

## National Unit Specification: general information

**UNIT** Geographical Methods and Techniques (Advanced Higher)

**NUMBER** D240 13

**COURSE** Geography (Advanced Higher)

### SUMMARY

This unit seeks to develop further the geographical skills of the candidate through a study of fieldwork methods and techniques, statistical awareness and production and interpretation of maps and diagrams.

### OUTCOMES

- 1 Demonstrate a knowledge, understanding and application of complex geographical methods and techniques.
- 2 Use geographical methods and techniques to analyse information and identify relationships.
- 3 Use geographical methods and techniques to present information.

### RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained a course or component unit(s) at Higher in Geography, or a course or component unit(s) at Higher or Advanced Higher in another social subject, or a course or component unit(s) at Higher or Advanced Higher level in Geology or Managing Environmental Resources or Travel and Tourism.

### CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Advanced Higher.

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### Administrative Information

**Superclass:** RF

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## **National Unit Specification: general information (cont)**

**UNIT**      Geographical Methods and Techniques (Advanced Higher)

### **CORE SKILLS**

This unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete core skills for the unit                  Numeracy                  H

Core skills components for the unit                  None

Additional information about core skills is published in *Automatic Certification of Core Skills in National Qualifications* (SQA, 1999).

## National Unit Specification: statement of standards

### UNIT Geographical Methods and Techniques (Advanced Higher)

Acceptable performance in this unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

#### OUTCOME 1

Demonstrate a knowledge, understanding and application of complex geographical methods and techniques.

##### Performance criteria

- (a) The selection of the geographical method or technique is appropriate to the type of information to be gathered.
- (b) The method or technique is applied accurately.
- (c) The information gathered by the method or technique is clear.

#### OUTCOME 2

Use geographical methods and techniques to analyse information and identify relationships.

##### Performance criteria

- (a) The analysis of information is accurate and valid.
- (b) The analysis of the information reveals positive, negative or no relationship.

#### OUTCOME 3

Use geographical methods and techniques to present information.

##### Performance criteria

- (a) The format chosen is appropriate to the type of information presented.
- (b) The information is presented clearly and accurately.

##### Evidence requirements

Evidence in the form of a completed checklist is required which indicates the achievement of all three outcomes and related performance criteria in each of the three skill areas:

- fieldwork methods and techniques – the candidate will be expected to show competence in **two** methods or techniques, **one** of which should be from (a) physical methods and techniques and **one** from (b) human methods and techniques
- statistical awareness – **one** piece of evidence which indicates that the candidate has applied appropriate techniques to process a given set of data
- production and interpretation of maps and diagrams – **one** piece of evidence by which the candidate produces maps and/or diagrams and **one** piece of evidence by which the candidate indicates that they can extract and interpret information from 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey (OS) maps

Supporting evidence demonstrating candidate competences in the above skill areas will require to be retained by the centre in accordance with the advice provided by SQA on moderation.

## **National Unit Specification: support notes**

### **UNIT            Geographical Methods and Techniques (Advanced Higher)**

This part of the unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the time allocated to this unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

#### **GUIDANCE ON CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT**

This unit is one of three mandatory units which together make up the course in Advanced Higher Geography. The other units are the Geographical Study and Geographical Issues.

##### ***Geographical Methods and Techniques***

This unit is built on those skills and methods developed progressively in the Geography curriculum from Standard Grade and Intermediate 1 and 2 to Higher Geography.

The Geographical Methods and Techniques unit is divided into three skill areas:

##### ***Skill area – fieldwork methods and techniques***

List a. – Physical methods and techniques

List b. – Human methods and techniques

##### ***Skill area – statistical awareness***

##### ***Skill area – production and interpretation of maps and diagrams***

In order to achieve certification in this unit, candidates have to attain all three outcomes stated in the unit specification. The outcomes are to be met by gathering evidence from each of the three skill areas. Within the skill area, fieldwork methods and techniques, the candidate will be expected to show competency in two methods and techniques, one of which should be from a. physical methods and techniques and one from b. human methods and techniques. The completion by the centre of checklists which indicate the methods and techniques undertaken by the candidate is required.

Refer to the course specification for further details on the unit content and the methods and techniques to be studied.

#### **GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT**

##### ***Induction and review***

Candidates should receive a general overview of the objectives and content of the unit, and specific criteria for achieving the unit award, possibly in the form of a checklist(s).

Candidates should be introduced to the ways of working on the unit (for example, if the use of a case study approach to a topic is chosen), the kinds of information and study skills expected from them (for example, if the unit is to be undertaken on a supported self-study format) and the kind of support they can expect from the teacher/lecturer (for example, if there are to be informal tutorials as well as formal class lessons).

## National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

### UNIT Geographical Methods and Techniques (Advanced Higher)

#### *Learning experiences*

If the candidates are studying for the course at Advanced Higher, it is recommended that centres teach unit 1 first. Units 2 and 3 provide opportunities to develop further and apply the skills specified in unit 1.

The methodology used by teachers/lecturers will be built on existing good practice. Teacher/lecturer exposition and note-taking from textbooks, information sheets and a wide variety of other resources may form the basis of class work in this unit. Individual and group discussion may reinforce this. Extension work, access to a variety of sources of information, fieldwork, independent reading and resource based learning should be made available to individuals and groups as appropriate. This independent learning may form the basis of a considerable part of the candidate's study time at Advanced Higher. Formal or informal group work could be used as an approach to learning where dialogue and interaction between candidates and between candidates and teacher/lecturer would be possible.

The following learning experiences are essential to the unit. Candidates should:

- engage in wide-ranging, independent reading relevant to their geographical studies
- make use of relevant terminology, advanced skills, concepts and ideas
- collect, extract, interpret, analyse and present geographical evidence
- gather and systematically record information derived from a variety of sources, such as fieldwork, maps, books, notes, graphs, statistics, audio-visual materials
- develop the skills of extended communication for a variety of purposes including responses to resource-based questions
- take part in formal and informal discussion and debate based on and informed by geographical evidence and knowledge in order to develop the ability to think independently and make informed judgements
- develop individual and independent learning skills

Opportunities for extension, revision and consolidation should be built into the unit. How this is organised will depend on the teaching approach. The sub-sections of the geographical methods and techniques unit may be taught in any order. The learning experiences in all three skill areas reinforce each other: knowledge and understanding of the methods and techniques as well as the application of some will be developed, along with increased competence in the skills listed in the outcomes and course specification.

Where a candidate has failed to achieve the outcomes in relation to one of the sub-sections it may be worthwhile to attempt to achieve them once other sub-sections have been studied, as by then they will have had an opportunity to develop further the required skills. Time should in any case be allowed for remediation and resitting of internal assessments where outcomes have not been achieved.

## **National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)**

### **UNIT            Geographical Methods and Techniques (Advanced Higher)**

#### **GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT**

##### *Approaches to assessment*

The pieces of work which demonstrate competence in the outcomes for each unit should also demonstrate a level of achievement equivalent to a grade C in the course. The same pieces of work may be assessed against the grade descriptions for the relevant part of the external course assessment to ascertain whether an A or B can be recorded as a course estimate or as evidence in the case of an appeal. For details of the grade descriptions for external assessment, refer to the course specification.

Additional pieces of work can be used for continuous assessment and as practice for external assessment. These could be grouped and/or timed to develop examination skills (as in a preliminary examination). Towards the end of the course, it may be useful to allow candidates to revisit the content covered at the beginning of the year, using skills developed through experience and maturation as the year's work progressed. Advice may also be given on the organisation of revision for the external assessment. Knowledge and understanding needs to be effectively retained and skills practised with unfamiliar sources or questions.

##### *Advice on generating evidence*

The evidence can be gathered towards or at the end of the unit and should reflect the requirements set out in the unit specification.

It is recommended that a holistic approach is used to devise more extended tasks which allow candidates to demonstrate achievement in more than one outcome (see National Assessment Bank for examples). It would be possible to use similar instruments of assessment to those used in the external examination for the course. It will be necessary to identify where in the candidate's response each outcome has been met. The marking scheme would reflect the standard embodied in the performance criteria but would also allow the evidence to be considered as a whole. The level of attainment required for successful completion of the unit should represent satisfactory attainment of the outcomes and, by inference, satisfactory coverage of all performance criteria.

Where a candidate has failed to achieve one or more of the outcomes, a retest may be undertaken after appropriate remediation. This retest need only reassess competence in the outcomes which the candidate has failed to achieve.

Further information and advice on assessment will be given in the Subject Guide and National Assessment Bank.

#### **SPECIAL NEEDS**

This unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. Special needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative outcomes for units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment and Certification Arrangements for Candidates with Special Needs/Candidates whose First Language is not English* (SQA, 1998).