

## National Unit Specification: general information

**UNIT** Geographical Study (Advanced Higher)

**CODE** DF48 13

**COURSE** Geography (Advanced Higher)

### SUMMARY

The Geographical Study Unit builds on and uses many of the skills developed in the *Geographical Methods and Techniques* Unit at Advanced Higher. It also uses the knowledge gained from the study of the Units and Course at Higher level in Geography.

As candidates should use several of the methods and techniques developed during the *Geographical Methods and Techniques* Unit at Advanced Higher level it is advised that candidates do not undertake this Unit until the *Geographical Methods and Techniques* Unit is at least partially completed. Where the Unit is being taken as a stand alone Unit, teaching will have to be tailored to meet the needs of individual candidates.

The aim of this Unit is to provide candidates with the knowledge and skills to carry out and complete a geographical study. Candidates would benefit from working in the field to gather information. The assessment concentrates on skills of gathering and processing information. During the study the candidates will demonstrate an ability to:

- ◆ plan and research the study by setting clear aims and objectives and appropriate gathering techniques which should include fieldwork
- ◆ select, use and accurately apply appropriate techniques to process and analyse the gathered information. This will require the candidate to use methods and statistical techniques appropriate to the data collected
- ◆ evaluate the techniques used throughout the study and make critical comment about the research process

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### Administrative Information

**Superclass:** RF

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## National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

**UNIT**                      Geographical Study (Advanced Higher)

### OUTCOMES

- a) Plan and research a geographical study.
- b) Select and use techniques to gather and analyse information.
- c) Evaluate the learning gained through the research process.

### RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates will normally be expected to have attained one of the following or equivalent:

- ◆ the Course at Higher Geography
- ◆ one or more of the Units at Higher Geography
- ◆ the Course or Units in other social subjects at Higher or Advanced Higher level

### CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Advanced Higher (8 SCQF 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

This Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

<b>Complete Core Skills for the Unit</b>	Problem Solving	Higher
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## **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) Create a plan to include clear aims and precise structured research questions.
- b) Identify the sources of information to permit the collection of information relevant to the research questions.

#### **OUTCOME 2**

Select and use techniques to gather and analyse information.

##### **Performance Criteria**

- a) Select and use appropriate techniques to gather information.
- b) Accurately analyse the information gathered.

#### **OUTCOME 3**

Evaluate the learning gained through the research process.

##### **Performance Criteria**

- a) Review research techniques to reach reasoned conclusions about their effectiveness.
- b) Justify conclusions reached about the effectiveness of the research.

### **EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE UNIT**

Candidates will be required to provide two pieces of evidence in a written or recorded oral format, namely:

- a) An Outline for an Interim Report
- b) an Interim Report based on one aspect of a geographical study

The Interim Report is a holistic assessment carried out under controlled and supervised conditions in a single continuous period of one hour.

The Outline for the Interim Report which candidates take into the formal situation when they write their Interim Report can be the subject of discussion between and guidance from the candidates' teacher/lecturer. It can be revised as part of the process. This may help in borderline cases where a candidate could be directed to return to some aspect of his/her report (reassessment) if some part of it was particularly weak and would prevent a pass being awarded.

## **National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)**

### **UNIT        Geographical Study (Advanced Higher)**

The Outline should be attached to the Interim Report and these two pieces of evidence will be required for the assessment of the Unit. The main function of the Outline is to support candidates in the writing of their Interim Report and can be used to support an assessment decision. It is checked as part of the assessment but by itself cannot provide evidence to permit the award of a Unit pass. To pass the Unit candidates will have to provide evidence that they have met the standards set in all Outcomes and for each of the Performance Criteria. The marking guidelines for this assessment, illustrated in the NAB, demonstrate the standard of evidence which will be required.

## 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 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

In most centres it is likely that this Unit will be taken by candidates who intend to complete the Advanced Higher Course in Geography. This Unit contributes to the Advanced Higher Course by providing the learning and teaching opportunities to enable candidates to complete a geographical study of up to 25 A4 pages or equivalent in length. However, the Unit is designed to permit candidates who do not wish to complete a full geographical study to obtain a Unit pass. This Unit focuses on the planning, researching, analysing and evaluating of a single research exercise, or in the case of the geographical study, one aspect of the study.

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

Candidates are likely to be taking this Unit in a variety of circumstances:

- ◆ the full geographical study is being completed as part of the Course
- ◆ the initial intention is to complete the full geographical study but the final product is not produced
- ◆ the Unit is seen as an end point and research is focussed on a single topic rather than a broader geographical study

#### Learning Experience

##### Teaching order

In deciding how this Unit is to be delivered teachers/lecturers are advised to consider the profile of the candidate group involved. As this may change from year to year the approach centres adopt to teaching may vary as well.

##### Methodology

In most cases candidates will begin this Unit with the intention of completing it as part of the Advanced Higher Geography Course. Where this is the case centres might, rather than teach the Units in sequence, decide to integrate the teaching of the *Geographical Methods and Techniques* Unit and the *Geographical Study* Unit. At an early stage in the session candidates will, therefore, become aware of the variety of geographical methods and techniques which are most likely to assist them as they conduct their research and analysis. It might be possible to combine aspects of the assessment of the *Geographical Methods and Techniques* Unit and the *Geographical Study* Unit. The *Geographical Methods and Techniques* Unit assessment focuses on the ability to apply selected techniques while the *Geographical Study* Unit concentrates on reviewing and evaluating the techniques candidates have used in the planned research they are conducting. Assessment for the *Geographical Methods and Techniques* Unit and the *Geographical Study* Unit might, therefore, focus on these different aspects of the same techniques.

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

### **UNIT        Geographical Study (Advanced Higher)**

#### **Skills and learning experiences**

In planning the teaching of this Unit centres should ensure that the following key skills and experiences are built in to the work programme. Candidates should be:

- ◆ engaging in wide ranging independent reading relevant to their geographical study
- ◆ making use of relevant terminology, and advanced skills, concepts and ideas
- ◆ collecting, extracting, interpreting, analysing and presenting geographical evidence
- ◆ gathering and systematically recording information derived from a variety of appropriate sources, such as fieldwork, maps, books, notes, graphs, statistics and audio visual materials

## National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

### UNIT Geographical Study (Advanced Higher)

- ◆ aware of the type of information it is necessary to retain to write comprehensive bibliographies
- ◆ developing the skills of extended communication in the form necessary to produce a geographical study; opportunities should be provided for revising and redrafting of extended writing following critical review
- ◆ taking 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
- ◆ developing individual and independent learning skills, especially those relating to the preparation and writing of the geographical study

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

Time ought to be set aside not only to ensure that candidates select appropriate research or study topics but that they also gain experience in reviewing and adapting any research work they carry out. One to one, group discussions and presentations to others may provide useful experiences for candidates in this type of review and self appraisal. A series of candidate led tutorials might be organised to encourage discussion about research and analysis carried out by them. Further advice on approaches to the teaching of this Unit is available in '*Geography: Flexible Learning Resources Pack (Advanced Higher)*', '*Geographical Issues; Annotated Bibliographies: Advanced Higher*' and '*Geographical Methods and Techniques: Statistical Awareness — Staff Briefing and Student Notes*' produced in 2002 by Learning and Teaching Scotland. These support materials are available on the website [www.LTScotland.org.uk/nq](http://www.LTScotland.org.uk/nq).

### GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

The Unit assessment is, in most cases, likely to be based on some aspect of research and analysis carried out in connection with a larger geographical study undertaken as part of the Course. As the evidence for this is likely to be developed over a period of time, candidates and centres ought, at an early stage of the Unit, select where the focus for Unit assessment will lie. Once this decision has been taken particularly careful records of this aspect of the study should be kept. These would not only support the candidate when it comes to writing the Interim Report and its Outline but these could also provide additional evidence of the performance of candidates should this be required for estimates or appeals. Records of research on additional areas might also contribute to evidence which permits Course estimates above level C.

### 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 Outcomes for this Course. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)).