

## National Unit Specification: General Information

**UNIT** Local Investigations (Higher)

**NUMBER** D36J 12

### COURSE

### SUMMARY

Developing a high level of research and investigation techniques, planning, organisational, interpersonal skills and self awareness through in-depth research activities into aspects of the local area and/or issues of local concern.

### OUTCOMES

- 1 Devise and organise a local investigation to meet personal development goals.
- 2 Undertake a local investigation to a pre-planned specification.
- 3 Foster and maintain good working relationships in the analysis, planning and implementation of a local investigation in testing circumstances.
- 4 Analyse and evaluate the contribution of the knowledge and skills gained through a local investigation to own personal social and vocational development.

### RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Access to this unit is at the discretion of the centre. However, it would be beneficial if the candidate had achieved Local Investigation (Intermediate 2) or equivalent.

### CREDIT VALUE

1 Credit.

### CORE SKILLS

Information on the automatic certification of any core skills in this unit is published in *Automatic Certification of Core Skills in National Qualifications* (SQA, 1999).

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## Administrative Information

**Superclass:** HB

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## National unit specification: statement of standards

**UNIT**            Local Investigations (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**

Devise and organise a local investigation to meet personal development goals.

#### **Performance Criteria**

- a) An initial self assessment clearly identifies qualities and skills and realistic personal development goals are set.
- b) Factors affecting the local investigation are clearly identified and assessed.
- c) Definition of the goals of the investigation activity is clear and accurate.
- d) Tasks are analysed and goals, roles and responsibilities negotiated, based on self assessment and others' strengths.
- e) Comparison of suitable investigation activities is thorough and uses a range of sources.
- f) Justification of selection of investigation activity is clear in terms of personal development goals and problems and consequences associated with different choices.
- g) Information collected to aid planning and preparation is relevant to the investigation.
- h) Potential problems or limitations associated with the investigation are identified accurately.
- i) A detailed step-by-step plan is produced which is complete, accurate and realistic.

#### **Evidence Requirements**

PC (a) An initial self assessment.

PCs (b)–(i) An investigation plan for one local investigation which provides written and/or oral evidence which supports the plan. The plan should include references to unfamiliar resources.

### **OUTCOME 2**

Undertake a local investigation to a pre-planned specification.

#### **Performance Criteria**

- a) Resources to implement plan are obtained and organised effectively.
- b) The activities are planned to allow the achievement of the set goals and to achieve effective use of time and resources.
- c) Required preparations for carrying out the investigation activity are organised efficiently and effectively.
- d) The strategy for undertaking the local investigation is defined clearly and accurately.
- e) Investigation activities are consistently undertaken with commitment, confidence and competence.

## National unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

### UNIT Local Investigations (Higher)

- f) Flexibility, initiative and problem solving skills are demonstrated clearly in the investigation activities.
- g) Progress of the investigation is self-monitored continuously and reviewed methodically and objectively.
- h) Records of investigation procedures are detailed and accurate.
- i) The conclusions of the investigation activity are clear, detailed and accurate and evaluate the strategy of the investigation.

### Evidence Requirements

PCs (a)–(g) Performance evidence for one local investigation.

PCs (h)–(i) Written and/or oral evidence in the form of records and a report of one local investigation.

### OUTCOME 3

Foster and maintain good working relationships in the analysis, planning and implementation of a local investigation in testing circumstances.

### Performance Criteria

- a) Advice is sought when required and evaluated effectively.
- b) Ideas, information, judgement and criticisms volunteered are relevant, accurate and sensible.
- c) Anticipated needs of others are responded to relevantly.
- d) Opinions of others on the progress of the investigation are critically evaluated.
- e) Disagreement is dealt with sensitively and tactfully.
- f) Co-operative working relationships in unfamiliar situations are initiated and developed independently.
- g) Appearance, manner and behaviour are appropriate to all circumstances.

### Evidence Requirements

PCs (a)–(g) Performance evidence which shows that the candidate has achieved all the performance criteria for one local investigation.

## **National unit specification: statement of standards (cont)**

**UNIT**            Local Investigations (Higher)

### **OUTCOME 4**

Analyse and evaluate the contribution of the knowledge and skills gained through a local investigation to own personal social and vocational development.

#### **Performance Criteria**

- a) The initial self-assessment is analysed in terms of strengths and weaknesses and progress towards defined personal development goals is evaluated objectively.
- b) Comments, feedback and advice from others are recognised objectively in conclusions.
- c) Analysis of the planning and implementation of the investigation activity is detailed, clear and accurate.
- d) Performance in task management skills and interpersonal skills is evaluated and related to future personal, social and vocational goals.
- e) Conclusions relating to the investigation activity, including personal feelings and reactions to it, are expressed clearly, accurately and with insight.

#### **Evidence Requirements**

PC (a) An updated self assessment.

PCs (b)-(e) Written and/or oral evidence for one local investigation.

## National unit specification: support notes

### UNIT Local Investigations (Higher)

This part of the unit specification is offered as guidance. None of the sections of the support notes is mandatory.

### GUIDANCE ON CONTENT AND CONTEXT

Corresponding to outcomes 1-4:

- 1 The possible contexts for a local investigation are wide ranging. They include local history, local environment, local decision making, local culture, local leisure facilities, tourism in the locality, local industry, local economy. This list is not prescriptive and tutors/trainers will find that a range of other contexts provides appropriate topics for investigation which provides an appropriate vehicle for the development of level 4 planning, organisation and interpersonal skills.

The scope for investigation activity within any of these contexts is wide ranging. In an investigation of local decision making, for instance, possible subjects might include housing, education, environmental health, planning, roads. Investigation could focus on pressure groups eg tenants' associations, ratepayers' associations, environmentalists, chambers of commerce, trade unions etc who may influence local decision making. At level 4 candidates will be expected to tackle controversial and complex topics and issues. In some investigation activities candidates may find overlap in such areas, thus contributing to a useful exchange of information where different investigations are being undertaken within the same candidate group.

In this unit the tutor's/trainer's role is as a consultant and candidates should demonstrate a high degree of autonomy in planning and undertaking activities.

Working independently candidates should identify their skills, qualities, capabilities and interests and their personal development goals. Choice of investigation topic should be consistent with personal development goals and will be made after examination of a number of possible options and review of information from a range of sources identified by the candidate. A clear indication of how investigation activity will promote personal development goals should be provided and the candidate should provide evidence that possible problems and consequences of the investigation activity have been carefully considered. The project brief will include a clear definition of the goals of the investigation activity, an outline plan and a detailed step-by-step plan which provides clear evidence of a high degree of planning and time management skills. The complete and accurate recording of both the planning and the implementation of the investigation is a requirement at level 4.

## National unit specification: support notes (cont)

### UNIT Local Investigations (Higher)

- 2 The candidate should take responsibility for the organisation and implementation of the local investigation. The high level of organisational skills required of candidates in this unit should be reflected in the investigation activities. The investigation techniques employed must be appropriate to the investigation. Candidates should be encouraged to use a variety of techniques as appropriate to particular contexts or issues. The range of investigation techniques which can be employed includes field studies; interviews; questionnaires; photographs; audio and video recordings; appeals for information and opinions via local press; library research; museum research; record office research; map work; 'opinion polls'; surveys.

Candidates should organise resources to implement their plan and detail and prioritise tasks appropriate to achievement of the goals outlined earlier. Activities should be organised to a self-constructed timescale and candidates will require to demonstrate evidence of commitment and competence in undertaking the investigation. The tutor/trainer should look for evidence of flexibility, initiative and problem solving throughout. In addition candidates should demonstrate evidence of effective self-monitoring of performance, record investigation procedures and report findings in a detailed and accurate manner.

The findings can be presented in a variety of forms, including video recordings, tape slide presentations, wall displays, written reports supported by graphical material, photographs, etc.

- 3 Local investigations provide an appropriate context for the development of interpersonal skills. The tutor/trainer should emphasise to candidates the importance of this aspect of the investigation activity.

Candidates should ensure that investigation and research methods provide opportunities to develop interpersonal skills. This should be reflected in the planning and implementation of the investigation and recorded in planning sheets and the project brief.

Log sheets should provide evidence that the candidate has independently initiated cooperative working relationships and has anticipated and responded to the needs of others in planning and conducting the investigation. Throughout the investigative activity there will be a range of opportunities for candidates to demonstrate the range of behaviour specified in the performance criteria. The candidate should provide evidence that he or she has presented himself or herself in a manner appropriate to circumstances and situations in various tasks and activities.

## National unit specification: support notes (cont)

### UNIT Local Investigations (Higher)

- 4 At level 4 candidates should display an extremely high level of insight and self-awareness both during and after investigation activity. A review of the initial self-assessment in relation to the achievement of the identified personal goals should be undertaken and evidence provided that this has been done objectively. Analysis and evaluation of all investigation activities and their contribution to personal goals must be objective and clear. Evidence that a detailed analysis of both the planning and implementation activity has been undertaken and that conclusions have been expressed with clarity, accuracy and insight is required at level 4.

The final interview provides an opportunity for candidates to analyse and evaluate the learning gained and to explain fully all aspects of the investigation activity. Evidence should be provided to clearly link the candidate's conclusions in relation to future personal, social and vocational development to learning gained through the investigation.

### **GUIDANCE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROACHES**

In this unit candidates may choose whether to undertake the investigation individually or in groups. However, if a group approach is preferred, each candidate must maintain an individual record of his or her part of the investigation. It is expected that in the course of the unit each candidate will compile a folder of assessment evidence containing initial self assessment, project brief, preliminary and detailed planning sheets of the proposed investigation, log sheets which record the activities undertaken by the candidate in the process of the investigation, material (in appropriate print or non-print format) which presents the results of the investigation activities, a final review sheet and final self analysis with reflections on the investigation process and its relevance to personal, social and vocational development.

Involving candidates in the decisions which affect them is valuable for personal development as well as being a powerful motivating factor. Among the areas for negotiation in this unit are:

membership of investigation groups; initial self-analysis and definition of personal goals; choice of investigation topics; roles within groups and allocation of tasks to group members; methods of investigation; methods of presenting results of investigation.

## National unit specification: support notes (cont)

### UNIT Local Investigations (Higher)

Corresponding to Outcomes 1-4:

- 1 Induction to the unit including explanation of its key features and establishing working relationships. An important role of the tutor/trainer is to act as facilitator to provide the appropriate framework and climate where candidates can take full responsibility for decision making, planning, organising and problem solving. At this level the tutor/trainer acts in a consultative role and it is important that this is fully explained to candidates at the outset. Tutors/trainers should ensure that a framework is established which encourages a high degree of independent activity and autonomy.

Individual, pair or group exercises will enable candidates to identify qualities and skills necessary for successful investigation and in-depth research activities. Tutor/trainer exposition, case studies and role play may be used.

Candidates should identify a topic for investigation related to their local area and focus on a particular context or issue. At this level candidates must tackle complex issues and relate these to their identified personal goals.

- 2 Each candidate or group undertakes the investigation, maintains accurate records of the investigation as it progresses and presents the findings. During this phase the role of the tutor/trainer is to act only as a consultant. It is important that the initiative lies with the candidates. The tutor/trainer must make a judgement regarding the timing and degree of any intervention should problems arise.

Candidates will have chosen the method of presentation of the findings early in the investigation. The findings of each investigation should be considered and discussed by the group as a whole. The sharing of knowledge and experience gained is valuable and the presence of an audience for the findings creates a sense of purpose.

- 3 Tutoring approaches should be designed to provide a framework within which independent learning related to investigation techniques and activities can take place. A wide range of methods can be used eg research techniques and task management skills involved in fieldwork activities, library visits, interviewing, planning, information retrieval, group work (if appropriate), time management, record keeping, presentation of findings, review and self-evaluation.

The level of skills required in relation to the above is extremely high and should be reflected in candidate performance throughout the unit.



## National unit specification: support notes (cont)

### UNIT Local Investigations (Higher)

- 4 In a debriefing interview with each individual, the tutor/trainer will discuss the candidate's experiences of planning and undertaking investigation and research activity. Tutors/trainers should not prompt performance but should create an atmosphere and framework within which candidates are encouraged to evaluate progress towards defined goals, describe learning gained and critically evaluate performance of task management and interpersonal skills relating to future personal and social development.

### GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT

During the unit the candidate is required to devise, plan and complete investigative tasks for a local investigation during which he or she should assemble a folder of assessment evidence in relation to the outcomes. Personal interviews are central to the assessment and will be used to explore the candidate's experience of the investigation tasks in relation to the stated performance criteria.

The tutor/trainer may conduct personal interviews with individual candidates or with groups, as appropriate. The interviews will take place on an on-going basis throughout the unit with a final debriefing interview at the end of the unit. Interviews should draw on relevant evidence from the candidate's assessment folder.

Centres may use the Instruments of Assessment which are considered by tutors/trainers to be the most appropriate. Examples of Instruments of Assessment which could be used are as follows:

Corresponding to outcomes 1-4:

- 1 Personal interview drawing on evidence from self-assessment, project brief/statement of intent and preliminary and detailed planning sheets.
2. Personal interview drawing on evidence from planning sheets, log sheets and presentation of findings of investigation in appropriate format.
3. Personal interview drawing on evidence from log sheets.
4. Personal interview drawing on evidence from final self-assessment sheet and review sheet.

## **National unit specification: support notes (cont)**

**UNIT**            Local Investigations (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* (SQA, 1998).