



Higher National Graded Unit specification

General information for centres

This Graded Unit has been validated as part of the HND Countryside Management. Centres are required to develop the assessment instrument in accordance with this validated specification. Centres wishing to use another type of Graded Unit or assessment instrument are required to submit proposals detailing the justification for change for validation.

Graded Unit title: Countryside Management: Graded Unit 2

Graded Unit code: F4BR 35

Type of Graded Unit: Project

Assessment Instrument: Investigation

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.*

Purpose: This Graded Unit is designed to provide evidence that the candidate has achieved the following principal aims of the HND Countryside Management to:

- ◆ provide individuals with generic and specific knowledge and understanding, competencies, skills and abilities of countryside management to make them employable at the management level of the industries or to pursue an independent career
- ◆ to develop skills and knowledge of the practical management of informal recreation and biodiversity in the countryside
- ◆ further develop ecological and environmental knowledge
- ◆ further develop Core Skills
- ◆ enable candidates to exercise autonomy and initiative in some activities at a professional level
- ◆ deal with ethical and professional issues in accordance with current professional and/or ethical codes or practices under guidance

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: It is recommended that the candidate should have completed or be in the process of completing the following Units relating to the above specific aims prior to undertaking this Graded Unit:

- ◆ *Data Collection and Handling Methods* F3X3 35
- ◆ *Ecological Surveying* F433 35
- ◆ *Education for Sustainable Development: Principles and Practice* F434 35
- ◆ *Habitat Management* F3SM 35
- ◆ *Interpretive Principles* F3SR 35
- ◆ *Terrestrial Ecosystems* DP4X 35

General information for centres (cont)

- ◆ *History and Archaeology: An Introduction* F3SN 34
- ◆ *Understanding the Landscape* D5E6 34
- ◆ *Countryside Visitor Management* F3F6 34

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

Assessment: This Graded Unit will be assessed by the use of an Investigation. The developed Investigation should provide the candidate with the opportunity to produce evidence that demonstrates she/he has met the aims of the Graded Unit that it covers.

Administrative Information

Graded Unit code: F4BR 35

Graded Unit title: Countryside Management: Graded Unit 2

Original date of publication: August 2008

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History of changes:

Version	Description of change	Date

Source: SQA

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Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates

Graded Unit title: Countryside Management: Graded Unit 2

Conditions of assessment

The candidate should be given a date for completion of the investigation. However, the instructions for the assessment task should be distributed to allow the candidate sufficient time to assimilate the details and carry out the assessment task. During the time between the distribution of the assessment task instructions and the completion date, assessors may answer questions, provide clarification, guidance and reasonable assistance. The assessment task should be marked as soon as possible after the completion date. The final grading given should reflect the quality of the candidate's evidence at the time of the completion date.

The evidence for the project is generated over time and involves three distinct stages, where each stage has to be achieved before the next is undertaken. Thus any re-assessment of stages must be undertaken before proceeding to the next stage.

If a candidate fails the project overall or wishes to upgrade, then this must be done using a *substantially different* project, ie all stages are undertaken using a new project, assignment, case study, etc. In this case, a candidate's grade will be based on the achievement in the re-assessment, if this results in a higher grade.

Instructions for designing the assessment task

The assessment task is a project. The project undertaken by the candidate must be a complex task which involves:

- ◆ variables which are complex or unfamiliar
- ◆ relationships which need to be clarified
- ◆ a context which may be familiar or unfamiliar to the candidate

The assessment task must require the candidate to:

- ◆ analyse the task and decide on a course of action for undertaking the project
- ◆ plan and organise work and carry it through to completion
- ◆ reflect on what has been done and draw conclusions for the future
- ◆ produce evidence of meeting the aims which this Graded Unit has been designed to cover

The investigation must require the candidate to demonstrate the relationship between land use issues, people management and ecological and conservation principles, topics chosen from the defined mandatory Units. Acting as a consultant who has been asked to review the countryside management of a site and produce a report to present to the client, the candidate should investigate a countryside site. The candidate must be asked to:

- ◆ undertake an element of resource mapping of the site and make at least one site visit to gather first hand information, identify any health and safety risk
- ◆ produce a survey tool to gather data
- ◆ interpret data

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates (cont)

- ◆ produce a report detailing countryside management practices and any best value integration of the land use and visitor needs and any conflicts of these needs
- ◆ produce conclusions as to the environmental and conservation challenge posed by integrating visitors into the countryside site which may require some element of environmental and or conservation protection

An example of a project for *Countryside Management: Graded Unit 2* investigation may be found in the support notes.

Guidance on grading candidates

Candidates who meet the minimum Evidence Requirements will have their achievement graded as C — competent, or A — highly competent or B somewhere between A and C. The grade related criteria to be used to judge candidate performance for this Graded Unit is specified in the following table.

Grade A	Grade C
<p>Is a seamless, coherent piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ has comprehensive evidence for each of the three phases of the project and that has coherent themes throughout ◆ demonstrates high standards through presentation style, language, accuracy and technical content ◆ demonstrates an accurate and insightful analysis and interpretation of the investigative brief's countryside site access issues ◆ demonstrates a systematic approach and a logical progression to the collection and analysis of data of a site ◆ has sought and made good use of a wide range of supporting evidence ◆ has provided evidence of innovation or dynamism in approach ◆ embodies highly effective integration of knowledge and skills ◆ recognises conflicts and potential drawbacks of ideas ◆ demonstrates independence of thought by successfully completing the stages of the project with minimal tutor support 	<p>Is a co-ordinated piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ provides evidence for each of the three phases of the project ◆ is clear in terms of presentation style, language, accuracy and technical content ◆ contains analytical responses to the project brief which relate to countryside site access issues ◆ contains data collection and analysis of a site ◆ contains supporting evidence ◆ contains standard approaches to issue ◆ presents evidence of integration of skills and knowledge ◆ tends to consider ideas and proposals in isolation from each other ◆ requires tutor intervention to keep the investigation on track

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The project will be marked out of 100. Assessors will mark each stage of the project, taking into account the criteria outlined. The marks will then be aggregated to arrive at an overall mark for the project. Assessors will then assign an overall grade to the candidate for this Graded Unit based on the following grade boundaries.

A	=	70%	—	100%
B	=	60%	—	69%
C	=	50%	—	59%

Note: The candidate must pass the planning stage of the case study before he/she can progress to the developing stage, and must pass the developing stage before he/she can continue to the evaluating stage.

Evidence Requirements

The project consists of three stages: planning; developing; and evaluating. The following table specifies the minimum evidence required to pass each stage.

Note: The candidate must achieve **all of the minimum evidence** specified below for each stage of the project in order to pass the Graded Unit.

Project stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements
Stage 1 — Planning 20%	<p>Plan of action which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the rationale for the investigation ◆ a set of aims and objectives for the investigation re land issues, environment and conservation challenges involved ◆ identification of the main issues for research and the techniques and sources to be used ◆ identification of sources and techniques required to collect all required types of information and how they will be utilised ◆ identification of the stages (milestones) involved in the project work and the timescales for completion of each stage (project plan) will be achieved ◆ identification of appropriate Health and Safety procedures <p><i>The candidate must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Planning stage.</i></p>

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates (cont)

Project stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements
Stage 2 — Developing 60%	An investigation report that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ a contents page ◆ review of current up to date literature relevant to the investigation ◆ identification, collection and collation of significant data ◆ manipulation and analysis of significant data ◆ presentation of appropriate data ◆ discussion of data and the findings ◆ conclusions drawn from critical analysis of data ◆ reference listing of sources used in literature review <p><i>The candidate must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Developing stage.</i></p>
Stage 3 — Evaluating 20%	An evaluation report which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ contains an abstract ◆ summarises any unforeseen events and how they were handled ◆ identifies knowledge and/or skills which have been gained or developed ◆ assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the output of the investigation ◆ determines to what extent the investigation met the original objectives <p><i>The candidate must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Evaluating stage.</i></p>

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates (cont)

Support Notes

The investigation should involve the application of knowledge of ecological and conservation principles, people management and land use issues as developed during the defined mandatory Units.

An example of a project for *Countryside Management: Graded Unit 2* might be a candidate acting as a consultant and undertaking an investigation of a site. They would determine the nature of the natural resources present and the demands upon them in relation to visitor needs, multi use, health and safety factors and environmental and conservation protection. This would involve, firstly, finding existing data on public use, general ecology, conservation interests, historical background and the development of the site. The candidate would then need to design a survey strategy to update the information and fill in any crucial gaps in knowledge. Using the data acquired, the candidate would be required to draw up the investigative findings and present conclusions in a report for the client.

It is recommended that at the start of the year, tutorials are held to introduce the project to candidates and provide initial direction. Thereafter it is suggested that regular scheduled meetings between the tutor and individual candidates are held to review progress and to provide appropriate guidance. The guidance must not be such that it influences the final grading, but alerting to the consequences of significant deviation from the plan during their development phase, for example, would be legitimate.

It is desirable for notes of the meetings to be made for the purposes of clarity and to further simulate the working environment. The notes should be agreed upon by both parties.

Candidates should be encouraged to keep a notebook incorporating a diary of the progress and tasks completed. This would facilitate the reflective component and help to ensure that milestones are completed in a businesslike manner.

Tutor questions may be used to ascertain candidates' understanding of the issues contained in the Investigation report and to probe the validity of the conclusions.

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 assessment arrangements. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs*, which is available on SQA's website: www.sqa.org.uk.

General information for candidates

This is a single credit Graded Unit at SCQF level 8. This Graded Unit is a Project: Investigation, to be completed towards the end of your HND. It is designed to assess your ability to integrate and apply knowledge and understanding from the following defined Units in order to meet the principal aims of the HND Countryside Management award. It should integrate knowledge and skills gained in the following HND Units:

- ◆ *Data Collection and Handling Methods* F3X3 35
- ◆ *Ecological Surveying* F433 35
- ◆ *Education for Sustainable Development: Principles and Practice* F434 35
- ◆ *Habitat Management* F3SM 35
- ◆ *Interpretive Principles* F3SR 35
- ◆ *Terrestrial Ecosystems* DP4X 35
- ◆ *History and Archaeology: An Introduction* F3SN 34
- ◆ *Understanding the Landscape* D5E6 34
- ◆ *Countryside Visitor Management* F3F6 34

You will be asked to carry out an investigation to generate data that will be used to construct a report of that investigation. The details of your investigation will be discussed with your tutor, and may involve the gathering (from archival sources and from original surveys) and analysis of data on a given site. The investigation will require you to plan, develop and evaluate. You will be asked to provide an action planning document, an investigation report and an evaluation of your management and effectiveness in conducting the investigation. You will be given a high degree of autonomy during all stages of the investigation; however your tutor is available for initial guidance and support at the start of each of the three stages (planning, developing, evaluating). After the submission of your report, your tutor may interview you to probe your understanding of the issues contained in your report and the validity of your conclusions.

The Project: Investigation will be assessed in three stages:

1	Planning	20% of marks
2	Developing	60% of marks
3	Evaluating	20% of marks

You will need to pass all three stages of your investigation by, and must pass each separate stage before progressing to the next stage. Assessors will mark each stage of your investigation, taking into account the criteria outlined. The marks will then be aggregated to arrive at an overall mark for your project and an overall grade assigned, based on the following grade boundaries.

A	=	70%	—	100%
B	=	60%	—	69%
C	=	50%	—	59%

There are opportunities to develop Core Skills in *Problem Solving, Numeracy, Information Technology* and *Communication*, all at SCQF level 6 in this Unit.