National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Natural Heritage: Project Management (SCQF level 6)

Unit code: FV45 12

Superclass:	QA
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Source:	Scottish Qualifications Authority
Version:	02

Summary

This Unit will introduce candidates to the diverse range of projects that are undertaken in relation to the Natural Heritage. Through participation in the planning and implementation of a natural heritage project candidates will explore and develop an understanding of processes involved in the successful management of Natural Heritage projects.

This Unit is suitable for anyone who would like to gain an understanding of projects carried out to enhance and maintain the Natural Heritage and how these can be successfully managed.

This Unit is an optional Unit in the National Certificate in Countryside Management, but is also available for candidates wishing to study the Unit on its own.

Outcomes

1   Describe a range of natural heritage projects and their importance.
2   Contribute to the planning of a natural heritage project.
3   Contribute to the implementation of a natural heritage project by carrying out allocated tasks.
4   Evaluate the effectiveness of the management of a natural heritage project.

Recommended entry

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, an understanding of the natural heritage, approaches to its protection and its promotion would be beneficial. Some experience of natural heritage projects would also be beneficial for candidates.

General information (cont)

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Credit points and level

1 credit at SCQF level 6 (6 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

Achievement of this Course gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill   Problem Solving at SCQF level 5

Core Skill component   None

There are also opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills which are highlighted in the Support Notes of the Unit Specifications for this Course.

National Unit specification: statement of standards

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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 SQA.

Outcome 1

Describe a range of natural heritage projects and their importance.

Performance Criteria

(a) Identify a range of natural heritage projects.
(b) Describe the importance of natural heritage projects.
(c) Describe the importance of effective project management in improving the natural heritage.

Outcome 2

Contribute to the planning of a natural heritage project.

Performance Criteria

(a) Identify the aims of a natural heritage project.
(b) Set objectives for a natural heritage project.
(c) Identify resources for a natural heritage project.
(d) Propose timescales for a natural heritage project.
(e) Allocate tasks in a natural heritage project.
(f) Produce an individual detailed plan for allocated tasks.

Outcome 3

Contribute to the implementation of a natural heritage project by ensuring that allocated tasks are carried out as identified in the project plan.

Performance Criteria

(a) Carry out tasks safely.
(b) Carry out tasks to required standards.
(c) Carry out tasks on time.

Outcome 4

Evaluate the success of the management of a natural heritage project.

Performance Criteria

(a) Evaluate the success of the management of the project.
(b) Make recommendations for improving the project management process.

National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

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Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Evidence is required to demonstrate that candidates have achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. Evidence will be presented as a folio of evidence generated throughout the activities of the Unit.

Outcome 1 — Written and/or oral evidence

Evidence must include:

♦   An identification of five different types of natural heritage projects
♦   A description of three benefits of natural heritage projects
♦   A description of the importance of effective project management for natural heritage projects

Outcome 2 — Performance and written and/or oral evidence

Working co-operatively as part of a team, candidates will produce a plan for a natural heritage project. Evidence must include:

♦   Identification of project aims
♦   Description of objectives to support the achievement of the project aims
♦   Identification of resource requirements
♦   Timescales for implementation of the project
♦   Targets and timescales for reviewing project progress
♦   Allocation of tasks to identified members of the group
♦   A plan of allocated tasks

Outcome 3 — Performance and written and/or oral evidence

Candidates will contribute to the implementation of a natural heritage project by carrying out identified tasks as allocated by their team during the production of the project plan. Evidence must include:

♦   Carrying out tasks safely
♦   Carrying out tasks to industry standards
♦   Carrying out tasks on time in accordance with the project plan schedule

Outcome 4 — Written and/or oral evidence

On completion of the natural heritage project candidates will evaluate the success of the management of the project. The findings of this evaluation will help to inform and make recommendations for improvement to the project management process. Evidence must include:

♦   Reflection on the success of the project against the identified aims and objectives
♦   Reflection on the success of the management of the project in relation to the project plan
♦   Recommendations for a minimum of two improvements that could be made to the project management process.

National Unit specification: support notes

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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 aligned to the following LANTRA National Occupational Standard (NOS):

♦ EC21 Plan Environmental Projects

Project management skills are greatly valued by employers and often lacking in new recruits. Because of the limited inherent financial resources available within the countryside management sector, grant funding is often a major benefit to the work of organisations involved with the natural heritage where work such as: wildlife conservation; wildlife surveying; enabling and promoting access; environmental interpretation and outdoor education are common place. The available grants are invariably project based, so an understanding of project management and the processes involved in it are invaluable for those working in this area.

Natural heritage projects might include the following:

♦ habitat and species enhancement and management
♦ management of infrastructure — boundaries and access features
♦ surveying (wildlife, habitat/ecosystem, landscape)
♦ promoting access
♦ education
♦ interpretation
♦ awareness raising
♦ campaigning/lobbying

The benefits of project work for the Natural Heritage cannot be underestimated, whether projects are of a larger scale and supported by grant funding or a systematic, practical and labour intensive approach to managing habitats on any given site. Managing such projects effectively means that time and resources are not unnecessarily wasted when they could be effectively deployed and utilised elsewhere, in an environment that does not generally have an excess of resources to employ. Furthermore, all natural heritage projects stand to benefit the wider environment be it through the conservation of species and habitats, the protection of geodiversity, the education of people about local and global environmental issues or enhancing access to the countryside. All of these provide benefits to nature and people's quality of life.

Natural heritage projects which support species and habitat conservation are often established through grant funding and provide immediate benefits for the species/habitats concerned. However, sustainability of projects can be problematic beyond the life time of the funding and it is important that during the delivery of this Unit, these issues are discussed and that the importance project sustainability are highlighted.

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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Processes involved in project management of natural heritage projects include:

♦ Project identification.
♦ Producing a project rationale and identifying the specific aims of the project.
♦ Undertaking project planning activities:
  — Objective setting — identifying what steps need to be taken to successfully achieve the project aims.
  — Identifying resource requirements — these might include physical/material, human, financial (including costs), time, support from other organisations (information, expertise, skills, man-power).
  — Identifying sources of funding and necessary resources.
  — Setting targets and timescales (including meeting the requirements of funders).
  — Proposals for sustainability of projects beyond the project life time.
  — Allocating roles and tasks.
  — Planning the implementation of allocated tasks:
    – When will they be carried out?
    – How will they be carried out?
♦ Implementation of the planned project.
♦ Reviewing project progress regularly and adjusting the plan if necessary.
♦ Evaluating the achievements/effectiveness of projects. This stage should take into consideration all of the points above. Candidates should be encouraged to think about what will impact on the effectiveness of a project (resources, human element, availability of materials, weather, finances, poor/inadequate/inaccurate planning, unrealistic timescales, wrong people identified for specific roles) and how effective management of a project can reduce negative impacts.

Candidates should work in groups to co-operatively plan an identified natural heritage project and allocate roles within the project. Then the group will implement the planned project through continued group working and by performing their identified roles. This practical experience of involvement in the running/management of a natural heritage project is invaluable for future career prospects. Candidates should be supported, where possible, from a distance and should not be prevented from making mistakes and having to address difficulties encountered within their groups. Again, this will provide real opportunities to engage with the realities of project work and any issues encountered will provide examples that can be explored through the evaluative stage of the Unit.

In evaluating the success of the management of the project candidates could consider reflecting on their own contribution to the project in terms of:

♦ Planning
♦ Implementation
♦ Reviewing
♦ Working co-operatively with team members
♦ Role within the project

And recognising their own strengths and weaknesses in relation to the success of the project's management.

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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Candidates could also consider reflecting on the contribution of others to the project in terms of:

♦   Planning
♦   Implementation
♦   Reviewing
♦   Working co-operatively with team members

And recognising the strengths and weaknesses of others in relation to the success of the management of the project in relation to the project aims.

Candidates must recognise the importance of ongoing review of any project during its implementation and the approaches that can be taken to monitor progress. Furthermore, candidates must recognise the value of evaluating the success of any project and how important these evaluations are in terms of understanding what went well and what did not and how these lessons are often transferable to other project situations.

Guidance on learning and teaching approaches for this Unit

This should be a largely practical based Unit. Introductory work could introduce candidates to the process of project management through guided discussions, lectures and research. Candidates will then be required to work in groups to make practical use of their understanding of natural heritage project work and its management, to plan an identified project, implement it effectively and then evaluate their experiences of the project. This hands on, practical involvement in the project management process must be undertaken so that candidates are provided with very real experiential learning situations and opportunities.

This Unit could be supported by visits undertaken to see ongoing natural heritage projects and to discuss the management and implementation of these with the organisations responsible for their implementation and management. These visits could provide a valuable insight into the running and management of natural heritage projects on the ground.

Guidance on approaches to assessment for this Unit

This Unit will be assessed through the production of a folio of evidence produced by students through the delivery of the Unit and their involvement in the project management process. Sections of evidence should be submitted at intervals throughout delivery, for example following the planning stage and the implementation stage. This will allow feedback to be provided to candidates in relation to their performance and guidance given on suggestions for improving their performance prior to embarking on subsequent stages of the project. Following the project completion and evaluations all evidence should be presented as a completed folio.

Assessment of this Unit will be through the production of a folio of evidence, generated by the candidate as they progress through the project based activities of the Unit. Evidence for each Outcome should be submitted at stages throughout the delivery of the Unit reflecting the development and progression of the group work and projects being carried out. This staged submission of evidence will ensure that feedback is given to candidates throughout their project experience and will provide opportunity for tutors to enter into discussions with individuals and groups to provide guidance as required. A final submission of the completed folio of evidence should be made on completion of the project, the evaluation and recommendations for improvement.

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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Opportunities for the use of e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all candidate evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. Further advice is available in *SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education (AA1641, March 2003), SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools (BD2625, June 2005)*.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

The delivery and assessment of this Unit will provide diverse opportunities for candidates to develop Core Skills in *Working with Others*, *Problem Solving*, *Communications* and *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)*. Depending on the project identified, there may also be opportunities to develop Core Skills in *Numeracy*.

This Unit has the Core Skill of Problem Solving embedded in it. This means that when candidates achieve the Unit, their Core Skills profile will also be updated to show that they have achieved Problem Solving at SCQF level 5.

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	Core Skill Problem Solving at SCQF level 5 embedded.	28/11/2011