

Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Women's Studies Research Project

Unit code: DH56 34

Unit purpose: This unit is designed to enable candidates to research and report on a specific topic related to women's studies. Candidates will examine the advantages and disadvantages of social science research methods within the context of women's studies, before undertaking a piece of individual research on a topic of their choosing.

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

1. Describe and evaluate the main research methods used in social science/women's studies.
2. Plan, implement and evaluate a research 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: Candidates should have good communication skills. Some prior study of a social science subject would be useful but is not essential.

Ultimately, entry is at the discretion of the centre.

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

Context for delivery: This unit is included in the framework for PDA Women's Studies. It may also be suitable for delivery as a stand-alone unit for candidates with a specific interest in this area.

Assessment: Assessment for Outcome 1 will be by restricted response questions. This assessment will be an open-book assessment that will take place in-class under supervised conditions. Candidates will not know the questions in advance. Assessment for Outcome 1 should be completed before the candidate commences the research project in Outcome 2.

General information for centres (cont)

Assessment for Outcome 2 will be by written report reflecting the candidate's personal research into a topic of their choosing. Additional evidence will be generated by means of a written action plan, a tutor progress interview and a written evaluation.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

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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

Describe and evaluate the main research methods used in social science/women's studies

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Primary and secondary sources of data
- ◆ Qualitative and quantitative data
- ◆ Data collection methods
- ◆ Main research methods
- ◆ Principles of ethical research

Evidence requirements

Evidence for the knowledge and/or skills in this Outcome will be provided on a sample basis.

A candidate's response can be judged to be satisfactory when the evidence provided is sufficient to show that the candidate is able to:

- ◆ identify examples of primary and secondary data relevant to women's studies
- ◆ explain the difference between qualitative and quantitative data
- ◆ identify and explain at least three different data collection methods
- ◆ discuss the relative advantages and disadvantages of the chosen data collection methods and evaluate these methods
- ◆ outline the principles of ethical research

This assessment should be completed prior to the candidate commencing their research project. Evidence will be provided in response to restricted response questions. This assessment will be an open-book assessment that will take place in-class under supervised conditions. Candidates will not know the questions in advance. The candidate's response will be approximately 1000 words.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Women's Studies Research Project

Assessment guidelines

Assessment guidelines for this Outcome are contained within the Evidence Requirements. It is recommended that the assessment be undertaken in one sitting of two hours' duration. Where a resit assessment is required, candidates should provide evidence relating to different data collection methods from those used in the first attempt.

Outcome 2

Plan, implement and evaluate a research project

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Define hypothesis/goals of investigation
- ◆ Identify factors likely to affect an investigation
- ◆ Plan investigation
- ◆ Effective implementation of action plan
- ◆ Undertake investigation into relevant topic, producing detailed, accurate findings
- ◆ Evaluation of plan and performance in investigative project

Evidence requirements

- ◆ Plan outlines hypothesis/goals of investigation, resources, tasks and factors which may affect investigation and is agreed with tutor before commencing research. This should consist of a written action plan of approximately 400 words in length.
- ◆ Report provides detailed and accurate explanation of investigation procedures, investigation findings and includes evidence to support the evaluation of the investigation strategy. This should consist of a written report of a research project of approximately 1500 - 2000 words in length.
- ◆ Evaluation includes discussion of feasibility of plan, research and interpersonal skills and draws conclusions regarding future performance in a similar activity. This should consist of a written evaluation of approximately 400 words in length.

The assessment will be conducted under open book conditions, and all items should be taken into account in assessment of a candidate's work. Tutor guidance and assessment should be ongoing throughout the duration of the unit.

Assessment guidelines

Assessment guidelines for this Outcome are contained within the Evidence Requirements.

Administrative Information

Unit code:	DH56 34
Unit title:	Women's Studies Research Project
Superclass category:	FB
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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Women's Studies Research Project

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 enable candidates to explore research issues in social science generally and in women's studies specifically.

Outcome 1 looks at different types and sources of data and methods of collecting and collating data.

Where possible, examples used in this Outcome should relate to Women's Studies and to candidates' own interests and experiences.

Data collection methods: interview, questionnaire, survey, case study, correlational studies, observation, experiment.

Feminist critiques of 'traditional' research methods should also be covered in delivery of this Outcome.

Outcome 2 allows candidates the opportunity to explore in more depth an area of women's studies that is of particular interest to them.

Candidates should be encouraged to draw on life and work experiences when selecting a topic for the project. Candidates' attention should be drawn, however, to potential ethical problems encountered in carrying out research, and tutor guidance should be given as to the practicality of candidates' proposed projects. In order to avoid ethical problems, the candidate's plan should be agreed with the tutor before commencing the research stage.

Candidates should be encouraged to draw on a variety of primary and secondary resources including interviews, questionnaires, case studies, library and online resources.

Candidate progress should be regularly monitored by the tutor using one-to-one progress interviews and pro forma written planning and evaluation questionnaires.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Women's Studies Research Project

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

This Unit is likely to form part of a group award that is designed to give candidates an understanding of the issues relating to women in society. Candidates are likely to have work and life experience relating to the issues raised in this Unit and candidates should be encouraged to use their existing knowledge and experience in selecting a topic for the research project.

Assessment for Outcome 1 should be undertaken separately, preferably before candidates start their research project for Outcome 2. Assessment for Outcome 2 should be in the form of a research project of approximately 1500 - 2000 words in length, in addition to a written action plan and evaluation of approximately 400 words in length each.

Candidates' reports should indicate an investigation into a pre-agreed Women's Studies-related topic, carried out over a period of several weeks. Reports should make reference to the written action plan and should contain detailed and accurate findings, drawing conclusions based on the original hypothesis/goals of the investigation, and identifying flaws and problems in the research. This should be further exemplified in the written evaluation, with conclusions for future activities clearly stated.

Open learning

The Unit could be delivered by open or distance learning. However, it would require planning by the centre to ensure sufficiency and authenticity of candidate evidence. Arrangements would have to be made to ensure that the assessment was conducted under supervision. For further information on Open and Distance Learning, please refer to the SQA publication, *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: Women's Studies Research Project

This Unit provides you with the opportunity to choose an area of women's studies that interests you and study it in more depth. You will learn about research methods and skills before carrying out your own investigative project into a particular area of interest.

At the end of Outcomes 1 you will sit an open-book, in-class assessment where you will write answers to restricted response questions. You will be expected to write about 1000 words. In Outcome 2, you will carry out practical research and write up a project report of approximately 1500 - 2000 words in length. You will also write an action plan and an evaluation of approximately 400 words in length each.

Your tutor will discuss and agree your topic choice with you before you commence Outcome 2, and will offer a progress interview and ongoing advice during the research element of the unit.