



## International Vocational Unit Specification

### General information for centres

**Unit title:** Crime Scene Investigation

**Unit code:** F3R6 47

**Unit purpose:** This Unit is designed to guide and instruct the initial actions of investigators at a crime scene with a view to ensuring that best evidence is preserved and obtained to assist in the pursuit of a criminal enquiry.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

- 1 Protect and preserve a crime scene.
- 2 Examine the scene and gather evidence.

**Credit points and level:** 1 HN credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit 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.*

**Recommended prior knowledge and skills:** Candidates should have a good working knowledge of general procedures gained through experience of working in a police environment. Candidates could be in or aiming towards an investigative post within a police or law enforcement organisation. Candidates should have good communication, analytical and research skills.

**Context for delivery:** If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

**Assessment:** Assessment for this Unit can be based on a simulated exercise. Candidates can be presented with a simulated crime scene which they will be asked to preserve and protect. They will also be required to produce a reflective report on the exercise which will enable them to explain why they took the actions that they did.

# **International Vocational Unit Specification: statement of standards**

**Unit title:** Crime Scene Investigation

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The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, Knowledge and/or Skills, and Evidence Requirements are mandatory.

Please refer to *Evidence Requirements for the Unit* after Outcome 2.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the Knowledge and/or Skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

## **Outcome 1**

Protect and preserve a crime scene

### **Knowledge and/or Skills**

- ◆ Preservation of life
- ◆ Crime scene identification
- ◆ Procedures for protecting and preserving
- ◆ Methods of protecting and preserving the crime scene
- ◆ Controlling access
- ◆ Initial evidence recovery and recording

## **Outcome 2**

Examine the scene and gather evidence

### **Knowledge and/or Skills**

- ◆ Methods for the examination of the crime scene
- ◆ Identification of best evidence
- ◆ Methods of evidence recovery and recording
- ◆ Packaging and securing of evidence
- ◆ Specialist support

## **International Vocational Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)**

**Unit title:** Crime Scene Investigation

### **Evidence Requirements for the Unit**

Candidates will need to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can protect and preserve a crime scene and conduct a thorough and systematic search of the scene to recover, record and store evidence. This will be achieved through participation in a simulated exercise and the production of a reflective report on a crime scene. The simulated exercise should be structured in such a way as to enable candidates to demonstrate all knowledge and skill items in both Outcomes.

Candidates must provide evidence to cover all Knowledge and Skills items in both Outcomes. This evidence must also show that candidates:

- ◆ have begun by taking appropriate steps for the preservation of life
- ◆ have accurately identified the crime scene
- ◆ have chosen suitable and valid procedures and methods to protect and preserve the particular crime scene and for controlling access to the crime scene
- ◆ have taken suitable steps to recover and record initial evidence
- ◆ are able to accurately identify best evidence
- ◆ have used suitable and valid methods for the examination of the crime scene, for evidence recovery and recording and for the packaging and securing of evidence
- ◆ have correctly identified what type of specialist support would be appropriate in dealing with the particular crime scene
- ◆ can explain why they have taken the actions they have and consider alternative actions that they could have taken

### **Assessment Guidelines for the Unit**

Assessment for this Unit should be undertaken by the candidate being presented with a simulated crime scene and required to protect and preserve the crime scene and gather and store evidence.

The simulated exercise can be assessed using an observation checklist containing all knowledge and skills items. The reflective report should be about 750 words long. Candidates should give reasons to justify what they have done or would have done differently. The report should provide an opportunity for any knowledge and skill items not met through the simulated exercise to be covered.

If necessary, more than one simulated exercise could be undertaken to ensure full coverage of all knowledge and skills items.

## Administrative Information

**Unit code:** F3R6 47  
**Unit title:** Crime Scene Investigation  
**Superclass category:** QH  
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### History of changes:

Version	Description of change	Date

**Source:** SQA

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## **International Vocational Unit Specification: support notes**

### **Unit title: Crime Scene Investigation**

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 intended for police officers or staff involved in the investigation of a criminal matter. Candidates could be following a career path which includes investigation as one of their core duties.

The Unit is designed to provide candidates with the knowledge and abilities to undertake and evaluate a criminal investigation through the preservation and examination of a crime scene as an integral part of a professional investigation process.

The Unit considers the key skills and abilities necessary to protect and preserve a crime scene and to systematically and methodically search the scene to recover the maximum amount of evidence possible utilising their own observations and skills in conjunction with the specialist support available to them.

The ability to properly examine a crime scene and recover evidence is crucial to any investigation and the progress of enquiries. Utilising the correct techniques and specialist support will maximise the potential for the recovery of evidence whether physical, contact or trace evidence not visible to the eye. Candidates will gain an understanding of the various types of crime scene they could encounter and how each has a moving and changing environment depending on the particular circumstances of the scene. Approaching a crime scene in a logical and methodical manner will benefit the wider investigation.

It is important to accurately record how a crime scene has been preserved, protected and managed. The recovery of evidence, how it was handled, secured and protected can significantly influence the investigatory process.

The notes below give further guidance on the context of each Outcome.

#### **Outcome 1 — Protect and preserve a crime scene**

Once a crime is identified, the initial response by the first officer(s) attending the scene is critical to the success of the investigation.

The initial action of the officer must focus on the preservation of life. Where it is thought that a person is injured, whether victim or suspect, medical assistance must be rendered as a matter of priority. However, minimal disruption must be caused to the crime scene, where possible. If items have to be moved or are destroyed as a consequence, a written record, detailing the circumstances, must be made by the attending officer. Similarly, if the injured person has been moved or re-postured this must be recorded in writing.

## **International Vocational Unit Specification: support notes (cont)**

### **Unit title: Crime Scene Investigation**

The weather conditions, including whether it is daylight or darkness, lighting and nature of the terrain must all be recorded. It may also be essential, at that early stage, to either recover or protect evidence. This may be due to weather conditions or other circumstances which indicate that the evidence may be moved or destroyed. Where this course of action is taken it must be recorded by the officer providing reasons for doing so. The position of the evidence, prior to removal or protection, must also be recorded.

A clear access and egress route must be identified at the scene which should be controlled by investigators. Staff must maintain a log recording the details of persons visiting and leaving the scene and their reason for being there.

The officer must also assess the scene or scenes and decide what the parameters of the crime scene are. The scene must be physically cordoned off making it clear to those visiting the scene where the external extremities are. It is advisable to make the cordon as wide as possible to ensure that all available evidence can be captured. The cordon can be re-assessed at a later time. It is easier to reduce the size of a cordon rather than try and extend it.

The scene must be secured by use of individual officers, tape, vehicles, road blocks or any other method available at that time.

A log must be maintained which details persons who have entered the cordon area to include, their personal details, rank, time and date of entry/exit and reason for visit. Any unjustified visit must be rejected by the officer controlling the scene and a record noted.

As far as possible the scene should be protected from the elements and against disturbance by human or animal influence.

A suitable rendezvous point should be identified where all visitors must meet and thereafter a common pathway identified to and from the cordon which will not disturb anything of evidential value.

Once the scene has been secured it is the job of the investigator to ensure that the scene is thoroughly examined and all relevant physical, trace and contact evidence is captured efficiently and effectively.

### **Outcome 2 — Examine the scene and gather evidence**

Evidence can be gathered in many different ways either from direct evidence afforded by the victim, other witnesses, physical evidence and trace or contact evidence.

Where witnesses, including the victim, have been identified they should be questioned to ascertain what information they know which is relevant to the matter under investigation. This information should be gathered in a structured manner utilising interview techniques designed to obtain all relevant information.

If the victim is not in a fit state to be fully interviewed every effort should be made to obtain brief details of the circumstances which can progress the investigation.

## International Vocational Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

### Unit title: Crime Scene Investigation

In terms of physical, trace and contact evidence it is essential that examination of the crime scene affords the Investigator the opportunity to obtain best evidence in the most thorough and systematic of processes. Depending on the nature of the scene and severity of the crime, not all evidence may have to be recovered. An accurate assessment must be made and evidence which will further the investigation recovered.

The crime scene may be extremely small requiring only the minimal amount of resources, conversely the crime scene could cover a large area which requires the allocation of intensive resources to secure and search the area.

Investigators must be aware that physical evidence may take many forms and it may not be immediately obvious that an item, an imprint or anything else has a connection to the crime under investigation. Therefore, in the initial stages of preservation and examination of evidence, the purpose should be to include rather than exclude matter that may be evidential until greater clarity is available.

On identification of evidence it must be carefully recorded, in written form, providing a description of the item, its location, who found it, where it was found and the time and date of finding. If possible it is advantageous to photograph the item in the place that it was found, thereby creating a comprehensive record of its recovery.

Once all the details have been recorded the item must be seized by the officer finding it and secured in such a way that it is protected for forensic analysis, if applicable. Where the item is bladed or capable of causing harm to someone, the item should be preserved in such a way that no injury can be caused to others, *for example, a knife being placed within a plastic container*. Some items may also be placed in clear plastic or brown paper bags depending on the type of item involved. A label detailing the following information must be securely attached to the item or container, using string or a similar material, with the following information recorded upon it:

- ◆ *Unique Reference No/Crime Number*
- ◆ *Location found*
- ◆ *Time and date of being found*
- ◆ *Description of item*
- ◆ *Signature(s) of witnesses identifying/finding the item*
- ◆ *Officer in charge of the case*
- ◆ *Details of officer seizing the item*

All items seized from a crime scene must be recorded in a log book to ensure integrity, accountability and clarity with regard to how they have been recovered, handled and by whom. It also records an accurate account of all items relating to a specific investigation.

Once these items have been gathered together they must be stored in a lockfast and secure location to ensure that they cannot be accessed without the appropriate authorisation being given.

It may be necessary on some occasions for an item to be examined by a forensic scientist (eg to establish a drug identity or to compare blood staining on clothing with blood samples obtained from suspects and witnesses).

## International Vocational Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

### Unit title: Crime Scene Investigation

The forensic scientist will also sign the label attached to the item for continuity of evidence. This may either be at the crime scene or when the item is later submitted to the laboratory.

In situations like this, where the item is passed from one person to another, for testing or other purpose there must be an unbroken link where each person can testify to handling the item or receiving it. Receipts should be completed to record this movement.

When handling hazardous substances, prevent risk of infection by wearing gloves. If it is a sharp item capable of causing injury, place it in a suitable container to protect those handling the item.

There are various types of specialist support available to the investigator whilst examining and recovering contact or trace evidence from a crime scene, these are:

- ◆ *Photographer — to record in photographs or video a crime scene and items found there or and injuries to suspects and victims*
- ◆ *Forensic Scientist — to recover blood or bodily fluids*
- ◆ *Crime Scene Officer — to recover fingerprints, footprints or other marks, scrapings, glass, fibres or other material left at a crime scene*
- ◆ *Search Trained Officer — for a detailed search of the locus and surroundings*
- ◆ *Pathologist — to examine a dead body in the condition and environment that it was found*
- ◆ *Prosecutor — to view the locus and the scenario to assist with subsequent prosecution*

On examination of a crime scene it is essential to identify the specialist support that may be required to recover trace or contact evidence such as blood, body fluids, glass, paint, fibre glass, packaging etc which can link the item on which the material is found to an otherwise unconnected source. Finding such a trace item often implies that there has been direct physical contact between the item and the source due to a transfer of material between them.

There are various techniques used for the recovery of materials and samples depending on its structure and where it is found. Clear adhesive tape is used for recovering fibres from a variety of surfaces and running a comb through someone's hair can also remove trapped debris (important to remember that you can also recover items that cannot be seen with the naked eye). Adhesive tape and powder is also used to recover fingerprints.

### DNA (Deoxyriboneucleic Acid)

DNA can be found in or on anything and can be left through sweat, blood, skin flakes, hair, saliva or body fluids. The technique of DNA analysis and profiling has been prevalent since the first conviction as obtained in 1988. It is a robust substance and can be used to link these fluids or skin flakes to an individual with a high degree of certainty.

DNA analysis can also be carried out on very small or degraded samples. Minute bloodstains, cigarette ends, swabbing of bite marks etc, can also potentially yield evidence.

## **International Vocational Unit Specification: support notes (cont)**

**Unit title:** Crime Scene Investigation

### **Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit**

This Unit can be delivered on a stand-alone basis or as part of a development programme for police staff seeking to work in an investigative role in a police or law enforcement environment. The main candidate group is likely to comprise of individuals who work in police or law enforcement organisations outwith Scotland.

This is essentially a practical Unit and the delivery should reflect this. Candidates can undertake practical exercises to help them acquire and develop the skills they need to undertake crime scene investigation as part of an investigative process. Candidates can also reflect on the practical exercises they have undertaken. This reflection could cover factors like their own preparation for the investigation, the actions they took, the quality of information obtained, the adherence to the prepared plan and their own performance as someone leading an investigation.

For the assessment candidates would be asked to attend a simulated crime scene and protect and preserve it and thereafter conduct a proper search of the scene utilising their own skills and all specialist support available. The simulation should be as realistic as possible and be of a situation which the candidate is likely to encounter. An observation checklist could be used to record candidate performance during the simulation. In most cases, a single simulated crime scene event is likely to be sufficient to meet the requirements of the assessment. However, there may be circumstances in which more than one simulated event is considered appropriate. This may make it easier for example to cover all aspects of the Outcomes in the mandatory section of the Unit.

Candidates are also expected to produce a reflective report on the simulation. The report provides an opportunity for candidates to give reasons to explain the actions they took and to consider how effective they were. In this way the assessment can help candidates to assess their own performance in the examination of the crime scene. They can explore what went well and what could have been improved upon and consider what lessons could be learned.

### **Open learning**

This Unit is particularly suitable for Open Learning as candidates should be able to acquire the relevant knowledge by working through the distance learning material which will be available for this Unit. Appropriate arrangements would need to be made for assessment and quality assurance.

### **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 Units. 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)).

## **General information for candidates**

### **Unit title: Crime Scene Investigation**

This Unit forms part of a series of International Vocational Awards developed by SQA and the Scottish Police College which focus on policing. It has been designed to offer personal developmental opportunities to police officers and staff who are involved in the investigation of criminal matters.

This Unit will provide you with the relevant skills and underpinning knowledge and understanding which you will need to identify, protect and preserve a crime scene with a view to ensuring that best evidence is preserved and obtained to assist in the pursuit of a criminal enquiry. It will help you to recognise critical factors which you need to take into account such as the over-riding importance of the preservation of life. It will take you through the appropriate actions required to deal with the scene of a crime. These include the procedures for protecting and preserving a crime scene and the methods you can use to do this. The Unit will also enable you to develop the skills you need to carry out an initial examination of the crime scene for evidence and how to recover and store any evidence obtained. It will help you become aware of specialist support and how you could make use of it.

To complete the Unit you will be required to successfully undertake the assessment for it. The assessment has two parts. Firstly, you will be asked to deal appropriately with a simulated crime scene. Your actions will be observed to ensure that you carry out all required actions in a suitable way. Secondly, you will be asked to produce a report on the simulation in which you will explain why you took the actions that you did. You will be able to practice both of these during the delivery.