



National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Market Operations and the Scottish Economy (SCQF level 5)

CODE F### 11

SUMMARY

This Unit is intended to introduce candidates to basic ideas in Economics. It is intended for candidates who have no previous knowledge of Economics. The Unit will enable candidates to apply a number of economic concepts to market situations and to explore aspects of the Scottish economy. It covers elements of microeconomics and macroeconomics and, therefore, provides a foundation for future study in Economics.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Illustrate and describe demand and supply concepts in specific market situations.
- 2 Describe particular aspects of the Scottish economy.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Entry is at the discretion of the centre.

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Intermediate 2 level (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 5*).

**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.*

Administrative Information

Superclass: EB

Publication date: March 2008

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

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CORE SKILLS

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills in this Unit.

This Unit provides opportunities for candidates to develop aspects of the following Core Skills:

Communication (SCQF level 5)

Problem Solving (SCQF level 5)

These opportunities are highlighted in the support notes of this Unit Specification.

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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

Illustrate and describe demand and supply concepts in specific market situations.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Illustrate and describe the effect on demand of changes in the determinants of demand.
- (b) Illustrate and describe the effects on supply of changes in the determinants of supply.
- (c) Illustrate and describe market equilibrium price.
- (d) Illustrate and describe changes to equilibrium price and quantity due to a change in a determinant of demand or supply.

OUTCOME 2

Describe particular aspects of the Scottish economy.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe the type of economy in Scotland.
- (b) Describe selected aspects of the Scottish economy.
- (c) Make reference to relevant sources.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

The candidates must produce evidence to demonstrate that both Outcomes and all Performance Criteria have been achieved.

Written and/or recorded oral evidence and diagrammatic evidence is required which demonstrates that the candidate has achieved Outcome 1 to the standard specified in the Outcome and Performance Criteria. The evidence should include **TWO** correctly labelled diagrams for each of Performance Criteria (a) and (b) and **ONE** correctly labelled diagram for each of Performance Criteria (c) and (d).

Written and/or recorded oral evidence is required which demonstrates that the candidate has achieved Outcome 2 to the standard specified in the Outcome and Performance Criteria. The evidence should provide **FOUR** aspects of the Scottish economy.

Candidates should be asked to produce evidence on their own at an appropriate point in the Unit when they have acquired appropriate knowledge and understanding. Centres must ensure that the evidence submitted is the work of individual candidates.

The Assessment Support Pack (ASP) for this Unit provides sample assessment materials and illustrates the standard to be applied and the breadth of coverage required. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the Assessment Support Pack to ensure a comparable standard.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Market Operations and the Scottish Economy (SCQF level 5)

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 a core Unit in the National Certificate in Business at SCQF level 5 but can also be taken as a free-standing Unit. It provides candidates with a mix of micro and macro economic concepts, applications and aspects. Candidates attempting this Unit are not expected to have previous knowledge and understanding of Economics. The National Certificate in Business at SCQF level 5 includes optional Units in Economics at SCQF level 6. Candidates who successfully complete this Unit will be able to progress to one or more of these Units which are: Microeconomics (Higher), The UK Economy (Higher) and The International Economy (Higher).

The extent of the knowledge, understanding and practical skills required for each Outcome is detailed within the statement of standards under the headings of Outcomes, Performance Criteria and Evidence Requirements. Candidates should be made aware of the economic concepts associated with demand and supply and the features associated with a mixed market economy. You may wish to teach the basic economic problem and related concepts although these do not form part of the assessment. Candidates should also be made aware of how such concepts can be applied and provide context to aspects of the Scottish economy.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

It is suggested that Outcome 1 is taught before Outcome 2 of this Unit as Outcome 1 provides more 'bite-size' microeconomics while Outcome 2 is concerned with wider aspects of the macro economy. Although some theory of economic concepts needs to be taught, the Unit should be approached practically so that candidates appreciate that economics is not only theoretical, but also practical. Actual examples relating to both the private and public sectors of the Scottish economy should be used to enable an integrative, holistic approach to the Unit. For instance in Outcome 1 examples could relate to markets associated with Scottish industries, housing associations, education and health establishments. The aspects described in Outcome 2 must be Scottish. Again a range of aspects should be covered. For instance aspects such as unemployment, inflation and growth on a national or regional level, exporting industries and government assistance for industry might be described. Lecturers and teachers can prescribe the four aspects for candidates to describe or there can be some flexibility allowing candidates to describe four particular aspects of their choice. It would be advisable, particularly given the level of the Unit, that at least a few of the aspects are prescribed and those that are left to choice be agreed between candidates and lecturers/teachers. This will also ease assessment and marking.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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A range of learning and teaching methods can be used in the delivery of this Unit. Current news articles in paper or electronic form could be used to encourage candidates to appreciate the ongoing practicality of economics. Once again, given the level of the Unit, the lecturer/teacher could direct candidates to particular articles, provide them with structured questions relating to the articles and then group discussions could be encouraged in feedback. It would also be possible to integrate visits to industry and/or government offices to enable candidates to contextualise applications and to observe economics in practice. Candidates could also be encouraged to investigate particular aspects of the Scottish economy in pairs, or small groups, and be asked to report back to the wider class group. Once again, given the level of the Unit, it would be advisable for the lecturer/teacher to provide candidates with advice on how to conduct and feed back from the investigation.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

In this Unit candidates will be applying their knowledge in two main ways. Firstly, they will be using basic theoretical ideas in Economics to show that they can identify relevant factors in particular market situations and assess their relevance to the situation. They are required also to demonstrate their understanding by illustrating the relevant market situation. Secondly, they will be required to describe information about the Scottish economy which they have gathered through guided research. Depending on the learning and teaching methods adopted, candidates may be able to communicate the information orally and in writing. There may be opportunities for example to convey information on their research on the Scottish economy to other in their class group. These activities can provide candidates with opportunities to develop aspects of the Core Skills of Communication and Problem Solving.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

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 communications technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or e-checklists. 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)*.

The Outcomes of this Unit can be assessed separately or holistically. This Unit could be assessed by asking candidates to compile a portfolio of evidence, which could include a variety of items such as drawn graphs, answers to short/medium response questions, extracts of statistics and a medium sized (eg 500 word) report on the Scottish Economy. Thus an appropriate instrument of assessment for Outcome 1 would be short/ medium response questions applied to a chosen market situation and an appropriate instrument of assessment for Outcome 2 would be to produce a report. Such instruments of assessment would allow candidates to build up evidence and a portfolio would enable candidates to develop various skills such as graph drawing, succinct writing/oral communication, well-structured writing/oral communication and independent retrieval of information

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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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).

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