

Draft National Unit Specification



Unit title: Biology: Life on Earth (National 4)

SCQF: level 4 (6 SCQF credit points)

Unit code: to be advised

Unit outline

The general aim of this Unit is to develop skills of scientific inquiry, investigation, analytical thinking and knowledge and understanding in the context of life on Earth. Learners will use a variety of approaches and will consider applications of life on Earth on our lives, as well as environmental and moral and/or ethical implications. Learners will research issues, apply scientific skills and communicate information related to their findings, which will develop skills of scientific literacy.

Learners who complete this Unit will be able to:

- 1 Draw on knowledge, understanding and skills to investigate, through experimentation, a topic/process relating to life on Earth
- 2 Draw on knowledge, understanding and skills to explore the impact of the human population on the environment
- 3 Use knowledge and understanding of life on Earth

This Unit is a mandatory Unit of the Biology (National 4) Course and is also available as a free-standing Unit. The Unit Specification should be read in conjunction with the *Unit Support Notes* which provide advice and guidance on delivery, assessment approaches and development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. Exemplification of the standards in this Unit is given in the *National Assessment Resource*.

The Added Value Unit Specification for the Biology (National 4) Course gives further mandatory information on Course coverage for learners taking this Unit as part of the Biology (National 4) Course.

Recommended entry

Entry to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. However, learners would normally be expected to have attained the skills, knowledge and understanding required by one or more of the following or equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

- ◆ Access 3 Biology Course or relevant component Units
- ◆ Access 3 Environmental Science Course or relevant component Units
- ◆ Access 3 Science Course or relevant component Units

In terms of prior learning and experience, relevant experiences and outcomes may also provide an appropriate basis for doing this Unit. Further information on relevant experiences and outcomes will be given in the *Unit Support Notes*.

Equality and inclusion

This Unit Specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence. For further information please refer to the *Unit Support Notes*.

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Standards

Outcomes and assessment standards

Outcome 1

The learner will:

1 Draw on knowledge, understanding and skills to investigate, through experimentation, a topic/process relating to life on Earth by:

- 1.1 Identifying, with support, an aim for the investigation
- 1.2 Describing the key features of the topic/process
- 1.3 Planning and designing an experiment to test an aim/purpose
- 1.4 Carrying out an experiment to test an aim/purpose
- 1.5 Recording measurements and observations appropriately
- 1.6 Processing the results
- 1.7 Drawing a simple valid conclusion
- 1.8 Commenting on the aim/purpose/approach and suggesting an improvement

Outcome 2

The learner will:

2 Draw on knowledge, understanding and skills to explore the impact of the human population on the environment by:

- 2.1 Gathering information from at least two sources to describe the impact
- 2.2 Describing the moral and/or ethical issues related to the impact of the human population on the environment

Outcome 3

The learner will:

3 Use knowledge and understanding of life on Earth by:

- 3.1 Giving straightforward descriptions of processes, systems and concepts relating to life on Earth
- 3.2 Solving given problems relating to life on Earth

Evidence Requirements for the Unit

Assessors should use their professional judgement, subject knowledge and experience, and understanding of their learners, to determine the most appropriate ways to generate evidence and the conditions and contexts in which they are used.

Evidence can be drawn from a variety of sources and presented in a variety of formats.

Evidence may be presented for individual Outcomes or gathered for the Unit as a whole, through combining assessment holistically in a single activity. If the latter approach is used, it must be clear how the evidence covers each Outcome.

Concepts to be covered in the Unit will include interdependence of organisms, energy and nutrient cycling, and behaviour.

In these concepts, evidence will be drawn from:

- ◆ interdependence of organisms at local and global levels, adaptations for survival, and factors affecting distribution of organisms
- ◆ energy and nutrient cycles
- ◆ learned behaviour in response to stimuli linked to survival of species, and behavioural adaptations

Exemplification of assessment will be provided in the *National Assessment Resource*. Advice and guidance on possible approaches to assessment is provided in the *Unit Support Notes*.

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Development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

It is expected that learners will develop broad, generic skills through this Unit. The skills that learners will be expected to improve on and develop through the Unit are based on SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work* and drawn from the main skills areas listed below. These must be built into the Unit where there are appropriate opportunities.

1 Literacy

1.1 Reading

2 Numeracy

2.1 Number processes

2.2 Money, time and measurement

2.3 Information handling

5 Thinking skills

5.3 Applying

5.4 Analysing and evaluating

Amplification of these is given in SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*. The level of these skills should be at the same SCQF level of the Unit and be consistent with the SCQF level descriptor. Further information on building in skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work is given in the *Unit Support Notes*.

Administrative information



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Superclass: to be advised

History of changes

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date

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Note: readers are advised to check SQA's website: www.sqa.org.uk to ensure they are using the most up-to-date version of the Unit Specification.