

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT	Geographical Study (Advanced Higher)
NUMBER	D241 13
COURSE	Geography (Advanced Higher)

SUMMARY

This unit seeks to develop investigative skills by producing a report of an in-depth research into a geographical topic (this may be undertaken in the local area).

OUTCOMES

- 1 Plan and research a Geographical Study.
- 2 Select and use appropriate techniques to analyse and evaluate information.
- 3 Present a Geographical Study.

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.

Administrative Information

Superclass:	RF
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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Geographical Study (Advanced Higher)

CORE SKILLS

This unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete core skills for the unit	Problem Solving	H
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Core skills components for the unit	None
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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 Study (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

Plan and research a Geographical Study.

Performance criteria

- (a) The plan includes clear aims and precise, structured research questions.
- (b) The sources of information identified permit the collection of information relevant to each research question.
- (c) The methods and techniques used to collect information are relevant to the study.

OUTCOME 2

Select and use appropriate techniques to analyse and evaluate information.

Performance criteria

- (a) The techniques selected and used to analyse information are relevant.
- (b) The analysis of information is accurate.
- (c) The conclusions reached are valid and clear.

OUTCOME 3

Present a Geographical Study.

Performance criteria

- (a) The information is presented clearly and in a structured and logical manner.
- (b) The information is presented using a range of methods and techniques.

Evidence requirements

Candidates are required to plan and research a Geographical Study, select and use appropriate techniques and produce a Geographical Study which provides evidence of achievement of all three outcomes and related performance criteria in the unit. For Outcome 1, PC (c), the relevance of the methods and techniques used should be justified in terms of the factors involved, resources and time available and/or by comparison with other possible methods and techniques. For Outcome 2, PC (c), conclusions reached should include clear reference to the criteria used and by evaluative comment on the methods and techniques used as well as the outcomes of the study.

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

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

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Geographical Study (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 Geographical Methods and Techniques and Geographical Issues.

Geographical Study

In this investigative exercise, candidates examine a research topic in depth. This may be undertaken in the local area and should normally contain evidence of the application of an appropriate range of the skills specified in unit 1. This unit focuses on the processes involved in planning, researching, analysing, evaluating and presenting information which leads the candidate to the production of a 3,000-word report with a maximum of 25 sides of A4 pages (or their equivalent). In order to achieve certification in this unit, candidates are required to produce evidence of achievement of all three outcomes and related performance criteria listed in the unit specification.

Refer to the course specification for further details on the unit content.

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).

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. It is recommended that candidates complete unit 1 before they begin unit 2 so that they can master the geographical methods and techniques needed to produce their Geographical Study. This unit may however be delivered as a free-standing unit where candidates master the geographical methods and techniques needed for their Geographical Study as and when required.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Geographical Study (Advanced Higher)

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 teachers/lecturers 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 appropriate sources, such as fieldwork, maps, books, notes, graphs, statistics, audio-visual materials
- develop the skills of extended communication in the form of a Geographical Study; opportunities should be provided for revision and redrafting of extended writing following critical review
- 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, especially those relating to the preparation and writing of the Geographical Study

Opportunities for extension, revision and consolidation should be built into the unit; how this is organised would depend on the teaching approach. Time should be allowed for remediation and revisiting of internal assessments where outcomes have not been achieved.

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 a 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.

Opportunities should be given for candidates to re-draft work before it is presented for assessment.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Geographical Study (Advanced Higher)

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).