Higher National Graded Unit specification

General information for centres

This Graded Unit has been validated as part of the HNC Contracting 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: Contracting Management: Graded Unit 1

Graded Unit code: F4TR 34

Type of Graded Unit: Project

Assessment Instrument: Practical Assignment

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.*

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

- develop a range of operational management and leadership competences required by employers of those engaged in or aspiring to managerial positions in the contracting industry
- enhance employment opportunities in operational management roles through development of managerial performance and personal competency, in areas such as:
  - managing a project
  - agreeing with contract variations
- utilise personal and teamwork competences for effective self performance, and the performance of the team and organisation operating in the contracting industry

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:

- *Management: Developing Self Management Skills* (DV86 34)
- *Managing and Working with People* (DV82 34)
- *Financial Studies for the Construction Industry* (DW3J 35)
- *Contracting Procedures*(F4NM 34)
- *Contracting Industry Project Management: Practical issues* (F4NK 34)
- *Contracting Industry: An Introduction to Strategic Management* (F4NL 34)

General information for centres (cont)

Core Skills: There are opportunities to develop the Core Skill of *Problem Solving*, *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 a practical assignment. The developed practical assignments 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: F4TR 34

Graded Unit title: Contracting Management: Graded Unit 1

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Version	Description of change	Date

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

Graded Unit title: Contracting Management: Graded Unit 1

Conditions of assessment

The candidate should be given a date for completion of the practical assignment. 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 reassessment 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.

At this level, candidates should work independently. It is up to centres to take reasonable steps to ensure that the project is the work of the candidate. For example, centres may wish to informally question candidates at various stages on their knowledge and understanding of the project on which they have embarked. Centres should ensure that where research etc, is carried out in other establishments or under the supervision of others that the candidate does not receive undue assistance.

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 such as budgetary, practical and resource issues
- relationships which need to be clarified such as resources and human resource issues
- a contracting management 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

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

Project brief

The underlying purpose of the practical assignment is to provide candidates with an opportunity to demonstrate that they possess the personal competences needed to operate effectively as a manager within the contracting industry. It should also enable candidates to apply theoretical concepts of management to tackle a particular situation within the contracting industry and to deal with contingencies arising from it.

Candidates should choose an activity, or a related group of activities, which requires them to take responsibility for the achievement of a specific Outcome or a cluster of related Outcomes pertinent to the overall goals of a contracting organisation. This could be within the context of their normal work experience as a manager or a one-off assignment. Candidates could use a project which they have been asked to complete as part of their work role, or could choose one especially for the purposes of this Unit. Candidates who are not currently working in a managerial capacity are likely to follow this route.

The practical assignment must be in the context of the contracting industry and should involve the following stages:

Stage 1: Planning

1 Set specific objectives for the achievement of the activity.
2 Set personal objectives for the assignment.
3 Identify the human and non-human resources required to complete the activity.
4 Identify the actions required to complete the activity.
5 Prepare a timetable for the completion of the activity.
6 Determine criteria to judge managerial effectiveness.

Stage 2: Implementing

1 Obtain resources needed to carry out the plan.
2 Communicate the objectives for the activity to others involved in the activity.
3 Monitor the actual progress of the plan against the planned timetable.
4 Take corrective action as required.

Stage 3: Evaluating

1 Assess the extent to which personal objectives have been met.
2 Assess the planning and implementation of the activity.
3 Use the pre-determined criteria to judge personal effectiveness as a manager and the contribution to which personal competences have made to managerial effectiveness during the activity.
4 Recommend action to enhance personal competences which will contribute to improved effectiveness as a manager in future managerial activities.

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

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
Is a seamless, coherent piece of work which: ♦ demonstrates clear and explicit links between the three stages of the assignment ♦ considers a broad range of personal competences which cover managing a variety of human and non-human resources ♦ convincingly illustrates how personal competences have influenced the candidate's managerial effectiveness in the context of the contracting industry ♦ effectively applies and integrates knowledge and understanding of managerial concepts and the contracting industry from the HNC Units to all stages of the project ♦ demonstrates a comprehensive and imaginative approach to the project brief, providing a challenging context within which the candidate can deploy their personal competences to display a high degree of managerial effectiveness ♦ contains criteria for evaluation which are coherently related to personal objectives and provide a strong basis for judging personal effectiveness ♦ includes a detailed evaluation of the candidate's managerial effectiveness and makes realistic and carefully justified recommendations for future action which are firmly grounded in their experience during the project ♦ demonstrates a high degree of autonomy during all stages of the practical assignment responds to any advice and guidance in a constructive, reasoned manner	Is a co-ordinated piece of work which: ♦ demonstrates links between the three stages of the assignment ♦ considers a narrow range of personal competences and may exclude some important resource types ♦ illustrates how personal competences have influenced the candidate's managerial effectiveness in the context of the contracting industry ♦ applies knowledge and understanding of managerial concepts and the contracting industry from the HNC Units ♦ demonstrates an approach to the project brief which allows the candidate to deploy their personal competences to display managerial effectiveness ♦ contains criteria for evaluation which may be limited, difficult to use or interpret and may constrain the depth and range of conclusions which the can drawn about personal effectiveness ♦ includes an evaluation of the candidate's managerial effectiveness and makes recommendations with some justification ♦ requires guidance and support, may be unwilling to take act without prior confirmation and may respond to advice and guidance in an uncritical fashion

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

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 achieve all of the minimum evidence specified below for each stage of the project in order to achieve the Graded Unit.

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 40% of marks	Produce an account of the planning stage which includes: ♦ a brief outline of the activity and why it has been chosen. ♦ specific objectives for the achievement of the activity. The objectives must take cognisance of: — the contracting industry context, requirements and procedures — the financial aspects of the activity — practical issues of implementation, perceived barriers or difficulties that may be encountered within the context of the contracting industry ♦ personal objectives for the assignment. ♦ the human and non-human resources required to complete the activity, assessing their relevance and the actions required to complete the activity. ♦ identification of relevant legislation and regulatory requirements. ♦ the actions required to complete the activity, to include those of the candidate and others. ♦ criteria to judge managerial effectiveness, which should refer to the candidate's current level of personal competence. ♦ the impact of health and safety on the activity.

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

Project stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements
Stage 1 — Planning (cont) 40% of marks	This stage will be assessed by the submission of documentation in the form of a plan of approximately 1,500 words or equivalent (excluding appendices) and by an individual interview with the tutor during which the candidate will be expected to explain the materials submitted. Interviews may be conducted face to face, or remotely (by telephone or other means). *The candidate must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Planning stage.*
Stage 2 — Developing 30% of marks	Produce an account of the developing stage which includes: ♦ how the human and non-human resources, including finance needed to carry out the plan, were obtained. ♦ how the objectives were communicated to others involved in the completion of the activity, including an explanation of why the methods used were chosen. ♦ the methods used to monitor the actual progress of the plan against the planned timetable including why they were chosen and how they worked in practice. ♦ how any practical issues were overcome during the implementation of the plan. This must include any corrective action which was required and the reasons why this was needed. If none was required, candidates must provide reasons to explain why this was the case. This section of the practical assignment will be assessed by the submission of an account of the developing stage of approximately 1,000 words or equivalent (excluding appendices) and by an individual interview with the tutor, during which the candidate will be expected to explain the materials submitted. Interviews may be conducted face to face, or remotely (by telephone or other means). *The candidate must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Developing stage.*

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

Project stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements
Stage 3 — Evaluating 30% of marks	Produce an evaluation managerial effectiveness during the practical assignment which includes: ♦ an assessment of the extent to which the candidate's personal objectives for the activity have been met. ♦ an assessment of the extent to which the specific objectives for the activity have been met. This must include as a minimum whether the activity was delivered to budget and within time. ♦ an assessment of the planning and implementation of the activity in terms of which aspects went well and why and which aspects did not go as well and why. ♦ a judgment of the candidate' personal effectiveness as a manager and the contribution to which personal competences have made to managerial effectiveness during the activity — which should be based on the pre-determined criteria. ♦ recommendations for action to enhance personal competences which will contribute to improved effectiveness as a manager in the contracting industry. This section of the practical assignment will be assessed by the submission of an evaluation of approximately 1,000 words or equivalent (excluding appendices) and by an individual interview with the tutor, during which the candidate will be expected to explain the materials submitted. Interviews may be conducted face to face, or remotely (by telephone or other means). *The candidate must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Evaluating stage.*

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

Support notes

The practical assignment has been selected as the instrument of assessment for the *Contracting Management: Graded Unit 1* to allow the candidate to demonstrate their ability to effectively manage an agreed task within the contracting industry, while taking account of the relevant management and legal and regulatory requirements.

By meeting the Outcomes of the practical assignment, the candidate will demonstrate managerial effectiveness through developing personal competences and sound knowledge and understanding of the management and legal concepts, as required to meet the needs of an organisation operating within the contracting industry.

The purpose of the Graded Unit is to allow candidates to integrate the knowledge and skills they have gained during their wider programme of study. Candidates employ knowledge, skills and concepts explored in other Units in the Contracting Management HNC.

Additional guidance on grading

Below is a suggested marking scheme for each stage of this project, which has been provided for guidance only and is not mandatory. Centres may opt to devise their own schemes. The grading table must also be consulted, when identifying an overall grade for candidates. **In all cases, marking schemes must be commensurate with the stated Evidence Requirements**.

Planning

This stage will be assessed by the submission of documentation and by an individual interview with the tutor during which the candidate will be expected to explain the materials submitted. Interviews may be conducted face to face, or remotely (by telephone or other means).

This section is worth 40 marks which could be allocated as set out below.

Up to six marks for an outline of the activity and reasons why it has been chosen. Marks could awarded on the basis of:

- the clarity and comprehensibility of the outline (maximum of one mark)
- the extent to which the reasons are convincing and related to the candidate's situation
- the degree of initiative shown by the candidate in making arrangements for the activity and in the selection of the activity itself

Up to six marks for the specific objectives for the achievement of the activity. Marks could be awarded on the basis of:

- the extent to which the objectives are consistent with the candidate's current levels of managerial effectiveness and personal competence

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

- the extent to which the objectives fit in with organisational and other relevant targets including:
  - the contracting industry context, requirements and procedures
  - the financial aspects of the activity
  - practical issues of implementation, perceived barriers or difficulties that may be encountered within the context of the contracting industry
- the extent to which the objectives are SMART

Up to six marks for personal objectives for the assignment. Marks could be awarded on the basis of:

- how closely the objectives refer to the candidate's personal competences
- how clearly the objectives demonstrate that the activity will give the candidate an opportunity to reflect on how these personal competences affect their managerial effectiveness
- the extent to which the objectives are SMART

Up to five marks for the human and non-human resources required to complete the activity. Marks could be awarded on the basis of:

- the extent to which the required resources (including time) have been clearly and fully identified (maximum of one mark)
- the clarity and accuracy of the explanation of how resources will be obtained
- the clarity and accuracy of the explanation of the candidate's role in managing them

Up to four marks for the identification of the relevant procedures/legislation and the regulatory requirements which need to be addressed for the completion of the activity. Marks could be awarded on the basis of:

- accurate identification of the procedures/legislation
- accurate identification of the relevant regulations which have to be complied with, in completing the activity

Up to three marks for the actions required to complete the activity. Marks could be awarded on the basis of:

- the extent to which actions which the candidate and others have to undertake in order for the activity to be completed, are identified

Up to four marks for criteria to judge managerial effectiveness. Marks could be awards on the basis of:

- the range of factors covered by the criteria
- the relationship between the criteria and the activity chosen by the candidate
- the extent to which the criteria reflect the candidate's own current level of personal competences
- the extent to which the criteria are likely to enable the candidate to make a valid judgement of managerial effectiveness

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

Up to four marks for a timetable for the completion of the activity. Marks could be awarded on the basis of:

- the inclusion of a final completion date and significant milestones in reaching this date
- the incorporation of likely contingencies and the validity of the justification for them
- how realistic the timetable is with respect to organisational and other targets which the candidate must meet
- the extent to which the timetable is consistent with the objectives for the activity

Up to two marks could be awarded for the impact of Health and Safety on the activity. Marks could be awarded on the basis of:

- a completed risk assessment pro forma

Developing

This stage will be assessed by the submission of documentation and by an individual interview with the tutor during which the candidate will be expected to explain the materials submitted. Interviews may be conducted face to face, or remotely (by telephone or other means).

This section is worth 30 marks which could be allocated as set out below.

Up to seven marks for an explanation of how resources needed to carry out the plan were obtained. Marks could be awarded on the basis of:

- the clarity and comprehensiveness of the explanation for the human and non-human resources, including finance
- the extent to which the candidate was required to use their initiative in obtaining resources
- the methods used to obtain resources and why they were chosen

Up to eight marks for how the objectives for the activity were communicated to others involved in the completion of the activity. Marks could be awarded on the basis of:

- the choice of methods of communication and their appropriateness for the persons concerned
- the extent to which the methods chosen allowed the candidate to extend and develop existing personal competences
- the reasons given to explain why the methods used were chosen
- valid comments on how effective the methods were

Up to eight marks for the analysis of the methods used to monitor the actual progress of the plan against the planned timetable. Marks could be awarded on the basis of:

- the choice of methods of monitoring or control and their appropriateness for the parts of the activity where they were used
- the extent to which the methods chosen allowed the candidate to extend and develop existing personal competences

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

- the reasons given to explain why the methods used were chosen
- valid comments on how well the methods worked in practice

Up to seven marks for an analysis of any corrective action which was required, or alternatively, analysis of why no corrective action was needed. Marks could be awarded of the basis of:

- practical Issues identified
- the validity of the reasons given
- the extent to which the methods of corrective action were suitable in the circumstances, or whether suggested methods would have been suitable
- whether corrective action could have been avoided, or how it was actually avoided

Evaluation

This stage will be assessed by the submission of documentation and by an individual interview with the tutor during which the candidate will be expected to explain the material submitted. Interviews may be conducted face to face, or remotely (by telephone or other means).

This section is worth 30 marks which could be allocated as set out below.

Up to seven marks for an assessment of the extent to which the candidate's personal objectives for the activity have been met. Marks could be awarded on the basis of:

- making explicit connections between personal objectives and what happened during the course of the activity
- attempts to indicate how closely objectives were met
- the strengths and validity of the reasons given to support points made
- comprehensive coverage of all personal objectives
- the use of feedback from others in the evaluation

Up to seven marks for an assessment of the extent to which the specific objectives for the activity have been met and an assessment of the planning and implementation of the activity in terms of which aspects went well and why; and which aspects did not, and why. Marks could be awarded on the basis of:

- reference to several aspects of both the planning and implementing stages
- clear identification of aspects that went well
- clear identification of aspects that may not have gone according to plan
- the strength and validity of the reasons given to support points made
- the use of feedback from others in the assessment

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

Up to nine marks for a judgement of personal effectiveness as a manager and the contribution which personal competences made to managerial effectiveness during the activity. Marks could be awarded on the basis of:

- making explicit use of the pre-determined criteria
- making explicit links between personal competences and managerial effectiveness to illustrate the contribution of personal competences
- a specific, valid and honest conclusion on the candidate's level of managerial effectiveness
- the strength and validity of the reasons given to support points made
- comments on the usefulness of the criteria set for the evaluation

Up to seven marks for recommendations for action to enhance personal competences which will contribute to improved effectiveness as a manager in future managerial activities within the contracting industry. Marks could be awarded on the basis of:

- the extent to which recommendations flow directly from the judgement of personal effectiveness as a manager
- how realistic the recommendations are in terms of how likely the candidate is to be able to carry them out
- the likely usefulness of the recommendations to the candidate in future work as a manager within the contracting industry
- the strength and validity of the reasons given to support points made
- comments on the support available from others to ensure that the recommendations are carried out

Core Skills

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skill of *Communication* at SCQF level 6 in this Graded Unit. The Core Skill of *Communication* is comprised of the components Written Communication and Oral Communication. The general skills of the Written Communication component are 'read and understand complex written communication' for its reading element and 'produce well-structured written communication on complex topics' for its written element. Specific reading skills required by candidates at SCQF level 6 include identifying and summarising significant information, ideas and supporting details in a complex written communication, and evaluation of the effectiveness of the communication in meeting its purpose. Specific writing skills required include 'presenting all essential ideas, information and supporting detail in a logical and effective order, use of a structure which takes account of purpose and audience, emphasising the main points and use of conventions as appropriate to the purpose/audience.

Candidates may need to utilise these skills throughout the Unit, particularly when covering the analytical aspects of their managerial activity, which may be presented in the form of a of a project report.

The delivery and assessment of this Unit may offer opportunities to develop the Core Skill of *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 6. The general skills required by its three components are the abilities to:

- analyse a complex situation or issue
- plan, organise and complete a complex task
- review and evaluate a complex problem solving activity

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

The project requires candidates to undertake the planning, development and evaluation of an activity, including a high degree of Critical Thinking and consideration of a number of variables. These will be dependent on the particular activity, but will include, for example, human resources, financial and other resource considerations, managerial requirements, and others related to the particular area. At the evaluation stage, conclusions must be justified with reference to the evidence gathered.

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

Contracting Management: Graded Unit 1 is assessed by means of a practical assignment in the context of the Contracting Industry. The aim is to give you the opportunity to demonstrate the application of the practical skills and knowledge and understanding to a situation that involves task management. You will be provided with a project brief that allows you to demonstrate your creative, interpersonal and management skills directly.

The Project (practical assignment) is assessed in three stages:

- Planning 40% of total marks
- Developing 30% of total marks
- Evaluating 30% of total marks

You need to satisfactorily complete the planning stage of your assignment before you can progress to the developing stage. Your tutor will mark your submission and discuss this with you on an individual basis, providing you achieve at least 20 marks out of the total 40 marks you will be able to progress to the next stage. Similarly you need to satisfactorily complete the developing stage before you continue to the evaluating stage. Your tutor will mark this stage and meet with you on an individual basis to discuss your submission.

Once you have completed all three stages you will be given an overall grade for the project. The evidence you are required to provide is:

- a plan of action
- evidence of a product or organised activity/meeting or a performance
- evidence that documents the processes underpinning the practical activity
- evidence showing evaluation of managerial effectiveness during the practical activity

The assessment is based on a combination of the end-result of the activity (the product or performance) and the implementation of the activity (the process). You will be asked to:

- interpret the brief
- gather information to clarify the brief
- decide on a product, activity, meeting or performance to develop
- select and manage materials and/or resources
- produce the product, organise the activity or meeting or deliver the performance
- evaluate the product, or activity/meeting or performance (through feedback)

Your final submission should aim to be seamless and coherent, demonstrating clear links between the three stages of the assignment. It should demonstrate your knowledge, understanding and application of the managerial, legal and regulatory concepts within the contracting industry. You should also ensure that you have used your own personal competences in an innovative and imaginative way to enable you to operate with a high degree of managerial effectiveness.

You are given a high degree of autonomy during all stages of the practical assignment, however your tutor is available for guidance and support as and when required. The assignment will be marked as soon as possible after the completion date. The final grading given will reflect the quality of your evidence at the time of completion, the level of support required by you from your tutor and your ability to critically review any assistance given.