



Higher National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Seal Management: Practice

Unit code: FA7M 33

Superclass: SH

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Unit purpose

This Practice Unit is one of two Units (a Theory Unit and a Practice Unit) which make up the Professional Development Award (PDA) in Seal Management at SCQF level 6. It is aimed at those working in the fisheries and fish farm sectors, and is designed to equip candidates with the skills required to use firearms safely and legally in accordance with the terms of the licence, in order to protect fisheries and fish stocks from seal predation.

Candidates will require to demonstrate an acceptable level of marksmanship by target shooting, and also to demonstrate that they use firearms correctly and safely and in accordance with the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010. This will be evidenced by completion of the Performance Test at Outcome 2.

Candidates will have to apply their knowledge of the importance of working within ethical and humane guidelines while meeting all relevant legislation. It is of paramount importance that they understand that while managing seals using firearms, shooting seals only takes place as a last resort, and that Scotland has a duty to protect its seal populations while at the same time protecting fisheries.

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

- 1 Plan for seal management action.
- 2 Undertake a practical shooting test for seal management in compliance with legislation.
- 3 Perform post-shooting procedures to meet legal requirements.

General information (cont)

Recommended prior knowledge and skills

No formal qualifications are required to undertake this Unit. Candidates will normally be working in a marine/fisheries environment where it may be necessary to undertake seal management. Experience of firearm handling is strongly recommended. Those candidates who have no previous marksmanship skills, or limited skills, may require to work under supervision to achieve competence.

Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit credit at SCQF level 6: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6*)

**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.*

Core Skills

In this Unit there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components. However there are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of *Communication, Problem Solving and Working with Others*.

Context for delivery

This Unit is one of the Units in the Professional Development Award in Seal Management at SCQF level 6. This Unit will normally be delivered in conjunction with the Unit, *Seal Management: Theory*. It is recommended that candidates will have completed the Theory Unit before applying their knowledge in this Practice Unit.

Assessment

This Unit is assessed by three assessments. Outcome 1 could be assessed by a short written assignment which should include a risk assessment. Outcome 2 is comprised of the Performance Test which should include observation and recorded evidence. Outcome 3 could be assessed by observation, a short written assignment and a simulation exercise. All Outcomes could be backed up by a portfolio or a log book/diary.

Normally candidates will undertake the marksmanship tasks through simulation, demonstrating an acceptable level of marksmanship by target shooting.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Seal Management: Practice

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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

Plan for seal management action.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Identification of presence of seals
- ◆ Seal species and behavioural characteristics in the context of seal management
- ◆ Characteristics of shooting location
- ◆ Danger to fish/fisheries caused by seals
- ◆ Safety of self, other participants and the public when there is a need to shoot
- ◆ Risk Assessment — risk to wildlife; risk to self and others in performing task
- ◆ Identification of target species
- ◆ Type of permitted firearm and ammunition
- ◆ Accountability, reporting and monitoring mechanisms

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ identify seal species and behavioural characteristics in the context of seal management.
- ◆ identify characteristics of shooting location.
- ◆ establish if seals are causing danger to fish/fisheries.
- ◆ identify target species.
- ◆ carry out a risk assessment.
- ◆ select appropriate type of firearm and ammunition.
- ◆ set up records for planning and monitoring.
- ◆ ensure that work and procedures are carried out in accordance with monitoring mechanisms and that they work within the lines of responsibility and accountability.

Assessment Guidelines

This Outcome could be assessed by a risk assessment along with short-answer questions. The required risk assessment could be part of a portfolio or log book/diary.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Seal Management: Practice

Outcome 2

Undertake a practical shooting test for seal management in compliance with legislation.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Presence and activity of seals and site characteristics
- ◆ Shooting method and firearm and ammunition appropriate to seal species, site characteristics and legal requirements
- ◆ Shooting skills: demonstrating acceptable level of marksmanship by target shooting
- ◆ Identification of when shooting becomes unsafe and must be stopped
- ◆ Location and observation of condition of culled seal
- ◆ Methods of humane dispatch of wounded seals
- ◆ Use of a sound moderator

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ interpret signs of seal activity which could influence type of action.
- ◆ select shooting method, firearm and ammunition appropriate to seal species, site characteristics and legal requirements.
- ◆ use a firearm safely.
- ◆ safely fit and use a sound moderator.
- ◆ demonstrate an acceptable level of marksmanship by placing three consecutive shots within a 4 inch circle target at a distance of both 50m and 100m (six consecutive shots in total). Candidates are permitted three attempts to make the six consecutive shots per assessment.
- ◆ shoot target taking account of range and site characteristics.
- ◆ shoot target effectively and safely, minimising the disturbance to non-target species.
- ◆ shoot target legally in accordance with legislation in Scotland and the Code of Practice.
- ◆ locate and observe reaction of seal to the shot to determine its condition*.
- ◆ approach culled seal safely according to its presumed condition*.
- ◆ take action if shooting is unsafe and requires to be terminated*.
- ◆ dispatch wounded seals humanely*.

*NB for the final four bullet points, it is anticipated that candidates should be able to describe what needs to be done in these circumstances, not that they should carry out these tasks as part of the assessment.

Assessment Guidelines

It is essential that the candidate is observed shooting at a target as defined in the Evidence Requirements and that performance is recorded via an observation checklist of all practice and accompanied by a log book/diary where appropriate.

It is expected that these tasks will normally be undertaken in a simulated environment.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Seal Management: Practice

Outcome 3

Perform post-shooting procedures to meet legal requirements.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Post-shooting treatment of firearms in accordance with manufacturer's guidance/procedures and relevant legislation
- ◆ Carcass recovery
- ◆ Disposal of dead seals safely and in accordance with legislation
- ◆ How to minimise the dangers of disease when handling dead seal
- ◆ Procedures for reporting of kills
- ◆ Public relations for seal management

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ clean, maintain and store firearms and ammunition in accordance with legal requirements.
- ◆ describe how to dispose of dead seals safely and in accordance with industry codes of practice and legal requirements.
- ◆ describe the dangers of disease when handling dead seals and how these can be minimised.
- ◆ maintain accurate records to agreed format.
- ◆ deal with the public and respond to queries with sensitivity.

Assessment Guidelines

This Outcome could be assessed through the use of an observation checklist for the first Evidence Requirement (which could be combined with the assessment for Outcome 2), short answer questions for the second and third Evidence Requirements and through the use of simulation for the last two Evidence Requirements (candidates could complete records based on a case study and respond to queries from the assessor in the role of a member of the public).

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Seal Management: Practice

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 designed to allow candidates to prove their competence in the discharge of firearms in the context of seal management under the terms of the relevant sections of the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010.

Candidates will apply the knowledge and understanding gained in the Unit — *Seal Management: Theory*.

Due to the practicalities in the timing of operations, it is likely that candidates will undertake the tasks in a realistic simulated environment using targets for shooting practice.

The Marine (Scotland) Act 2010: Part 6 — Conservation of Seals will increase protection for seals and improve seal management in Scotland. For the first time it will be illegal to kill or take any seal at any time unless under specific licence. All seal management will be carried out under licence and properly regulated. In particular, Section 111(2) of the Act provides that Scottish Ministers should not issue seal licences authorising a person to kill seals unless they are satisfied that the person has the necessary skills and experience.

All fisheries or fish farms will have to apply for a licence if they wish to undertake a seal management programme to protect fisheries or fish farms from serious damage. Nominated marksmen will require to be licensed. A main form of accreditation will be through successful completion of the two Units which make up the PDA.

It is of paramount importance that candidates understand that while managing seals using firearms, shooting seals only takes place as a last resort, and that Scotland has a duty to protect its seal populations while at the same time protecting fisheries and fish farms.

Outcome 1

Outcome 1 prepares the candidate for the pre-shooting phase in the operation of shooting seals.

Candidates should consider:

- ◆ Characteristics of shooting location — topography, habitat, other activity, public access
- ◆ Type of firearm — centre-fire rifle
- ◆ Ethical issues

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Seal Management: Practice

Health and safety

Legal requirements in relation to the storage, handling and discharge of firearms must be adhered to. Requirements under the Health and Safety at Work Act must also be complied with. At all times, marksmen/licencees must comply with the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 and Code of Practice.

Candidates must know how to assess:

- ◆ Risk — to self, others who may be present, and to wildlife.
- ◆ Risk in relation to the site characteristics, weather conditions and activity of seals within the site area.

Before shooting seals, a thorough risk assessment should be undertaken to avoid danger to the public. Candidates should be aware of possible dangers to seals, self and others.

Particular attention must be paid to:

- ◆ Anglers
- ◆ Boats, canoes and other water users
- ◆ Walkers
- ◆ Aquaculture staff
- ◆ Scuba divers
- ◆ Dolphins and whales
- ◆ Other wildlife

Outcome 2

Outcome 2 is the crucial Outcome of this Unit and of the PDA as it deals with the competence of the marksman, ie applying all knowledge to implement a seal management programme in relation to protecting fisheries and fish stocks by shooting seals. Information below is taken from the Code of Practice. It is important to note that assessment of competence will generally be done by observation of the candidate shooting at a target and not seals in-situ.

Candidates should be conversant with the following:

The Scottish Seal Management Code of Practice — it is a general principle of the new licensing system that seals should only be shot as a last resort. It is an offence to kill seals except under licence or for welfare reasons to alleviate suffering.

Shooting skills — safely and legally — handle a firearm through from receiving to discharging.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Seal Management: Practice

How to shoot seals — information from the Code of Practice

Seals must be shot from a range of not more than 150 metres.

Section 112 (1) (a) of the Act specifies that Marine Scotland will impose conditions specifying maximum numbers of seals which may be killed (as determined by Potential Biological Removal — PBR — calculations) and it is an offence to shoot more than the maximum number of each species of seal permitted by the licence.

Before firing, the nominated marksman should take all reasonable steps to identify the species of seal. Information to assist seal identification is available at www.scotland.gov.uk/seallicensing

Shot placement is concerned with:

- ◆ achieving rapid death.
- ◆ minimising suffering.
- ◆ achieving carcass recovery where possible and safe to do so.

In the case of seals, the recommended shot is a head shot. The brain of a seal is a very small target (orange-sized).

Section 112 (1) (b) of the Act provides for licence conditions in respect of reducing the risk of unnecessary suffering. All reasonable steps should be taken to ensure against a long and painful death. These should include locating and humanely despatching injured animals.

Marksmanship skills

The Code of Practice sets out the required marksmanship skills. In order to demonstrate an acceptable level of marksmanship the candidate is required to place three (3) consecutive shots within a 4 inch target at a distance of both 50m and 100m. This means six (6) consecutive shots in total, if the candidate fails to hit the 4 inch target at either distance they are required to start again, with a maximum of three attempts per assessment to make the required number of consecutive shots. Candidates should be given ample opportunity to practice and to “zero” their firearm before commencing the assessment. The Code of Practice states calibre of firearm and weight of bullet, eg ‘a rifle using ammunition with a muzzle energy not less than 600 foot pounds and a bullet weighing not less than 45 grains’. This effectively excludes any 0.22 rimfire rifles. Only centrefire rifles can be used, with the 0.22 Hornet using 45 grain bullets representing the lowest acceptable combination of bullet weight and energy. Expanding bullets designed to deform in a predictable manner must be used.

Please note the specification of the type and caliber of firearm and of bullets is subject to change by Marine Scotland.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Seal Management: Practice

Candidates should be aware of and practice the following:

Always

- ◆ Remain calm and unhurried when handling firearms.
- ◆ Handle a firearm at all times as if it were loaded.
- ◆ Carry out appropriate risk assessment.
- ◆ Ensure the firearm is clean and undamaged and the correct ammunition is selected.
- ◆ Know how the firearm works, including disengaging of set triggers if fitted.
- ◆ Know the status of the firearm, ie bullet in the chamber, safety on etc. Do not be embarrassed to check the status of the firearm and safety catch, and do so frequently.
- ◆ Be aware of where the barrel is pointing. Do not point at anything not intended to be shot, irrespective of load status.
- ◆ Leave loading the firearm until the last possible moment.
- ◆ When loading/unloading make sure muzzle is pointing in a safe direction. **Remember — most accidents occur when changing the state of a firearm.**
- ◆ Unload the firearm before crossing any major obstacle (fence, stream or ditch) or whenever laying down a firearm, entering a building or vehicle or putting a firearm into a case.
- ◆ Pass a firearm with the muzzle pointing in a safe direction, and before giving or receiving a rifle make sure that all involved can see that it is unloaded, ie magazine is empty or removed, bolt open, chamber clear.
- ◆ Ensure the bore is free from obstruction. When crawling, a purpose-made muzzle cap, or a piece of tape or cling film, is strongly recommended. If the bore becomes obstructed, the firearm should be unloaded and cleaned using a pull-through.
- ◆ Be aware, when in close proximity to the firearm of the effects of muzzle blast. Wear hearing protection when firing and ensure that others in close proximity also do so.
- ◆ After the shot, be aware of the status of the firearm. When moving forward make sure that other people stay behind the marksman, in case a follow up shot is required.
- ◆ Always unload prior to carcass recovery.
- ◆ Ensure that firearms are securely stored and transported.

Never

- ◆ Put off the safety catch or touch the trigger unless there is a stable firing position and the firearm is pointing at the target.
- ◆ Have a loaded firearm in an enclosed space such as a vehicle or building (unless shooting from a stationary vehicle).
- ◆ Carry ammunition other than that required for the firearm being used.

Also

- ◆ Never fire at a target that does not have a safe backdrop.
- ◆ If possible shoot from an elevated position.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Seal Management: Practice

It is acknowledged that nominated marksmen are likely to be experienced individuals but for the sake of clarity, the following safety steps should be followed:

- ◆ The selection of firearm should be correct (Types of firearm — Barrel type and calibre).
- ◆ The passing/receiving, carrying, opening and loading of the firearm should be carried out safely.
- ◆ The stance adopted when discharging the firearm should be correct.
- ◆ The aiming, discharging and unloading of the firearm should be safe, correct and accurate and in accordance with good shooting etiquette.
- ◆ The storing of the firearm when not in use is in accordance with safety and legal requirements.
- ◆ The use of the safety catch is correct.

Section 112 (1) (b) of the Act provides for licence conditions in respect of reducing the risk of unnecessary suffering. Candidates should be aware of the need to take all reasonable steps to ensure against a prolonged and painful death including locating and humanely dispatching injured animals.

Outcome 3

For Outcome 3 candidates will require to undertake all the post-shooting tasks required to meet the legislation set out in the Code of Practice. They will therefore have to apply the knowledge and skills gained in the Theory Unit.

Carcass recovery and disposal

The candidate/licencee should take all reasonable steps to recover dead seals but only when it is safe to do so. Even a carcass that has been in the water for several days should be retrieved wherever possible.

The information below relates to requirements on the licensee.

When a carcass is to be recovered, the licensee must:

- ◆ ensure that it is safe to undertake removal activity, ie not putting self or others in danger.
- ◆ wear suitable heavy duty gloves.
- ◆ move the seal carcass above the high water mark, away from water to a discreet location to avoid carcass being washed away and any risk to public health.
- ◆ if necessary, cover carcass.
- ◆ make careful note of the exact location.
- ◆ after handling, wash and disinfect self thoroughly.

Details of any seal carcass should be reported to the appropriate authorities in accordance with legislative requirements. The report should include OS grid reference, site details and your contact details (telephone number and address) to the following:

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Seal Management: Practice

Scottish Agricultural College Strandings Scheme — Telephone: 01463 243030

If the licensee encounters problems disposing of seal carcasses, advice should be sought from the local office of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA).

Reporting of kills

Each licensee will be required to complete and return the required form every three months with details of any seals shot and whether the carcass was recovered, when no seals have been shot they are required to provide a nil return.

They should maintain accurate records (this is a requirement of the Act and penalties may be imposed for non-compliance). Candidates must understand the importance of this and the severity of non-compliance.

There is a duty of seal licence holders to report details of seals shot to Scottish Ministers **within ten days of the end of each three month period.**

The following details of all seals shot must be recorded on the Marine Scotland seal licence statutory return form provided to licence holders:

- ◆ Date
- ◆ Time
- ◆ Species of seal shot
- ◆ History of carcass recovery
- ◆ Licence number
- ◆ Name on licence

A person to whom a seal licence is granted must send a seal licence return form to the Scottish Ministers within 10 days of the end of each reporting period of 3 months following the granting of a seal licence. Where no seals have been killed, taken or injured during the reporting period concerned, the report must state that fact.

Public relations for seal management

Candidates should be aware of the potential ethical issues that may arise when involved in seal management activities. At all times nominated marksmen must consider the potential consequences of shooting a seal. In order to maintain good public relations they should:

- ◆ maintain close liaison with the local police.
- ◆ maintain close liaison with local representative of Scottish Natural Heritage and local wildlife tourism operators.
- ◆ be aware of the aims of any local seal management plan and be prepared to explain these.
- ◆ explain the required action in polite and diplomatic terms to interested members of the public.
- ◆ when required, explain where further information can be obtained by members of the public.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Seal Management: Practice

Candidates should understand the need to:

- ◆ improve understanding of the factors affecting public attitudes to seal management in Scotland.
- ◆ understand the need to handle potential media enquires with sensitivity and in a balanced way.
- ◆ deal positively with challenges from members of the public from an informed stance.
- ◆ practise positive public relations skills.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

This Unit could be assessed through a mix of practical exercises, written assignments and written/oral questions. Case studies/scenarios could be used to illustrate the knowledge elements.

For Outcome 1 candidates could undertake some research. They will require to carry out a risk assessment on the risk to fisheries, fish stocks, seals and other wildlife present and the dangers to self/others.

Assessment for Outcome 2 will focus on performance evidence. The primary methodology should be observation of the candidate shooting at a target and performing pre-and post shooting tasks using an observation checklist. An exemplar checklist is included in the Assessment Exemplar and in the Arrangements Document for the PDA in Seal Management.

This should be supplemented by questions to ensure coverage of the knowledge requirements. Evidence could be recorded in a portfolio or log book/diary. Outcome 2 provides opportunities for the candidate to demonstrate skills in selecting the correct type of firearm, using it correctly and demonstrating marksmanship skills. Due to the difficulties in providing real situations at the time of assessment, the candidate will normally be assessed by simulation on a target range.

Outcome 3 could be assessed by a mix of performance evidence for the practical aspects and a written assignment or written/oral questions for the remaining knowledge and/or skills as appropriate. It could also include a short simulation exercise.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills in this Unit. However, there are opportunities to develop aspects of the Core Skill in *Problem Solving* (Analysis, particularly within Outcome 2 and the practical activity) and Communication (Written/Oral) through the assessments for the Outcomes. There may also be opportunities to develop aspects of the Core Skill — *Working with Others*.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Seal Management: Practice

Open learning

It may be possible to deliver some parts of this Unit via open or distance learning however direct observation of the candidate will be required for the practical elements of Outcomes 2 and 3.

Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Clarification of Outcome 2 Evidence Requirements.	12/04/11
03	Amendment to Evidence Requirements for Outcome 2.	18/10/11

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General information for candidates

Unit title: Seal Management: Practice

This Unit is designed to provide you with the required skills to work with firearms under licence to implement seal management. In particular, you will require to demonstrate that you can use firearms correctly and safely and in accordance with the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010. You will have to apply your knowledge of ethical and humane guidelines and should use firearms and follow procedures in accordance with all relevant legislation.

The Unit is aimed at those working in the fisheries or fish farm sectors and marine environments.

This Unit is one of two Units (the other covering theory) which make up the Professional Development award at SCQF level 6 and is designed to equip candidates with the skills to use firearms safely and legally for seal management.

On completion of this Unit you should be able to:

- ◆ plan for seal management action.
- ◆ undertake a practical shooting test for seal management in compliance with legislation.
- ◆ perform post — shooting procedures to meet legal requirements.

You will be able to demonstrate ability to:

- ◆ identify the species of seal.
- ◆ carry out risk assessment for the task and work safely in line with Health & Safety requirements and the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010.
- ◆ select a firearm and ammunition which meet the requirements of planned seal management activities and the requirements of the Code of Practice and relevant legislation.
- ◆ use and safely handle firearms, and demonstrate competence in shooting at 50m and 100m putting three shots in a 4-inch circle.