



Higher National Unit specification: general information

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

Graded Unit code: H1XS 34

Type of Graded Unit: Project

Assessment Instrument: Investigation

Publication date: August 212

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

Unit purpose

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

- ◆ to prepare candidates for employment at an appropriate level within the human resource management field by developing their skills
- ◆ to develop knowledge and understanding of the roles, responsibilities and processes involved in managing the human resource
- ◆ adopt an innovative and creative approach to job roles and be able to respond quickly to challenges posed by changes in the human resource function
- ◆ to develop a range of core and transferable skills essential within human resource management
- ◆ to enhance the personal effectiveness of candidates
- ◆ to prepare candidates for progression to further study

General information (cont)

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:

- ◆ *Human Resource Management: Introduction* (H1KP 34)
- ◆ *Individual Employment Relations: Law* (DN75 34)
- ◆ *Individual Employment Relations: Practice* (DN76 34)
- ◆ *Continuing Professional Development: Introduction* (H1XJ 34)
- ◆ *Recruitment, Selection and Induction* (H1XK 34)
- ◆ *Interviewing* (H1XM 34)

Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit 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.*

Core Skills

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components as part of this Graded Unit. However, there may be opportunities to develop the Core Skills of *Problem Solving, Working with Others* and *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)*.

Assessment

This Graded Unit will be assessed by the use of a project in the form of an investigation. The 'fleshed-out' investigation should provide the candidate with the opportunity to produce evidence that demonstrates she/he has met the aims of the Graded Unit it contributes.

This Graded Unit should be undertaken on an individual basis and involves candidates undertaking the role of Consultant to an organisation and responding accordingly. Candidates will be encouraged to plan to introduce the HRM function to a local Small or Medium Enterprise (SME) or a large organisation where a significant part of the HRM function is being introduced. This requires the integration and application of HR skills and knowledge. The plan should include a clear action plan and timescale for implementation. This assessment is not only concerned with applied practice but should provide candidates with opportunities to demonstrate interpersonal and management skills and creative solutions to problems.

The assessment exemplar for this Unit provides assessment and marking guidelines that exemplify the national standard for achievement. It is a valid, reliable and practicable Instrument of Assessment. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the assessment exemplar to ensure a comparable standard. Assessment exemplars are available on SQA's secure website.

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

Graded Unit title: Human Resource Management: Graded Unit 1

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.

At this level, candidates should work independently. It is the responsibility of 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.

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

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

Graded Unit title: Human Resource Management: Graded Unit 1

The assessment task must require the candidate to:

- ◆ identify a suitable scenario in which the HRM function or a major part of the HRM function can be introduced. It is suggested that an appropriate type of organisation in which to introduce the HRM function could be a fictional or a real SME (Small Medium Enterprise) or a large organisation where a significant part of the HRM function is being introduced
- ◆ analyse the task and decide on a course of action for undertaking the project
- ◆ identify the key function(s) of human resource management that need to be included
- ◆ consider and evaluate all possible factors, eg budgetary, legal, staffing, information that may impact upon recommendations
- ◆ present arguments and justify proposals for action
- ◆ reflect on what has been done, critically evaluate the appropriateness of action taken and draw conclusions for the future
- ◆ produce evidence to meet the aims which this Graded Unit has been designed to cover
- ◆ Plan, organise and carry out the investigation through to completion

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.

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

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Grade A	Grade C
<p>Is a seamless, coherent piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ has sufficient evidence for all three essential stages of the project and is clearly inter-related ◆ demonstrates an insightful interpretation of the project brief ◆ is highly focused on the key learning and development tasks associated with the investigation ◆ effectively consolidates and integrates knowledge and skills from across the HNC ◆ is clear and well-structured and the language used is of a high standard in terms of the level, accuracy and technical content ◆ is produced to a high standard 	<p>Is a co-ordinated piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ has sufficient evidence for all three essential stages of the project ◆ demonstrates an acceptable interpretation of the project brief ◆ is focused and relevant to the tasks associated with the investigation ◆ consolidates and integrates knowledge and skills from across the HNC, but this may lack some continuity and consistency ◆ is satisfactorily structured and the language used is adequate ◆ is produced to an adequate standard

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.

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

Graded Unit title: Human Resource Management: Graded Unit 1

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 25%	<p>Develop a brief/action plan to investigate a Human Resource Management issue and assess its implications for an organisation. The brief must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ an outline of the investigation and why it has been chosen. The issue must directly relate to a topic covered as part of the Group Award ◆ the aims and objectives of the project ◆ personal development objectives for the assignment ◆ an explanation of how the investigation will be conducted ◆ considerations of contingency plans ◆ action plan with mile-stones showing time available and a plan for evaluation <p>The brief/action plan should be 750–1,250 words long or equivalent. It may also include charts or diagrams.</p> <p>This section of the project will be assessed by submitting a brief/action plan.</p> <p>This section is worth 25 marks.</p> <hr/> <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)

Graded Unit title: Human Resource Management: Graded Unit 1

Project stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements
<p>Stage 2 — Developing 55%</p>	<p>Produce an investigation report of a Human Resource Management issue that includes evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ detailed explanation of how the HRM issue affects the chosen organisation. The explanation should be justified by explicit reference to the data collected and to concepts, including legislation, covered in the mandatory Units of the Group Award. The explanation must be consistent with objectives at the planning stage ◆ collection, collation and analysis of the primary and secondary sources of information and any other data collected ◆ an awareness of resource constraints affecting the organisation ◆ assessment of the implications and effects on the chosen organisation should be analysed in relation to the organisation's human resource activity and must make reference to concepts and topics, including legislation, studied within the mandatory Units of the Group Award ◆ statement of the conclusions drawn from the investigation and any appropriate recommendations to be made. These should be explicitly related to the issues being investigated and the needs of the organisation <p>The account of the developing stage of the report should be 1,750–2,000 words or equivalent.</p> <p>The report should contain a contents page, a summary of the findings and recommendations made, reference list correctly cited in the text.</p> <p>This section is worth 55 marks.</p>
	<p><i>The candidate must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Developing stage.</i></p>

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

Graded Unit title: Human Resource Management: Graded Unit 1

Project stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements
<p>Stage 3 — Evaluating</p> <p>20%</p>	<p>Providing an evaluation of the effectiveness of all parts of the investigation which should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ assessment of the extent to which each of the original project and personal objectives of the investigation have been met. This should include reference to any modifications made during the course of the investigation, their importance and to any alternative courses of action considered but rejected. ◆ commentary on aspects of the planning and developing stages which worked effectively and why, and/or aspects of the planning and development stages which did not work as effectively as expected ◆ assessment of the reliability and validity of the primary and secondary sources of information ◆ recommendations for future investigations. These should be based on items above and must relate to the personal development of the candidate. This could be in terms of the further development of skills used in this investigation and aspects of the process(s) of the investigation. It should be clear from the recommendations that the candidate has reflected on what happened and has drawn conclusions from this reflection ◆ assessment of new skills and knowledge gained during the process of the investigation <p>The evaluating stage should be 750 to 1,000 words or equivalent.</p> <p>This section is worth 20 marks.</p>
	<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)

Graded Unit title: Human Resource Management: Graded Unit 1

Support notes

Stage 1 — Planning:

This stage is worth 25 marks. The candidate must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified to pass the planning stage. The planning stage will be assessed by submission of the brief/action plan to investigate a Human Resource Management issue and assess its implications for an organisation. The tutor's role is as a facilitator and so to gain high marks the candidate must demonstrate a high degree of autonomy in planning activities.

The Planning Stage, marks should be allocated in the following way:

Up to 2 marks for an outline of the activity and why it has been chosen.

Up to 5 marks for the aims and objectives of the project.

Up to 4 marks for the personal development objectives of the investigation.

Up to 6 marks for the explanation of how the investigation will be conducted.

Up to 2 marks for planning contingencies

Up to 6 marks for creating an action plan with milestones showing time available and a plan for evaluation.

The brief/action plan should be 750–1,250 words long or equivalent. It may also include charts or diagrams.

It is recommended that there is an individual interview with each candidate to ensure the action plan is feasible. The interview will also allow candidates to explain the evidence they have submitted.

Stage 2 — Developing

This stage is worth 55 marks. The candidate must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified to pass the developing stage. Assessment is based on a report of the activity. For the Developing stage, the marks should be allocated in the following way:

Up to 12 marks for how the HRM issue affects the organisation, explicit reference to other concepts/topics, including legislation, studied in the mandatory Units in the Group Award and the consistency of objectives outlined in the planning stage.

Up to 10 marks for collection, collation and analysis of researched data.

Up to 8 marks for identifying and explaining the constraining resource factors on the organisation.

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Graded Unit title: Human Resource Management: Graded Unit 1

Up to 15 marks for the assessment of implications and effects on the organisation supported by clear reference to concepts and topics, including legislation, studied in the mandatory Units of the Group Award.

Up to 10 marks for conclusions drawn and recommendations made.

Where the candidate produces the report in writing, it is recommended that this should be around 1,750 to 2,000 words or equivalent.

Stage 3 — Evaluating

This stage is worth 20 marks. The candidate must achieve the minimum criteria specified to pass the Evaluating stage. This stage is assessed by the production of an evaluation report. The tutor's role is as a facilitator and so candidates should demonstrate a high degree of autonomy in evaluating activities.

For the Evaluating stage, the marks should be allocated in the following way:

Up to 4 marks for the assessment of the extent to which each of the original project and personal objectives of the investigation have been met.

Up to 4 marks for explaining aspects of the planning and developing stages which worked effectively or otherwise.

Up to 5 marks for the assessment of the reliability and validity of the primary and secondary sources of information.

Up to 3 marks for recommendations for future investigations.

Up to 4 marks for assessment of new skills and knowledge gained during the process of the investigation.

The evaluation report should be 750 to 1,000 words or equivalent

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

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General information for candidates

Graded Unit title: Human Resource Management: Graded Unit 1

This Graded Unit integrates the main knowledge and skills gained in the Units within the HNC in Human Resource Management. It is therefore expected that you will have either completed or are in the process of completing the mandatory Units of your HNC in Human Resource Management.

This Graded Unit is based on a project and the assessment is an investigation. You will be required to identify a suitable organisation (your tutor will be able to guide you on this) in which an HRM function or major part of the HRM function can be introduced. You will assess the implications of this for the organisation. There are three stages to this project and the main activities in each stage are:

Stage 1 — Planning

In the Planning stage, you will develop a brief/action plan to investigate a Human Resource Management issue and assess its implications for an organisation. The brief must include:

- ◆ an outline of the investigation and why it has been chosen.
- ◆ the aims and objectives of the project
- ◆ an explanation of how the investigation will be conducted
- ◆ considerations of contingency plans
- ◆ action plan with mile-stones showing time available and plan for evaluation
- ◆ personal development objectives for the assignment

This section of the project will be assessed by submitting a brief/action plan. The brief/action plan should be 750–1,000 words long or equivalent. It may also include charts or diagrams.

Stage 2 — Developing

In this Developing stage, you will produce an investigation report of the Human Resource Management issue. The report will include evidence of:

- ◆ a detailed explanation of how the HRM issue affects the chosen organisation.
- ◆ collection, collation and analysis of the primary and secondary sources of information and any other data collected
- ◆ an awareness of resource constraints affecting the organisation
- ◆ assessment of the implications and effects on the chosen organisation should be analysed in relation to the organisation's human resource activity
- ◆ statement of the conclusions drawn from the investigation and any appropriate recommendations to be made. These should be explicitly related to the issues being investigated and the needs of the organisation

The account of the developing stage of the report should be 1,750 to 2,000 words or equivalent.

General information for candidates (cont)

Graded Unit title: Human Resource Management: Graded Unit 1

The report should be suitably structured. Your tutor may provide you with a report template, or the following list of headings (taken from the CIPD factsheet 'Writing a persuasive business report') provides an example of a report structure you may wish to follow:

- ◆ Title
- ◆ Executive Summary
- ◆ Table of contents
- ◆ Introduction
- ◆ Research methods
- ◆ Findings, analysis and discussion
- ◆ Conclusions
- ◆ Recommendations
- ◆ References
- ◆ Appendices

Stage 3 — Evaluating

In this final stage, you will review your assignment by considering the extent to which each of the original project and personal development objectives of the planning and developing stages of the investigation have been met, including areas modified and alternative courses of action considered. You will also cover the reliability and validity of the primary and secondary sources of information and make recommendations for future investigations.

Finally, you will appraise your project in terms of strengths and weaknesses and identify knowledge and skills which have been gained or developed throughout the Graded Unit.

The evaluating stage should be 750 to 1,000 words or equivalent.

Your project will be marked out of 100 and **you must pass each stage before moving onto the next stage**. Each stage has the following marks:

Planning 25 marks
Developing 55 marks
Evaluation 20 marks

You will be assigned an overall grade which will be based on the following boundaries:

Grade A = 70%–100%
Grade B = 60%–69%
Grade C = 50%–59%