past project has been successful, where appropriate, applying this to their own. This may include aspects such as time, quality, achievement of objectives, delivery. Candidates should appraise the results of their own project, consider how to identify areas of potential improvement and show any areas where the project may have benefited from tasks having been done differently.

As this is an introductory level Unit, covering smaller scale projects (or sub-projects within more major undertakings), suggested project duration would be 12 to 18 weeks in total.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Project Management: An Introduction

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

This Unit is primarily designed to provide candidates with the knowledge and skills to successfully undertake a small project in the workplace.

The assessment of Outcome 1 should take place before implementation of the project. The assessment of Outcome 2 and 3 will include a report describing the implementation and evaluation of a project. It should be in the form of a report which could be disseminated to project stakeholders.

The Unit can be delivered and assessed with or without the support of commercially available project management software.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of Communication, Working with Others and Problem Solving at SCQF level 6 and the component 'Using Graphical Information' of the Core Skill of Numeracy SCQF level 5 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

Candidates may have an opportunity to analyse risk factors in their project in Outcome 1. This will involve identifying the risk factors, assessing the relevance of these factors and developing an approach to deal with the risks. This will be assessed and may give candidates the opportunity to develop the component 'Critical Thinking' of the Core Skill Problem Solving at SCQF level 6. The general skill that candidates may have to complete is 'analyse a complex situation or issue'.

Candidates may also have the opportunity to plan a project, including its organisation, within Outcome 1. They may also have the opportunity to consider resource allocation in a project. In Outcome 2 candidates have to close and complete a project. The project planning and completion will be assessed. The specific skills which the candidates will have an opportunity to develop are developing a plan, identifying and obtaining resources to carry out the plan and carrying out a task. This may give the candidate the opportunity to develop the component 'Planning and Organising' of the Core Skill Problem Solving at SCQF level 6. The general skill that candidates may have to complete is 'Plan, organise and complete a complex task'.

In Outcome 2 the candidate could identify and resolve problems which may arise during the implementation of a project. In Outcome 3 they will be assessed on the evaluation of their project. They may evaluate the effectiveness of their project, identifying and gathering appropriate evidence to justify their evaluation. Considering what lessons may be learned, drawing conclusions and making recommendations gives candidates the opportunity to develop the component 'Reviewing and Evaluating' of the Core Skill of Problem Solving at SCQF level 6. The general skill that candidates may have to complete is 'Review and evaluate a complex problem solving activity'.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Project Management: An Introduction

In completing the course work for Outcomes 1–3 candidates may have the opportunity to develop the Core Skill of Working with Others at SCQF level 6. Candidates will have to define the goal of their project and identify the component tasks and roles. This may involve negotiating roles and responsibilities with others, taking account of their own strengths and weaknesses and those of colleagues. Candidates may also negotiate working methods and rules for managing the work of the project and support co-operative working. Candidates may have to evaluate and draw conclusions about their own contribution to the project in Outcome 3. The general skill required is "Work with others in a group to analyse, plan and complete a complex activity.

There are opportunities to develop the component 'Written Communication' of the Core Skill of Communication at SCQF level 6 in the assessment of Outcomes 1–3. Candidates may complete written reports, requiring that they produce well-structured written communication, on a complex topic. In so doing they should present essential ideas in a logical and effective order, use a structure which takes account of purpose and audience. They may also use language and conventions effective in achieving their purpose, adapting where necessary, to take account of the target audience of project stakeholders. They may use spelling, punctuation and sentence structures which are consistently accurate and vary sentence structure, paragraphing and vocabulary to suit the purpose and target audience.

If candidates complete an oral presentation they will have an opportunity to develop the component 'Oral Communication' of the Core Skill Communication at SCQF level 6. They may use vocabulary and a range of spoken language structures consistently and effectively at an appropriate level of formality. They may convey all essential information with supporting detail accurately and coherently with varied emphasis as appropriate. They may structure the communication to take full account of purpose and audience and take account of the audience during delivery. The general skill that the candidates may have to complete is 'Produce and respond to oral communication on a complex topic'.

In Outcome 1 candidates are required to develop a project management technique. If candidates develop a Gantt chart, they will have the opportunity to develop the component 'Using Graphical Information' of the Core Skill of Numeracy SCQF level 5. The development of a Gantt chart will allow candidates to select an appropriate form of graph or chart and communicate information to the project team and/or stakeholders. The general skill they may complete is "Interpret and communicate graphical information in everyday and generalised contexts.

Candidates may have the opportunity to develop the Core Skill of Information Technology at SCQF level 6 if, for example, they use project management software in the monitoring, managing and completion of projects (and any related tasks) or where using presentation software in disseminating information and results.

Open learning

This Unit is suitable for delivery by open or distance learning method however, it would require planning by the centre to ensure the sufficiency and authenticity of candidate evidence. It would also require provision that any necessary additional planning and resources are made available for candidate support, assessment and quality assurance. A combination of new and traditional authentication tools may have to be devised for assessment and reassessment purposes.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Project Management: An Introduction

Candidates with disabilities and/or additional support needs

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. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (**www.sqa.org.uk**).

General information for candidates

Unit title: Project Management: An Introduction

The purpose of this Unit is to introduce you to the knowledge and skills to undertake and complete a small scale project.

On successful completion of the Unit you will be able to:

1   Plan a project.
2   Implement, monitor and review a project.
3   Evaluate a project.

You may have the opportunity to plan, implement and evaluate a project from your workplace or from a case study.

In Outcome 1 you will learn how to identify the key features of a project. You will learn how to plan a project and use project management tools such as an Action Plan, Gantt chart or PERT diagram to assist in planning. You will also learn about resource allocation in project management and how to undertake a risk analysis. Outcome 1 may be assessed by the production of a project planning document.

In Outcome 2 you will learn how to implement a project. You will learn about monitoring techniques and how to deal with problems which can arise in the implementation of projects. You will also learn about the importance of communication and reporting in project management. You will learn how to manage a project's progress, the key factors which need to be considered when closing a project and methods of dissemination of its results.

In Outcome 3 you will learn how to evaluate a project. You will learn how to select suitable evaluation criteria, appraise the results and identify any lessons which have been learned or tasks which may have benefited from having been done differently.

Outcomes 2 and 3 may be assessed by the production of a project report which could be disseminated to stakeholders.

You will be asked to gather and present evidence in your assignment that meets all the requirements for each of the three Outcomes in this Unit.

During the course of the Unit there will be opportunities for you to develop important Core Skills in the areas of Communication, Working with Others, Problem Solving and Numeracy.

This Unit introduces you to project management. You may wish to progress to the G873 16 Diploma in Project Management after completing this Unit. This Diploma is made up of two SCQF level 8 Units; DV5H 35 *Project Management: Project Justification and Planning* and DV5J 35 *Project Management: Managing the Implementation of a Project*.