

Writing Higher National Units using the revised format

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1 Introduction

The main aim of these guidance notes is to explain the key aspects of the revised Higher National Unit specification, which was introduced in March 2003, and how they differ from the previous HN Unit specification. These notes will be useful for anyone who needs detailed guidance on writing or editing Units in the new format, for example:

- ◆ Qualifications Managers
- ◆ Qualifications Officers
- ◆ people commissioned by SQA to write Units
- ◆ centres writing Units for validation by SQA

The revised HN Unit specification, which is also used for 10-hour Units, is different from the previous HN Unit format and that used for National Units. The reasons for changing the HN Unit specification were:

- ◆ to make Units easier to understand by using plain English and normal word order, and putting information where it will be most helpful
- ◆ to try to cut down on assessment by steering users towards holistic assessment (where appropriate)
- ◆ to respond to feedback from centres and higher education institutions

The changes were piloted as part of the HN Review. The revised Unit format has now been evaluated, and the changes have been approved.

Main changes in the revised Unit format

These are the main changes from the previous HN Unit specification:

- a) A summary of the information required to deliver the Unit appears on the first page.

New sections on **Context for delivery**, **Assessment** and **Core Skills** have been added. **Credit value** has been renamed **Credit points and level** and will give the number of HN credits, the level of the Unit in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), and the number of SCQF credit points it has been allocated. The old 'Access' section has been changed to **Recommended prior knowledge and/or skills**. To enable this information to be included on the first page, **Administrative information** has been moved to the end of the Unit.

- b) A new **Knowledge and/or skills** section is included for each Outcome or, where the Unit is assessed holistically, for the Unit as a whole.

This section should detail only the knowledge and skills that are essential for achieving the Outcome/Unit. It will often include the type of information previously listed under Range statement. Everything listed here can be assessed. Where it is not possible to demonstrate all the knowledge requirements through holistic assessment, this section can be sampled through supervised, unseen assessment. Tests for sampling knowledge, whether written or oral, would, of course, need to be kept confidential and could not be used in the same form for re-assessment.

- c) Performance Criteria (designated as such, and listed a), b), c), etc) are no longer used. Instead, this information, which conveys the national standard, should become part of expanded **Evidence Requirements**.

The purpose of this change is to steer practitioners away from the PC-by-PC checklist approach, which seems to be encouraged by separate Performance Criteria and sometimes leads to fragmentation and over-assessment. Where the Unit is assessed holistically, the Evidence Requirements will be specified for the Unit as a whole rather than Outcome by Outcome. [In the past, the Evidence Requirements needed to state no more than, ‘Oral or written evidence which covers the Performance Criteria’. Reference back to the PCs for clarification often showed them to be poorly specified, giving no idea of what type of evidence or how much was required.]

The essential criteria for Evidence Requirements is that they should state very clearly what a candidate has to do, and to what standard; how much evidence is required to satisfy these requirements; and the conditions in which assessment should be carried out. Provided Evidence Requirements meet these criteria, the precise format in which they are expressed should not be standardised — it can remain sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of different sectors. For example, in some vocational areas it may be helpful to list Evidence Requirements alphabetically.

- d) There is a new section, **Assessment guidelines**, which follows immediately after the Evidence Requirements, whether they are written for an Outcome or for the Unit as a whole.

Assessment guidelines are now required for all Units as part of the Unit specification. Although the assessment guidelines do not have the force of a mandatory part of the statement of standards, they should provide a good model for assessment.

If a Core Skill is embedded in a Unit, you are strongly recommended to seek prior moderation for any alternative to the assessment model given in the assessment guidelines to ensure that the Core Skill is still covered.

- e) The Merit Statement is no longer part of the revised HN Unit specification. The new design rules for HN development specify that

grading should be attached to the Graded Units. The grading will be A, B, or C.

- f) There are two new sections in the support notes:
- ◆ Open Learning.
This gives advice on open and distance learning delivery.
 - ◆ General information for candidates.
This is a brief and simple summary of the Unit, which could be given to candidates before they start on the Unit (like the Candidate's Guide in the National Assessment Bank packs developed to support the delivery of National Units that are components of National Courses or Scottish Group Awards).
- g) The other information previously in the support notes will be listed under the following revised headings:
- ◆ Guidance on the content and context for this Unit
 - ◆ Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit.
This section will include a sub-section entitled Opportunities for the development of Core Skills.

2 Planning the Unit

a Before you start work

Before starting work you should always check that the Unit you intend to write does not duplicate existing SQA provision. If your remit comes directly from an SQA officer, a check will already have been carried out. If not, check with the Qualifications Manager responsible for the subject area or refer to the appropriate SQA catalogues/CD-ROM. Centres can also propose to develop Units, which SQA would validate. There is guidance on the procedure for this in the HN Toolkit (*Developing HN Qualifications: a toolkit for centres*), which is available on our website (www.sqa.org.uk).

You should always **plan** before you write or revise a Unit. You need to be very clear about the overall purpose and rationale for the Unit. You should be able to identify the Unit's main target group and its objectives, whether these are to fill a gap in existing SQA provision, or to meet the specific needs of employers, degree programmes, or professional bodies. This will help you to plan the content and scope of the Unit. You also need to think about the balance between level, content, delivery, assessment, and the notional design length of the Unit.

Things to consider

Core Skills

Since the candidates taking the HNC/HND for which you are developing the Unit will need to meet a Core Skill development profile, you could consider whether there are opportunities for embedding or signposting Core Skill development in the Unit you are writing. It will be easier to do this at the time of writing rather than at a later stage. It is essential, though, that the attempt to embed/signpost a Core Skill should not turn you aside from the rationale and purpose for which you are writing the Unit.

Unit writing is an iterative process. For example, when you have completed your first draft, it may become apparent that not merely development towards a Core Skill, but a complete Core Skill, would fall naturally out of the Unit and the assessment you have planned. At that stage, you could think about 'tweaking' your Unit to make sure it matches the Core Skill framework.

Further advice and guidance on Core Skills is given in this document in sections 3a6 and 3b3 and 3c3. You should also familiarise yourself with the Core Skills framework, which can be found in the Core Skills section on SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk).

Assessment instruments and holistic assessment

Think about the content of the Unit and what you want candidates to be able to do as a result of having studied it, ie the outcomes of their learning. Even at this early stage you may begin to get a feel for whether it will be the type of Unit that could be assessed holistically (all the Outcomes together) or whether it will need to be assessed sequentially. Try to work out the **sequence** of Outcomes that is most logical for delivery and assessment.

Inclusion and accessibility

A crucial task for Unit writers is to ensure that unnecessary barriers to access are not built inadvertently into the Unit documentation and that all sections of the Unit are written in an inclusive way.

Inclusiveness is a principle that is relevant to all candidates and not just to groups such as candidates with disabilities or from an ethnic minority. It acknowledges that there can also be barriers to achievement for a whole range of groups including, for example, adult returners and the socially disadvantaged.

Units also need to be written in such a way that allows their use in different cultural contexts (eg not using local references) and with different types of assessment (eg e-assessment). This would not apply to Units requiring specialist knowledge (eg a Unit in Scots Law).

In recent years there have been significant developments in approaches to support learning. Inclusion has meant not just that more students are educated together but also that the needs of a much wider group of learners have been recognised. The recognition that barriers to learning such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, and autism are spectrum disorders, found in lesser as well as greater degrees, means that the individual difficulties of a much larger number of learners have to be met. Many more learners than was previously thought have some difficulty with reading, spelling, processing information etc. Learners may have conflicting needs but it is important that you consider all needs and make decisions for valid reasons.

Inclusiveness by design

It is important that you anticipate disadvantage and, wherever possible, take steps to eliminate or minimise it. This is the basis of legislation such as the Disability Discrimination Act. It is not enough to acknowledge disadvantage, steps must be taken to eliminate or reduce its effect. An inclusive approach, therefore, means developing an awareness of the wide variety of need as part of the whole process involved in the development of a Unit.

Candidates with a wide range of difficulties might have difficulty accessing, presenting, and organising information.

These include:

- ◆ candidates who are deaf and need to use interpreters because they mainly communicate in British Sign Language
- ◆ candidates who are visually impaired and may need to use Braille and raised diagrams
- ◆ candidates with a physical disability who may have difficulty in writing or in performing practical tasks
- ◆ candidates with specific learning difficulties who may have a particular difficulty in reading, writing, spelling, or manipulating or with short-term memory, organisational skills, and co-ordination
- ◆ candidates who are autistic and may have difficulty with communication and in thinking in a flexible way
- ◆ candidates who are socially disadvantaged and may lack confidence and a complete educational experience

You should be aware that where it does not affect an Outcome, specifying the communication mode can disadvantage candidates. For example:

- ◆ a deaf candidate may not be able to produce oral responses without the use of an interpreter
- ◆ a blind student may be dependent on Braille to produce work
- ◆ a candidate with specific learning difficulties may need a scribe to produce work

Altering Outcomes to reflect these differing needs promotes inclusion and the independence of the candidate and avoids the need for special arrangements.

Core Skills

While candidates taking the HNC/HND you are developing will need to meet a Core Skill development profile, it is important to remember that Core Skills are potentially exclusive for some candidates who have particular difficulties. For example:

- ◆ candidates who have specific learning difficulties may experience difficulties with the Communication Core Skill component: Written Communication
- ◆ deaf candidates and those with speech difficulties may experience problems with Communication Core Skill component: Oral Communication
- ◆ candidates with Asperger's Syndrome may experience difficulties with Working with Others

It is therefore important that in embedding or signposting a Core Skill or ‘tweaking’ your Unit to make sure it matches up to the Core Skill framework you do not move away from the rationale and purpose of the Unit.

Assessment relating to Candidates with Disabilities and Additional Support Needs

For some candidates, notably those with significant disabilities, it will be impossible to overcome the barriers to assessment through design alone. For this reason SQA has produced guidance for centres on alternative assessment arrangements to enable candidates to demonstrate their achievement. The publication *Guidance on Alternative Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities or Additional Support Needs* is available on the SQA website (www.sqa.org.uk). These arrangements are not intended to compensate for design deficiencies and should be used only when absolutely essential.

b General points

As you go along, review what you are writing to ensure the coherence of the Unit:

- ◆ Check that the Outcomes relate back to the Unit title and the summary given in the Unit purpose section.
- ◆ Check that the list of knowledge and skills you have detailed as essential for the achievement of the Outcome/Unit is complete, and that all items really are essential, since they are subject to assessment. Supporting ‘nice-to-know’ knowledge can be outlined in the support notes.
- ◆ Check that the Evidence Requirements cover everything in the Outcome/Unit, and that they state clearly and unambiguously exactly what a candidate has to do and to what standard; how much evidence is required to demonstrate this; and the conditions in which assessment should be carried out. If you are using sampling as a method of assessment, ask yourself whether the sample will provide sufficient evidence for an assessor to be able to infer competence in the items not assessed. Does the assessment plan you have thought out for the Unit match the Evidence Requirements?
- ◆ Check that the way you have written the Unit is inclusive and will be accessible to everyone.

Rewrite Outcomes where necessary. Sometimes, after writing other sections of the standards, you might realise that an Outcome does not express what you originally intended. It is usually easier to rewrite the Outcome than to rewrite everything else.

Finally, it is a good idea to have a network of contacts from whom you can get feedback while writing the Unit. It could come, for example, from the design team of the HNC/HND to which your Unit contributes; or from practitioners who teach in the area your Unit covers. If you are writing the Unit as part of a sequence in which the remaining Units are written by other writers, you could ask them for comment, since it would be important to keep in regular contact to resolve any issues of overlap and progression. The network does not have to be large, but it is a good way of testing out the coherence and practicability of the Unit, particularly in relation to assessment and to the balance between content and the timescale for delivery.

3 Writing the Unit specification

This part of the handbook goes through the sections of the Unit specification, describing what you have to produce for each of them.

a General information for centres

Although this is the first page of the specification, you may not be able to provide much of the information required until you have written the rest of the Unit. Some of it, eg the Unit code, will be put in by others after the Unit has been validated.

1 Unit title

The most important feature of a good Unit title is that it gives a clear indication of what the Unit is about. The Unit title should reflect what candidates are doing or the skills or knowledge they will have developed on achieving the Outcomes. Remember that the title is the first, and sometimes the only, thing that someone reads about a Unit.

The title should indicate clearly the area of skills and/or knowledge covered. This can be followed, if necessary, by a further statement indicating any specialism or qualifying factor, for example:

- ◆ Video Production Technology: Basic Skills
- ◆ Graphic Design: Children’s Book Illustration
- ◆ Research Methods in Social Sciences

Avoid using ‘The’ at the start of a title — this makes alphabetical listings more meaningful. For example, call your Unit *Using Accounting Information to ...* rather than *The Use of Accounting Information to ...*

Similarly, instead of starting your title with *An Introduction ...* or *Introduction to ...*, give the main part of the title followed by a colon and then ‘An Introduction’, eg: *Management: An Introduction to Team Leadership*.

Numbers in Unit titles

You should not use numbers in a title, even where there is a clear progression between Units. This progression should be reflected in the wording of the title and the recommended prior knowledge and skills section. For example:

Communication: Basic Writing Skills
Communication: Advanced Writing Skills

Note: Some Units belong to a hierarchy in that they allow candidates to study the same body of knowledge and skills but to different levels of demand. In such cases, the Units will be given the same title but will be distinguished by the SCQF level, which is embedded in the product code allocated to the Unit after successful validation, eg an SCQF level 7 Unit would have the last two digits as 34. Hierarchies allow candidates to be given credit for achieving a higher level than the minimum specification.

2 Unit code

A 4 + 2 alphanumeric code now replaces the Unit number in the Awards Processing System (APS) used by SQA. The Unit code will be inserted by SQA once the Unit has been validated. The first four digits are the Unit identifier, the last two specify its SQA level.

A Unit cannot be altered or amended except through validation. After validation, it would be allocated a new code.

3 Unit purpose

You should give a clear, brief summary of what the Unit is about, followed by the statement, ‘On completion of this Unit candidates should be able to:’ and then list the Outcomes. Be careful that you do not make claims in the summary that go beyond what is in the Outcomes. You might want to give an indication of the intended candidate target group for the Unit or of progression from it, if appropriate.

4 Credit points and level

The credit value allocated to a Unit gives an indication of the contribution the Unit makes to an SQA Group Award. All SQA qualifications will carry SCQF credit points. Previously, credit was expressed as HN credits with one SQA, HN credit representing approximately 40 hours of timetabled teaching, learning, and assessment. SCQF credit points are allocated on the basis of one credit point for every 10 hours of programmed learning. HN candidates are expected to put in an equivalent amount of their own study time, which gives a one-credit HN Unit an allocation of 8 SCQF credit points, and a two-credit Unit 16 SCQF credit points.

When making a judgement about the credit value of a Unit, you should take into account the estimated amount of programmed learning, teaching, and assessment time needed for an ‘average’ candidate (ie a candidate who has the prior knowledge and skills you have recommended, see next section) to achieve the Outcomes.

This section also includes the level of the Unit in the SCQF (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework). The SCQF brings all Scottish qualifications into a single framework of 12 levels. HNC, Advanced

Higher, and Scottish Degree Year 1 are all at level 7 in the SCQF. HND and Scottish Degree Year 2 are at level 8.

Throughout the writing of the Unit specification, you need to be aware of the SCQF level for which you are writing, eg equivalence between AH and HN Units, and progression from HNC to HND. In HNCs/HNDs the design principles allow Units at various SCQF levels (but normally 6 to 9) to form part of the structure of an HNC or HND, provided that the mandatory requirements for inclusion of Units at level 7 for an HNC and at level 8 for an HND are met.

When proposing the allocation of SCQF levels to HN Units, it is essential that you use the SCQF level descriptors as a reference. These are given in Appendix 4.

5 Recommended prior knowledge and skills

This section will give guidance on the level of knowledge and skills candidates should have if they are to be able to achieve the Unit in the time allotted. The guidance here will act as an indicator of any induction required before candidates start on the Unit.

It is helpful to give examples of the type and level of qualification that might demonstrate prior knowledge and skills, and examples of other kinds of experience that might also indicate this. Examples of qualifications will normally be at no more than one SCQF level below the level of the Unit you have written. Where the Unit is a direct progression from another Unit, the precursor Unit should always be indicated.

6 Core Skills

The design principles state that HNC and HND programmes should clearly include opportunities for candidates to develop Core Skills to levels required by the occupations or progression pathways the HNs support. This would normally mean that all five Core Skills should be developed in every HN programme. Most Units will offer opportunities for some Core Skill development – either embedded or signposted.

Core Skills (or components) are ‘embedded’ where the Unit assessment overtakes the Core Skills assessment. In these cases, Core Skills achievement will appear on the candidate’s certificate.

Core Skills are ‘signposted’ where opportunities to develop Core Skills (or components) occur during teaching, learning and assessment but lie outwith formal assessment (and therefore will not be certificated). Further advice and guidance on signposting Core Skills is given in section 3c3.

The statement under this heading should give general guidance on both embedded and signposted Core Skills being developed in the Unit.

Where a claim for an embedded Core Skill has been validated, a standard statement will be added by SQA.

The achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following: (give Core Skill, or component, title and level)

Where Core Skills development is signposted, use the wording:

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skill(s) of (give Core Skill title + level) in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

Where Core Skills are both embedded and signposted, use the wording:

The achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following: (give Core Skill, or component, title and level). There are also further opportunities to develop the Core Skill(s) of (give Core Skill, or component, title + level) in this Unit.

Where there are no opportunities to embed or signpost any Core Skill, use the wording:

There are no opportunities to develop Core Skills in this Unit.

The detail of how Core Skills development will be carried out should be written into the support notes. Any assessment evidence required for embedded Core Skills should be stated in the Evidence Requirements. Some signposted Core Skills development might be included in the assessment guidelines (see section 3b4).

7 Context for delivery

This standard statement will be used in all Units: ‘If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed in the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.’

You could expand this guidance briefly where necessary. For example, for a Unit on Research Methods:

The most appropriate approach to delivery is to integrate this Unit with a Unit that requires the candidate to carry out a realistic research project in a suitable context.

8 Assessment

This section should state very briefly how the Unit will be assessed, and give any special conditions of assessment. Where the Unit is a mandatory part of an HNC/HND framework for which an assessment exemplar is being developed, the following statement will appear:

An exemplar instrument of assessment and marking guidelines have been produced to show the national standard of achievement required at HN level X.

b Statement of standards

1 Outcomes

The Outcomes in a Unit specification should tell the reader precisely what a candidate is able to do as a result of learning. The main feature of an Outcome is that it is written in terms of final output or achievement of skills or knowledge. It should always be possible to preface the wording with the phrase, ‘The candidate will be able to ...’ For example:

- ◆ Evaluate a customer care strategy for an organisation
- ◆ Provide translations of complex texts
- ◆ Author an interactive application to the agreed design

As a rough guide, each Unit specification should have between three and five Outcomes. This is not a hard and fast rule, but a recommendation drawn from experience. A large number of Outcomes leads to fragmentation and militates against the holistic approach to assessment that we want to encourage.

As with all aspects of writing, clarity and coherence are important. Outcomes should state clearly the skills or knowledge that must be demonstrated by candidates. There should be a clear link between different Outcomes in the same Unit specification, and there should be a clear link between the Outcomes and the rationale for the Unit, its purpose and objectives.

When writing Outcomes it is useful to ask ‘What is to be done, and for what purpose?’ This will help you to ensure that each Outcome is clear and precise.

Some verbs can be ambiguous in meaning and it is better to avoid their use. For example:

assess	This has connotations of formal assessment.
know	How do candidates show that they know something and what

	kind of knowledge is required? Do you mean explain? Would it be clearer to say ‘use knowledge to evaluate’? State exactly what you mean so that there can be no doubt.
understand	The same questions arise. Use a verb that tells candidates exactly what they should be able to do to demonstrate understanding.
demonstrate	This depends on what is being demonstrated. For example, if candidates are required to demonstrate knowledge, they can do so by answering questions on specific topics. If, however, a candidate is asked to demonstrate understanding, what would you be asking them to do? If it is to analyse, evaluate, etc, it would be better to say this.
illustrate	This should only be used in the context of art and design Units.

2 Knowledge and/or skills

You should include a knowledge and/or skills statement for each Outcome or, where the Unit is assessed holistically, for a combination of Outcomes or the Unit as a whole. This section should contain only the knowledge and skills that are essential for achieving the Outcome and for which the candidate would have to produce evidence. It should not be used to detail a teaching syllabus — you can include any useful additional information in the support notes. You should not express knowledge and skills statements as Performance Criteria. Rather they are lists of the essential ingredients that support the outcome. For example, in the Outcome: ***Author an interactive application to the agreed design*** the knowledge and skills would be listed as:

- ◆ Authoring software
- ◆ Incorporation of media elements
- ◆ Navigation
- ◆ Interaction
- ◆ On-going testing

These points should be expanded in the support notes, and the level of knowledge and/or skill to be assessed should be clear from the Evidence Requirements.

3 Evidence Requirements

This section must state clearly and unambiguously exactly:

- ◆ What candidates have to do, and to what standard, to demonstrate that they have achieved the Outcome. This includes:
 - the type of performance, eg analysis, evaluation, application

- information on the standard, eg apply a calculation using three different sets of figures; *or* evaluate three theories, one of which is contested by the profession; *or* analyse two given situations, one that is familiar to the candidate and one that is unfamiliar.

- ◆ Whether a certain amount of evidence must be generated to prove candidates have met the standard. A precise statement on the amount of evidence may not always be necessary, but if you state the amount of evidence in terms of number of words or length of pages, use the notion of equivalences, eg the equivalent of 500 words or the equivalent of one A4 side. Where the amount of evidence is not crucial to meeting the standard required for the outcome, you can include this as a guideline in the assessment guidelines.

- ◆ Whether there are any conditions in which assessment should be carried out. This may include one or more of the following:
 - ***Closed book.*** This means no materials are allowed in the assessment.
 - ***Open book.*** This means candidates are allowed access to materials. Details of prescribed materials must be given. This includes the type (eg books, notes), the amount (eg one A4 side, two text books), any named text (eg a French dictionary), or any other sources of information (eg a cached internet site).
 - ***Unseen.*** This normally means the candidate will not have seen the assessment in advance. There might be instances where part of the assessment is seen and part unseen. For example, candidates might be asked to look at a case study in advance and then answer unseen questions on this at a later date. Unseen or partially unseen assessments are required when sampling is used to assess knowledge.
 - ***Supervised/invigilated.*** This should be stipulated when authentication of the candidates' work is necessary. Supervised conditions may be required for open or closed book assessment. When sampling is used, the assessment must be under supervised conditions.
 - ***Timed.*** This means that candidates must complete the assessment in a given time. If using this condition, writers/validators must be satisfied that it is necessary to meeting the standard required. For example, in a travel Unit, candidates might have to find information on a travel package quickly, as this would be a requirement in the workplace; or in a Word Processing Unit candidates might have to demonstrate their ability to word-process documents at a particular speed. However, if a candidate had to save a file and send it electronically, demonstrating competence in this task might be more important than completing it in a set time. If a timed assessment is not necessary to meet the standard required, guidance on timing can be given in the assessment guidelines.

- ◆ Any restrictions on the way in which evidence can be generated to ensure that a valid and reliable assessment of a candidate's achievement can be made. For example, some evidence must be generated through workplace practice.

You should not specify the instrument of assessment (eg report, extended response questions) in the Evidence Requirement unless this is *essential* to meeting the standard required. Evidence can often be generated using different instruments of assessment, and recommendations on which ones to use should be made in the assessment guidelines.

This is very important because, while writers must ensure that standards are clear, Evidence Requirements should be written to allow centres to construct assessments relevant to particular cultural contexts and/or types of assessment. So, for example, the Evidence Requirements should not be restrictive in referring to particular cultural contexts (unless this is necessary to the standard, such as Scottish Legal system). Likewise, you should write the Evidence Requirements to allow the possibility of constructing instruments of assessment conducive to e-assessment.

The way you write the Evidence Requirements is also important. They must contain meaningful information about the standard of achievement or performance the evidence must meet — sometimes referred to as the national standard of achievement — which was previously put into the Performance Criteria. Many existing HN Unit specifications have PCs liberally sprinkled with adjectives such as 'correctly' or 'accurately' as the evaluative statement where, in fact, there is no one right or wrong answer, method of carrying out an action, etc. This means that assessors do not have a clear idea of what they should be looking for when they are assessing the Unit. If the use of 'accurately' and 'correctly' is meaningful, though, in conveying the standard required, their use would not be questioned.

You need to be sure that you are telling candidates very clearly exactly what level of performance will be expected from them. The same words must also tell assessors and moderators what standard of performance to look for in coming to a valid and reliable judgement about whether an Outcome/Unit has been achieved. Always be as specific as possible and make certain that everything in the Evidence Requirements is critical to the achievement of the Outcome/Unit, ie is an essential part of what it is to be competent in that Outcome/Unit.

You must also make sure that your Evidence Requirements cover the full breadth of achievement of skill, knowledge, or understanding required by the Outcome/Unit. Anyone reading the Unit specification should have no doubt about what the national standard of performance is for each Outcome and for the Unit as a whole.

Sampling

As already noted, sampling can be used as a method of assessment, thus achieving one of the main aims of the revised HN Unit — to reduce the assessment load for both centres and candidates.

Sampling is particularly appropriate for knowledge-based Units where assessing all the knowledge and/or skills items would require candidates to produce an unacceptably large volume of evidence. In this type of Unit an assessor can infer that a candidate who can demonstrate competence in a sample of knowledge items would also be competent in all items in the Unit.

Sampling can also allow the use of a holistic instrument of assessment, which might not otherwise be feasible if candidates had to produce evidence to cover all items in the Unit specification.

Sampling must be carried out in supervised conditions. Normally, the sample should be unseen to ensure that candidates fully prepare the range of knowledge and skills and not just the chosen sample. However, in some instances, you may be able to combine unseen sampling with part of an assessment that is seen in advance. For example, an assessment could comprise a case study given to candidates in advance and unseen questions given at the time of assessment and used to sample knowledge by asking the candidate to focus on a particular theory or type of practice.

A different sample should be chosen on each assessment occasion so that candidates cannot ‘spot’ what they will be asked in advance of the assessment taking place. There should be a quality statement covering all the knowledge items from which the sample will be selected so that, whatever the sample chosen, candidates, assessors, and moderators will be aware of the national standard of performance expected. If, however, certain items of knowledge **must** be assessed on each assessment occasion, this should be stated in the Evidence Requirements. The Evidence Requirements, then, should state:

- ◆ The proportion of knowledge and/or skills that can be sampled. There is no specified minimum below which sampling will not be valid, but the evidence produced in the sample must be sufficient for an assessor to infer that candidates are competent in all the Outcomes of the Unit. This may not be possible if the sample chosen is too small.
- ◆ The standard required for each knowledge item — in some cases you may be able to write this as a quality statement that overtakes the whole body of knowledge and/or skills items specified for an Outcome or Unit.
- ◆ Whether any item(s) must be assessed on each assessment occasion, eg if it is crucial to successful achievement of the Outcome(s) or to achieving an embedded Core Skill.

- ◆ The fact that a different sample should be chosen for each assessment (apart from any items which must be assessed on each occasion, if this is appropriate) to prevent candidates being able to predict what they will be asked.
- ◆ The conditions of assessment — where any special conditions of assessment are specified (eg supervised, closed book), these should be applied on every assessment occasion, including full and partial re-assessment.

Core Skills

If you are embedding a Core Skill, you need to ensure that assessment of the Core Skill is overtaken by the Evidence Requirements of the Unit. This will be particularly important if you are using sampling as a method of assessment, since the Core Skill will have to be covered in every sample selected.

There will normally be no reference to signposted Core Skill development in the Evidence Requirements.

How to write Evidence Requirements

You can write Evidence Requirements for the whole Unit, for a combination of Outcomes in a Unit, or for individual Outcomes. There is no standard format for writing Evidence Requirements — as long as they are clear and unambiguous, and will be easily understood by all users of the Unit. You could write them as paragraphs of text or as a series of bullet points following a simple stem, if this is the simplest way of stating what is required. The latter format, though, would not be appropriate in all circumstances. In process-oriented Units, you might decide that the easiest way of presenting the Evidence Requirements would be to list them by letter or number.

If you have written the Evidence Requirements in an integrative way for the Unit as a whole or more than one Outcome, they will appear under the heading **Evidence Requirements for the Unit** at the end of the statement of standards. If you have written them for each Outcome, each Outcome will be followed by its own **Evidence Requirements** heading, after the section on knowledge and/or skills.

4 Assessment guidelines

Although each HN Unit must contain assessment guidelines, centres are not required to follow them — anything that is mandatory should be in the Evidence Requirements section.

Assessment guidelines can be written for an Outcome, for a combination of Outcomes, or for the Unit as a whole.

This section will contain the type of detailed information that was previously contained in the support notes of some well-written Units. It should give guidance on how best to carry out the assessment, eg recommending the use of a particular assessment instrument. It should provide a clear template for assessors to flesh out an assessment instrument. It should also, where applicable, provide guidance on how to integrate assessment in an Outcome, or how to link assessment with other Outcomes in the Unit. It might, for example, give guidance on how the whole Unit could be assessed through a single instrument of assessment.

If the assessment involves sampling knowledge, this section should give guidance on how this might be carried out, eg by means of a confidential test carried out in closed book, supervised conditions.

When writing the assessment guidelines you should take care to be as inclusive as possible, making sure that you are not inadvertently creating any barriers to achievement, eg for candidates who require additional support or who are undertaking the Unit by open or distance learning. For example, if your guidelines suggest sampling knowledge by means of a supervised, closed book test, you will need at the same time to think about the guidance you will give under the **Open learning** heading on how candidate evidence can be authenticated.

Where you have written assessment guidelines for the whole Unit, the heading **Assessment guidelines for the Unit** will follow the heading **Evidence Requirements for the Unit** at the end of the statement of standards. Otherwise, assessment guidelines will follow the Evidence Requirements of the Outcome to which they relate.

Here is an example of an Outcome with Evidence Requirements and assessment guidelines:

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need evidence to demonstrate all aspects of their knowledge and/or skills in this Outcome by showing that they can, with reference to a particular task that a team has to achieve:

- ◆ propose an objective for the task that meets the SMART criteria
- ◆ propose an objective for the team leader that meets the SMART criteria
- ◆ propose an objective for the team that meets the SMART criteria
- ◆ identify the steps in the planning process involved in the task
- ◆ propose one planning technique that could be used and justify the choice
- ◆ explain how the control process will operate in the situation

- ◆ propose one control method that could be used and justify its suitability in the situation

These items refer to the bullet points listed under knowledge and/or skills and must be assessed on each assessment occasion. Candidates must provide a satisfactory response to all seven items in the form of a report or in response to a specific question or questions.

Evidence should be generated through assessment under controlled conditions. Where a case study is used, candidates may be given a copy of it 7–10 days before the assessment takes place. Candidates may bring a copy of any case study to the assessment event, along with any notes that they have made personally. They may not bring textbooks, handouts, or other material not prepared by themselves. The notes should be handed in at the end of the assessment.

Assessment guidelines

The assessment of this Outcome can be combined with Outcomes 1 and 2 as part of a single assessment for the Unit. This could be conducted at a single assessment event lasting two and a half hours and carried out in supervised conditions. It would be possible, if desired, to break this assessment down into three separate assessment events that assess each Outcome holistically.

In the assessment, candidates will be required to produce a report or reports based on a case study or an actual workplace situation. Reports can be supplemented by additional questions to ensure all aspects of the Evidence Requirements are covered. The report may be presented in any suitable way. Reports may be written, oral, or signed. Where the Evidence Requirements specify the use of a sample, the sample will vary from assessment to assessment.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Where a case study is used as part of the assessment, it should relate to a team within a particular organisation, and should centre on a significant task that the team has to achieve. It should include background information on the organisation, the task, and the team. It would be helpful if the organisation were relevant to the Group Award the candidate is taking.

Candidates who have access to a suitable workplace can base their assessment work on a suitable situation drawn from their place of work. This could relate to a team or section of which they are part, as a team member or as team leader, or to the experience of a team or section with which they are familiar but not directly involved. If you adopt this approach, you should make clear to candidates from the outset that this will be the case.

Where a workplace situation is used, you should take care to ensure that it would provide candidates with sufficient opportunity to meet the Evidence Requirements of the Unit. It may be appropriate for the lecturer or trainer concerned to ensure beforehand that a particular workplace will allow candidates to generate sufficient and suitable evidence. It should meet the following criteria:

- ◆ There should be a clearly identifiable team, even if it is not described as a team, with an identifiable team leader or supervisor.
- ◆ The team should have been involved in a significant task, eg organising a particular event, introducing new systems of working, undertaking a pilot project. The task should be one about which the organisation or the team made a specific decision, and it should require planning. It is likely to be easier for candidates if the task has been completed or is close to completion.
- ◆ The candidate should be able to find out the information required by the Unit, eg the composition of the team in terms of team roles, planning and control methods used, objectives set, and ways performance is reviewed.

The workplace situation should allow for all items listed under knowledge and skills for each Outcome to be covered.

These criteria can be met in a large or small organisation. In the latter case, it is possible that the team would comprise all those involved in the organisation. For larger organisations, candidates may focus on a particular part of the organisation, in which case explanations of the organisational context, eg culture, should relate to that part of the organisation involved.

You can include opportunities to develop Core Skills in the assessment guidelines if a particular instrument of assessment or an Assessment Strategy lends itself to candidates developing a particular skill or generating evidence towards a Core Skill. For example, a report might contribute towards the development of Written Communication. You should indicate the Core Skill and level.

5 Administrative information

This section will be completed by SQA.

c Support notes

1 The importance of Support Notes

The Support Notes section is often the most useful part of the Unit specification for users. It is an opportunity to expand on the information given in the Statement of Standards and give clear advice on all aspects of delivery. This benefits all users and helps to share best practice in the area being covered.

2 Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

You might want to use this section to contextualise and expand on the statement of standards. You might want to say more about the purpose of the Unit, and to give more detail relating to each of the Outcomes, and any other information that would be useful for someone using the Unit for the first time. For example, this section could contain further details of what should be covered in the delivery of the Unit. While the Knowledge and/or Skills section covers the essential knowledge on which candidates will be assessed, there may well be other areas of content of which they should be aware, or which it would be helpful to cover if they are to gain full benefit from undertaking the Unit.

This section should also provide details of any recognition given by professional bodies or other organisations, the relationship of specific outcomes to National Occupational Standards, any Group Award to which the Unit contributes, and progression pathways. For example, if part of the rationale for the Unit is to provide underpinning knowledge for an SVQ, you could expand on this here.

3 Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

This is where you can provide advice on how the delivery and/or assessment of the Unit could be integrated with other Units. This is particularly relevant if the Unit has been developed as part of a Group Award. Additionally, this section should offer guidance on how best the

Unit would fit into the sequence of delivery, if part of an HNC and/or HND, or how it could be delivered as a free-standing Unit.

Although the authentication of a candidate's work is the responsibility of each centre, you might want to give advice on how evidence could be authenticated as being the work of a particular candidate. For example, if candidates were required to carry out a joint assignment and individually write up the results in a report, you could suggest that writing up the report be carried out in supervised conditions.

Opportunities to develop Core Skills

This section should also be used to signpost any opportunities to develop Core Skills or Core Skill components. It should give details of the Core Skills that might be developed, their SCQF levels, the outcomes they relate to, and details of the ways in which they might be developed, eg through particular teaching or learning strategies, student self-study, formative assessment. You could give this information in text form and/or in a grid. Examples of this in text form are given in Appendix 5.

Signposting refers to the identification of opportunities for developing Core Skills (or components) that lie outwith those that can be summatively assessed and certificated. It highlights these opportunities to those delivering and managing the Units and allows them to use the range of opportunities to develop Core Skills through teaching and learning.

These opportunities include:

- ◆ knowledge and skills — the way the knowledge and skills cover Core Skill development should be expanded in this section.
- ◆ formative assessment — this should show how using particular formative assessment would develop a particular Core Skill. For example, practising essay writing might develop Written Communication.
- ◆ summative assessment — although there might not be sufficient evidence in a summative assessment to gain a whole Core Skill or component, there might be opportunities to achieve partial Core Skills through summative assessment using a particular instrument of assessment. This should be indicated in this section.
- ◆ teaching and delivery — this has the potential to cover many aspects of Core Skills depending on the subject taught. This may also be closely related to student work and learning. You should indicate opportunities provided by teaching and delivery in the form of suggested activities, eg the use of group work in the classroom or seminar presentations by students.
- ◆ student work/learning — independent research, additional work in library, working with others in groups. This may be closely related to

teaching and delivery. You should indicate opportunities provided by student work/learning in the form of suggested activities.

The strength of opportunities to develop Core Skills will vary depending on three factors. These are:

- ◆ volume and consistency of the opportunities, eg once only, all through the Unit
- ◆ the ways the opportunities are developed, eg formative assessment, teaching, student research
- ◆ how closely the opportunity matches the Core Skills framework, at which part (eg general skills, specific skills), and which level.

These factors will overlap and therefore will affect the *relative* strength of opportunities to develop Core Skills. For example, is it a one-off formative assessment that matches the general aspects of a Core Skills; is it a consistent approach in teaching and learning (eg group work) that matches a specific skill in the framework; or is it intensive student research that matches suggested tasks in the framework? The relative strength of opportunities could be mapped on a grid or through descriptive statements.

4 Open learning

This section should direct centres to the SQA guide, *Assessment and Quality Assurance of Open and Distance Learning* (www.sqa.org.uk).

All Units will fall into one of the following three categories:

Units that are ideally suited to delivery by distance learning.

In this situation you should provide encouragement of ways to do this. For example:

- ◆ The evidence for Outcomes 1 and 2 could be held in a portfolio (or electronic portfolio) and sent to the assessor.
- ◆ The oral presentation required for Outcome 3 could be recorded on video and sent to the assessor, or made using video conferencing facilities and observed by the assessor

Units for which distance learning would technically be possible, but complicated to arrange

In these cases you should advise centres accordingly. For example:

- ◆ Although this Unit could be delivered by distance learning, it would require a considerable degree of planning by the centre

to ensure the sufficiency and authenticity of candidate evidence. Arrangements would have to be made to ensure that:

- the practical activity in Outcome 1 is supervised by a responsible person and clearly recorded (using an assessment checklist, or on video) for the assessor
- the assessor is, at some point, able to question the candidate on that performance (face-to-face, by telephone, online)
- the closed book test for Outcomes 2 and 3 is delivered in a supervised environment

Units for which it may not be feasible to deliver by distance learning

Where this is the case, please say so and explain why. For example:

- ◆ This Unit is not suited to delivery by distance learning because it requires candidates to be observed and questioned by a qualified practitioner to meet:
 - Health and safety requirements
and/or
 - Statutory/professional body requirements

5 Candidates with disabilities and/or additional support needs

Advice and guidance on inclusion and accessibility is given in Section 2a. The Unit specification will contain the following standard statement:

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. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Alternative Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs*, which is available on SQA's website: www.sqa.org.uk.

6 General information for candidates

This section should always start on a new page so that it can be photocopied and given out to candidates at the start of Unit delivery. It should be written in simple, plain English, and should include information for candidates on:

- ◆ what the Unit is about
- ◆ what they have to know,
- ◆ how they will be assessed.

It should also give details of the opportunities – embedded and signposted - to develop Core Skills in the Unit. This should make clear

the kind of activities that will develop Core Skills and identify the Core Skills, their levels and the depth to which they will be developed.

Appendix 1: Unit quality checklist

This checklist is designed to help you check the quality of Unit specifications when you are writing, editing, commenting, or proofreading.

While carrying out this check, you should also make sure that the Unit is written in clear and simple English that will be accessible to all users. Make sure that the way the Unit is written does not inadvertently introduce any barriers to achievement for certain groups of candidates, eg by specifying a particular mode of communication for producing evidence or specifying particular manipulation if this is not part of the competence being assessed.

Unit quality checklist



Unit title		Level	
Writer		SQA Officer	Date of check

	Tick	Comments
General presentation and layout		
The following have been included in the Unit specification		
Title		
Code		This will be provided by SQA
Unit purpose (including Outcomes)		
SCQF Credit value and level		
Recommended prior knowledge and skills		
Core Skills statement		
Context for delivery statement		
Assessment statement		
Each Outcome has a related knowledge and/or skills section, Evidence Requirements and assessment guidelines (or given for the Unit as a whole).		
The Unit specification includes support notes that contain the following sections:		
Guidance on content and context		
Guidance on the delivery and assessment of the Unit including the development of Core Skills		
Open learning		
Additional Support Needs		This will be provided by SQA
General information for candidates		

	Tick	Comments
Unit title		
The Unit title is distinct from other Unit titles.		
The Unit title is meaningful, ie it reflects the subject content and you understand what the Unit is about from the Unit title.		
The title is concise.		
If the Unit is part of a sequence, the title reflects the Unit's place in this sequence.		
The Unit title conforms to house style (eg use of colon).		
Unit purpose		
The Unit purpose explains the purpose of the Unit and is written in clear and unambiguous language.		
The Unit purpose is consistent with the Unit title and Unit Outcomes.		
The Unit purpose identifies the target group for the Unit.		
The Unit purpose states what candidates should be able to do on completion of the Unit by listing the Unit Outcomes.		
The Unit purpose does not make claims beyond those in the Unit Outcomes.		
The Outcomes listed on the front page match the Outcomes inside the Unit specification.		
SCQF Credit value and levels		
The credit value is appropriate to the Unit's contents (including assessment).		
The assigned level is consistent with the SCQF level descriptors.		
If the Unit is part of a hierarchy, the assigned level is consistent with the levels of other Units in the sequence.		
Recommended prior knowledge and skills		
The recommended knowledge and skills are relevant to the Unit.		
The recommended knowledge and skills are set at an appropriate level.		
The recommended knowledge and skills are realistic for candidates undertaking a Unit at this level.		
Examples are provided of the types of prior qualification and experience expected from candidates.		
The recommended knowledge and skills are consistent with the knowledge and skills required for the Group Award (where appropriate).		
References to other qualifications (Units, courses, Group Awards) are accurate.		

Core Skills		
Standard wording is used to describe opportunities for Core Skill development in the Unit.		
Standard wording about automatic certification is used if a Core Skill is embedded in the Unit.		
A Core Skill claim form is form is attached (where appropriate).		
Context for delivery		
The standard paragraph is used.		
Advice about delivery in tandem with other Units is provided (where appropriate).		
Outcomes		
The Outcomes are written in terms of outputs and can be prefaced with: ‘The candidate will be able to ...’		
Each Outcome begins with an active verb.		
The Outcomes relate to the Unit summary.		
The Outcomes are distinct, necessary, and sufficient.		
The number of Outcomes is minimised and achievable in the notional time allocation (credit value).		
The wording of each Outcome is clear to subject specialists.		
The Outcomes do not include qualitative statements.		
It is possible to generate evidence for each Outcome.		
Knowledge and/or skills		
Only essential knowledge and skills are specified, ie general guidance is not included.		
The knowledge and skills build on the recommended prior knowledge and skills.		
Each item is stated clearly and concisely.		
Knowledge and skills are related to the Outcome and set at an appropriate level (consistent with the level of the Unit).		
Evidence Requirements		
The Evidence Requirements are appropriate to the Outcome and knowledge/skills descriptions.		
The Evidence Requirements relate to, and encompass, the Outcome and associated knowledge/skills.		
The Evidence Requirements clearly specify:		
◆ the type of evidence required		
◆ the standard of evidence required		
◆ the amount of evidence required		

◆ the conditions of assessment, eg open/closed book, supervised		
◆ the proportion of knowledge/skills that can be sampled (where appropriate)		
The Evidence Requirements only contain assessment guidance that is mandatory. All other guidance has been transferred to the assessment guideline section.		
The Evidence Requirements encourage holistic assessment (in and across Outcomes).		
The Evidence Requirements embed any claimed Core Skills.		
Assessment guidelines		
The assessment guidelines match the assessment strategy outlined on the first page of the Unit specification, any advice given in the support notes, and information given in General information for candidates.		
The assessment guidelines encourage holistic assessment and indicate clearly how assessment could be integrated in and across Outcomes.		
The assessment strategy does not create any barriers to achievement or to delivery of the Unit through open or distance learning.		
The assessment guidelines will produce sufficient evidence to match what is asked in the Evidence Requirements and to the standard stated.		
There is guidance on how to generate sufficient evidence to ensure that an embedded Core Skill or Core Skill component is covered.		
The assessment guidelines clarify how evidence for Core Skill development could be produced.		
There is no guidance that is mandatory and should therefore be transferred to the Evidence Requirements.		
Support notes		
Sufficient information has been given under each heading of the support notes for:		
◆ Guidance on the content and context for this Unit		
◆ Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit		
◆ Guidance on opportunities to develop Core Skills		
◆ Open learning		
◆ Additional support needs		
◆ General information for candidates		
The information given amplifies or explains any aspects of the Unit that need clarification.		
The information is clear and helpful.		

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit		
The information given is clear and helpful, particularly to someone using the Unit for the first time.		
The guidance gives details of any additional content to what is listed as essential under knowledge and/or skills that could be covered in delivery, but not assessed, that would enrich the learning experience for candidates.		
The guidance expands on the purpose of the Unit and who would benefit from doing it.		
The guidance puts the Unit in its vocational context, eg by giving details of Group Awards to which the Unit contributes or of any recognition by professional bodies or other organisations.		
The guidance gives details of progression routes, particularly if the Unit is part of a sequence.		
Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit		
If the Unit is part of a Group Award, the guidance gives details of any opportunities for integration of delivery and assessment across Units.		
The guidance gives information about opportunities to develop Core Skills, which have been indicated in the Core Skills statement at the beginning of the Unit.		
If the Unit is part of a Group Award, guidance is given as to where it would best fit into the sequence of delivery or on how it could be delivered as a free-standing Unit.		
Open and distance learning		
Guidance on the suitability of the Unit for open and distance learning delivery is provided. This should fall into one of three categories: well suited; technically possible but complicated to arrange; not feasible. If it is simply not feasible to deliver by ODL (this should be rare), there must be an explanation of why this is the case.		
Advice on the type of arrangements that need to be put in place to ensure sufficiency and authenticity of candidate evidence is provided.		
If alternative assessment instrument(s) are proposed, when compared with the recommended assessment strategy they are:		
◆ comparable in terms of validity and reliability		
◆ of equal rigour in their conditions of assessment		
Reference is made to the SQA publication <i>Assessment and Quality Assurance of Open and Distance Learning</i> (www.sqa.org.uk)		
Additional support needs		
The standard paragraph is used.		

General information for candidates		
The information is clear and helpful and written in a style and tone appropriate to the target audience.		
Information is provided on:		
◆ what the Unit is about		
◆ what the candidate has to know		
◆ what the candidate has to do, ie how he/she will be assessed		
◆ the opportunities to develop Core Skills in the Unit		
◆ anything additional which would be generally useful to candidates		

Additional comments:

Appendix 2: Revised Higher National Unit Shell specification

Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title:

Unit code:

Unit purpose: (text 11)

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

Credit points and level: xx HN Credit at SCQF level *: (X SCQF credit points at SCQF level *)

**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:

Core Skills: (One of the following statements should be used)

Where a claim for an embedded Core Skill has been validated, a standard statement will be added by SQA.

‘The achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:
(give Core Skill, or component, title and level)’

Where Core Skills development is signposted, use the wording:

‘There are opportunities to develop the Core Skill(s) of (give Core Skill, or component, title + level) in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.’

Where Core Skills are both embedded and signposted, use the wording:

‘The achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:
(give Core Skill, or component, title and level). There are also further opportunities to develop the Core Skill(s) of (give Core Skill, or component, title + level) in this Unit.’

Where no Core Skills are either embedded or signposted, the following statement will be used:

‘There are no opportunities to develop Core Skills in this Unit.’

General information for centres (cont)

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: Text Size 11

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: (text size 14)

Unit code: (text size 14)

The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, knowledge and/or skills, and evidence requirements are mandatory.

(If you think holistic assessment is the best assessment strategy for the Unit and you wish to state *Knowledge and/or Skills* and *Evidence requirements* for the Unit as a whole, please add the following statement here: ‘Please refer to *Knowledge and/or skills for the Unit* and *Evidence requirements for the Unit* after the Outcomes.’)

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

(text 11)

Knowledge and/or skills

(text 11)

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can:

(text 11)

Assessment guidelines

(text 11)

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title:

Outcome 2

Knowledge and/or skills

Evidence Requirements

Assessment guidelines

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title:

Outcome 3

Knowledge and/or skills

Evidence Requirements

Assessment guidelines

Administrative Information

Unit code: (text 12)

Unit title:

Superclass category:

Original date of publication:

Version:

History of Changes:

Version	Description of change	Date

Source: SQA

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SQA acknowledges the valuable contribution that Scotland's colleges have made to the development of Higher National qualifications.

Additional copies of this Unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Please contact the Customer Contact Centre for further details, telephone 0845 279 1000.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title:

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 xx hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

(This section should be used to provide information on the opportunities to develop Core Skills in this Unit. It should expand on the summary information given on page 1).

Open learning

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. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Alternative Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs*, which is available on SQA's website: www.sqa.org.uk.

General information for candidates

Unit title:

Appendix 3: Revised Higher National Unit exemplar

Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit Title: Management: An Introduction To Team Leadership

Unit code: Exemplar Unit

Unit purpose:

This Unit is designed to enable candidates to recognise the main issues affecting the role of a team leader or first-line manager. It prepares them for this role by giving them the underpinning knowledge they will need. It is primarily intended for candidates who expect to take up supervisory or team leader posts. It would also be relevant to those with work experience as a team leader or team member, and to those who have limited experience in work situations. On completion of the Unit candidates should be able to:

- ◆ explain the organisational context of management and team leadership
- ◆ develop an approach to leading an effective team
- ◆ propose the management activities required to complete a particular team task

Credit value: 1 HN Credit at SCQF level 7 (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7*)

SCQF (the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework) brings Scottish qualifications into a single framework of 12 levels ranging from SQA Access 1 to doctorates. The SCQF includes degrees; HNC/Ds; SQA National Qualifications; and SVQs. Each SQA Unit is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at a specific level. 1 SCQF point = 10 hours of learning. HN candidates are normally expected to input a further number of hours, matched to the credit value of the Unit, of non-contact time or candidate-led effort to consolidate and reinforce learning.

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: Candidates should have good communication skills. These could be demonstrated by the achievement of the Core Skill *Communication* at SCQF level 6, or by possession of Higher English and Communication or a suitable HN Communication Unit. It would be beneficial if candidates had some work experience, but it is not essential. They should, though, have some appreciation of the role of a first-line manager. It is not necessary for candidates to have had previous experience as a first-line manager or team-leader, although, where this is the case, the Unit may provide an opportunity to reflect on this experience.

Core Skills: This Unit gives automatic certification of the following Core Skill component:

Problem Solving: Critical Thinking at SCQF 6.

Context for delivery: This Unit is included in the framework of a number of HNC and HND Group Awards. It is recommended that it should be taught and assessed in the context of the Group Award to which it contributes.

Assessment: The Unit could be assessed by a single instrument of assessment that requires candidates to produce a report (or reports) and answer questions based on a case study or on their workplace experience (depending on the current situation of the candidates and their prior experience). It would also be possible to break this assessment down into three separate assessment events that assess each Outcome separately.

Assessment should be carried out in supervised conditions and, if taking place as a single event, this should last two and a half hours. Since the Core Skill component of *Problem Solving: Critical Thinking* is embedded in this Unit, we strongly recommend that you follow the assessment guidelines given. If you wish to use a different assessment model, you should seek prior moderation of the assessment instrument(s) you intend to use to ensure that the Core Skill component is still covered.

Please note that candidates must achieve all the minimum evidence specified for each Outcome, combination of Outcomes, or for the Unit as a whole to pass the Unit and achieve the Core Skill component.

An exemplar instrument of assessment and marking guidelines have been produced to indicate the national standard of achievement required at SCQF level 7.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Management: An Introduction to Team Leadership

Unit code: Exemplar Unit

The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, knowledge and/or skills, and evidence required are mandatory.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed by sampling, 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

Explain the organisational context of management and team leadership.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ types of formal organisational structure
- ◆ the role of teams in the organisation
- ◆ communication networks in organisations
- ◆ accountability, authority, responsibility of managers and team leaders
- ◆ sources of power for managers and team leaders
- ◆ organisational culture

Evidence Requirements

Evidence for the knowledge and/or skills in this Outcome will be generated through sampling. This evidence can be presented as part of a report, or in response to a specific question or questions. Each candidate will need evidence to show that she/he can, with reference to a particular situation involving a team, provide an accurate and clear explanation of the organisational context of management and team leadership based on a sample of the six knowledge items above. The sample should be derived from a case study or workplace situation that covers all six items being sampled.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

To ensure that candidates will not be able to foresee which items they will be questioned about, a different sample of three of the six knowledge and/or skills items is required each time the Outcome is assessed. Candidates must provide a satisfactory response to all three items.

Where an item is sampled, a candidate's response can be judged satisfactory where the evidence shows that the candidate can:

- ◆ identify the type of formal structure that applies to the organisation in the case study or workplace, and explain this categorisation using three characteristics of formal organisational structure
- ◆ explain how teams influence the work of the organisation, and how the role of the team leader is influenced by the organisational context
- ◆ explain how the role of the team leader is influenced by the formal and informal communication networks within the organisation
- ◆ explain the authority and responsibility of the team leader, and show who the team leader is accountable to, demonstrating an understanding of what the terms mean
- ◆ explain the sources of power for team leaders, making reference to three different sources of power
- ◆ make use of an accepted classification to identify and explain the culture of the organisation, giving reasons for the choice made

Evidence should be generated through assessment in supervised conditions. Where a case study is used, candidates may be given a copy of it 7–10 days before the assessment. Candidates may bring a copy of the case study to the assessment, along with any notes that they have made. They may not bring textbooks, handouts or other material not prepared by themselves. Their notes should be handed in at the end of the assessment.

Assessment guidelines

The assessment of this Outcome can be combined with Outcomes 2 and 3 as part of a single assessment for the Unit, details of which are given under Outcome 3 below.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Outcome 2

Develop an approach to leading an effective team.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ stages of group development — forming, storming, norming, and performing
- ◆ team roles
- ◆ approaches to leadership
- ◆ models of motivation
- ◆ Adair's action-centred leadership
- ◆ performance review
- ◆ structured decision-making

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need evidence to show they can, with reference to a particular situation involving a team, develop an approach to leading the team that identifies the key factors involved. The approach must assess the relevance of the key factors, and should result in improved team performance. The context of the situation may be familiar or unfamiliar, and will be presented in a case study or be derived from a workplace situation. It will involve complex variables and will include relationships that need to be clarified. The evidence should be consistent, and should accurately:

- ◆ Identify the stage of development a team has reached, and provide a justification for this. The justification should recognise the complexity of the variables involved in group development, and clarify the relationships between them and the stages of group development.
- ◆ Explain how a team leader can draw conclusions from the stages of group development to develop an approach to leading an effective team. The explanation should take account of the complex variables involved and clarify relationships between the stages of team development and the work of a team leader.
- ◆ Make use of data on the roles of team members to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the team, and apply a team role approach to suggest a course of action intended to bring about the development of an effective team.
- ◆ Suggest and justify a leadership approach that would enable the team to function effectively. The justification should take account of the factors involved in leading a team and the available evidence, and may include a comparison with other possible approaches.
- ◆ Propose two ways the team leader could enhance the motivation of the team. This can be justified in terms of accepted motivational models. It should contribute to the development of an effective approach to team leadership.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

These items refer to the first four bullet points listed under knowledge and/or skills, and must be assessed on each assessment occasion. Candidates must provide a satisfactory response to all five of these items in the form of a report or in response to a specific question or questions.

Evidence for the remaining knowledge and/or skills items in this Outcome will be provided through sampling. To ensure that candidates will not be able to foresee what they will be questioned about, a different sample of one of the last three knowledge and/or skills items is required each time the Outcome is assessed. This evidence can be presented as part of a report or in response to a specific question or questions. Evidence should be derived from a case study or workplace situation that covers all three items being sampled.

Where an item is sampled, a candidate's response can be judged satisfactory where the evidence provided shows that the candidate can:

- ◆ use Adair's action-centred approach to leadership to suggest ways the effectiveness of a team can be improved
- ◆ explain how a team leader can use performance review to enhance team effectiveness
- ◆ evaluate the effectiveness for a team leader of the structured decision-making model

Assessment guidelines

The assessment of this Outcome can be combined with Outcomes 1 and 3 as part of a single assessment for the Unit, details of which are given under Outcome 3 below.

Outcome 3

Propose the management activities required to complete a particular team task.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ setting objectives that are SMART, ie specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound
- ◆ stages of the planning process
- ◆ planning techniques
- ◆ control process
- ◆ methods of control

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need evidence to demonstrate all aspects of their knowledge and/or skills in this Outcome by showing that they can, with reference to a particular task that a team has to achieve:

- ◆ propose an objective for the task that meets the SMART criteria
- ◆ propose an objective for the team leader that meets the SMART criteria
- ◆ propose an objective for the team that meets the SMART criteria
- ◆ identify the steps in the planning process involved in the task
- ◆ propose one planning technique that could be used and justify the choice
- ◆ explain how the control process will operate in the situation
- ◆ propose one control method that could be used and justify its suitability in the situation

These items refer to the bullet points listed under knowledge and/or skills and must be assessed on each assessment occasion. Candidates must provide a satisfactory response to all seven items in the form of a report or in response to a specific question or questions.

Evidence should be generated through assessment under controlled conditions. Where a case study is used, candidates may be given a copy of it 7–10 days before the assessment takes place. Candidates may bring a copy of any case study to the assessment event, along with any notes that they have made personally. They may not bring textbooks, handouts, or other material not prepared by themselves. The notes should be handed in at the end of the assessment.

Assessment guidelines

The assessment of this Outcome can be combined with Outcomes 1 and 2 as part of a single assessment for the Unit. This could be conducted at a single assessment event lasting two and a half hours and carried out in supervised conditions. It would be possible, if desired, to break this assessment down into three separate assessment events that assess each Outcome holistically.

In the assessment, candidates will be required to produce a report or reports based on a case study or an actual workplace situation. Reports can be supplemented by additional questions to ensure all aspects of the Evidence Requirements are covered. The report may be presented in any suitable way. Reports may be written, oral, or signed. Where the Evidence Requirements specify the use of a sample, the sample will vary from assessment to assessment.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Where a case study is used as part of the assessment, it should relate to a team within a particular organisation, and should centre on a significant task that the team has to achieve. It should include background information on the organisation, the task, and the team. It would be helpful if the organisation were relevant to the Group Award the candidate is taking.

Candidates who have access to a suitable workplace can base their assessment work on a suitable situation drawn from their place of work. This could relate to a team or section of which they are part, as a team member or as team leader, or to the experience of a team or section with which they are familiar but not directly involved. If you adopt this approach, you should make clear to candidates from the outset that this will be the case.

Where a workplace situation is used, you should take care to ensure that it would provide candidates with sufficient opportunity to meet the Evidence Requirements of the Unit. It may be appropriate for the lecturer or trainer concerned to ensure beforehand that a particular workplace will allow candidates to generate sufficient and suitable evidence. It should meet the following criteria:

- ◆ There should be a clearly identifiable team, even if it is not described as a team, with an identifiable team leader or supervisor.
- ◆ The team should have been involved in a significant task, eg organising a particular event, introducing new systems of working, undertaking a pilot project. The task should be one about which the organisation or the team made a specific decision, and it should require planning. It is likely to be easier for candidates if the task has been completed or is close to completion.
- ◆ The candidate should be able to find out the information required by the Unit, eg the composition of the team in terms of team roles, planning and control methods used, objectives set, and ways performance is reviewed.

The workplace situation should allow for all items listed under knowledge and skills for each Outcome to be covered.

These criteria can be met in a large or small organisation. In the latter case, it is possible that the team would comprise all those involved in the organisation. For larger organisations, candidates may focus on a particular part of the organisation, in which case explanations of the organisational context, eg culture, should relate to that part of the organisation involved.

Administrative Information

Unit code: Exemplar Unit

Unit title: Management: An Introduction to Team Leadership

Superclass category: n/a

Date of publication: June 2001

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Management: An Introduction to Team Leadership

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

The Unit is primarily intended to prepare candidates for the type of team leader or supervisory role they may take up or progress to by giving them the essential underpinning knowledge and skills. As a result, candidates are likely to work predominantly with case study or simulated material, using this to consider the work of team leaders and to evaluate their effectiveness. Nevertheless, it is also applicable to those who have relevant work experience. If this experience has been as a team leader, the Unit could be helpful as a means of reflecting on how they carried out this role and suggesting ways in which their contribution to the team could be improved. Candidates who do have experience of being managed should be encouraged to use this when examining the work of a manager.

Although the Unit is expressed in generic terms, it should be related to a context that is familiar to candidates. If necessary, the terminology used in the Unit can be adapted to suit the workplace, eg team leader can be replaced with supervisor; a team may become a section or a work group.

The Unit can be approached from the standpoint of a particular team, beginning with its position in the organisation as a whole. In some small firms, the team and the organisation may be the same thing. The remainder of the Unit centres on the work of the team in completing a particular task, including the ways in which the team leader or supervisor can influence the behaviour of team members.

Outcome 1 looks at the organisational context of the managerial activity, setting the scene for the team leader. Candidates should become familiar with the terminology used, and should use it in describing situations that they know. One approach would be to encourage candidates to consider the reasons why a particular structure has been chosen and why other forms of structure are less appropriate or unsuitable. Formal organisational structure could cover hierarchical/flat, centralised/decentralised, divisional/functional, product/service, hybrid, or matrix. Suitable models or organisational culture may be Deal and Kennedy's risk/feedback model or Handy's power, role, task, and person cultures.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

In Outcome 2, candidates look at the role of the team leader in influencing the behaviour and level of performance of the team. They should be encouraged to think about the following:

- ◆ The extent to which the team's stage of development affects the way the team can be led, and the motivation of team members.
- ◆ Belbin's team role theory is an appropriate way of exploring team roles — task roles, group maintenance, and individual roles could also be used.
- ◆ Traits, style, and contingency models of leadership — Blake and Mouton's managerial grid could exemplify democratic and autocratic leadership styles, while suitable contingency models of leadership include Handy's 'best-fit' model and Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership. These could be combined with Adair's model of task, team, and individual.
- ◆ Models of motivation such as financial rewards, satisfiers and dissatisfiers, expectancy theory, meeting individual needs, empowerment.
- ◆ A suitable structured (or rational) decision-making model (eg sense the problem, gather information, define the problem clearly, specify relevant criteria for the solution, generate possible answers, evaluate the answers, choose the best option).

Outcome 3 considers how a team might complete a particular task, as well as the decision-making process that led to the conclusion that the particular task was required. Candidates should be made aware of:

- ◆ the steps in the planning process (define objectives, generate and evaluate options, identify activities, sequence the activities, identify resources, review the plan, prepare schedules, monitor and control)
- ◆ planning techniques such as milestones, Gantt charts, network analysis
- ◆ the steps in the control process (set standards, measure actual performance, compare performance to standards, take corrective action/do nothing/change standards)
- ◆ control methods such as bureaucratic control through rules and procedures; quality systems; budgetary control; control through organisation values

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

This Unit is likely to form part of a Group Award designed to provide candidates with technical or professional knowledge and skills for a specific occupational area. Those who successfully complete the award are likely to progress to first line management or team leader posts.

In these circumstances, the Unit is likely to be delivered towards the end of the Group Award, by which time candidates should have a good appreciation of the main types of workplace environment with which they will be involved. This should allow the Unit to be delivered in a way that enables candidates to appreciate its relevance to the occupational area concerned. Wherever possible, links should be drawn with situations that candidates will understand, eg the planning process can be related to specific occupational issues.

Assessment will be by one instrument of assessment, which will be undertaken close to the end of the delivery period for the Unit. It should be held in controlled conditions. Candidates may bring any case study material with them to the event, along with any notes that they have made personally. They may not bring textbooks, handouts or other material not prepared by themselves. They may be given copies of any case study 7–10 days before the assessment event.

Open learning

This Unit could be delivered by distance learning. However, it would require planning by the centre to ensure the sufficiency and authenticity of candidate evidence. Arrangements would have to be made to ensure that the single assessment for Outcomes 1, 2, and 3 is delivered in a supervised environment under controlled conditions.

To keep the administrative burden to a minimum, it is recommended that a single assessment based on a case study is used for open and distance learning candidates.

For information on open learning arrangements, please refer to the SQA guide *Assessment and Quality Assurance of Open and Distance Learning* (www.sqa.org.uk)

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. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Alternative Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs*, which is available on SQA's website: www.sqa.org.uk.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

General information for candidates

Unit title: Management: An Introduction to Team Leadership

This Unit is designed to enable you to recognise the main issues that affect the role of a team leader or first-line manager. It is primarily intended to prepare you for a supervisory or team leader post later in your career, but it can also help you if you already hold such a position. If you have work experience of being managed or of being a manager, you should be able to make use of it during your study of this Unit.

The Unit has three main areas, each the subject of a separate Outcome. To begin with, you will look at the overall organisational context in which team leaders or first line managers have to work. You will then examine teams themselves and look at how the team leader can lead and motivate the members of the team. Finally, you will look at a team task and how it can be planned and controlled.

Overall, you will be expected to use the knowledge and skills from the Unit to enable you to assess how a team leader can enable a team to be as effective as possible. This could help you in the future if you become a team leader, or could enable you to enhance your, and your team's, current performance if you already hold such a post.

To complete this Unit successfully, you will have to achieve a satisfactory level of performance on one piece of assessed work. Towards the end of the Unit, you will undertake an assessment in controlled conditions. It will last for two and a half hours, and you will be required to produce a report or reports and to answer questions on the three areas above. (If the lecturer or trainer delivering this Unit decides to break down the assessment into three separate events, this paragraph would need to be amended.)

If you do not have relevant workplace experience, your report will be based on a case study of a team in an organisation. It will cover a task the team has to do, and will include information on team members and the organisation of which the team is a part. You will be given a copy a few days before the assessment event. However, if you do have relevant work experience, your report will be based on this experience, and you will be given full details of how to make use of this in your assessment.

You will be allowed to bring a copy of any case study to the assessment event. You may also bring notes that you have made personally for your own use. You will not be permitted to bring textbooks, handouts, or other materials that you have not prepared yourself.

Appendix 4: SCQF level descriptors

SCQF Level 12 — (SHE level 6, PG 2, PhD — Doctorate)

NB: The descriptors set out the characteristic generic outcomes of each level. They are intended to provide a general, shared understanding of each level and to allow broad comparisons to be made between qualifications and learning at different levels. They are not intended to give precise or comprehensive statements, and there is no expectation that every qualification or programme should have all of the characteristics. The descriptors have been developed through a series of consultations and are offered as a first working guide and will be revised in the light of feedback on their use.

Knowledge and Understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic Cognitive Skills	Communication, ICT and numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level include the ability to:				
<p>Demonstrate and/or work with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ a critical overview of a subject/discipline, including critical understanding of the principal theories, principles and concepts ◆ a critical, detailed and often leading knowledge and understanding at the forefront of one or more specialisms ◆ knowledge and understanding that is generated through personal research or equivalent work that makes a significant contribution to the development of the subject/discipline 	<p>Use a significant range of the principal skills, techniques, practices and materials associated with a subject/discipline.</p> <p>Use and enhance a range of complex skills, techniques, practices, and materials at the forefront of one or more specialisms.</p> <p>Apply a range of standard and specialised research/equivalent instruments and techniques of enquiry.</p> <p>Design and execute research, investigative, or development projects to deal with new problems and issues.</p> <p>Demonstrate originality and creativity in the development and application of new knowledge, understanding and practices.</p> <p>Practise in the context of new problems and circumstances.</p>	<p>Apply a constant and integrated approach to critical analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of new and complex ideas, information, and issues.</p> <p>Identify, conceptualise, and offer original and creative insights into new, complex, and abstract ideas, information, and issues.</p> <p>Develop creative and original responses to problems and issues.</p> <p>Deal with very complex and/or new issues and make informed judgements in the absence of complete or consistent data/information.</p>	<p>Use a significant range of advanced and specialised skills as appropriate to a subject/discipline — for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ communicate at an appropriate level to a range of audiences and adapt communication to the context and purpose ◆ communicate at the standard of published academic work and/or critical dialogue and review with peers and experts in other specialisms ◆ use a range of software to support and enhance work at this level and specify software requirements to enhance work ◆ critically evaluate numerical and graphical data 	<p>Exercise a high level of autonomy and initiative in professional and equivalent activities.</p> <p>Take full responsibility for own work and/or significant responsibility for the work of others.</p> <p>Demonstrate leadership and/or originality in tackling and solving problems and issues.</p> <p>Work in ways that are reflective, self-critical, and based on research/evidence.</p> <p>Deal with complex ethical and professional issues.</p> <p>Make informed judgements on new and emerging issues not addressed by current professional and/or ethical codes or practices.</p>

SCQF Level 11 — (SHE level 5, PG 1, PG Dip, PG Cert, MA, MSc, SVQ 5)

NB: The descriptors set out the characteristic generic outcomes of each level. They are intended to provide a general, shared understanding of each level and to allow broad comparisons to be made between qualifications and learning at different levels. They are not intended to give precise or comprehensive statements, and there is no expectation that every qualification or programme should have all of the characteristics. The descriptors have been developed through a series of consultations and are offered as a first working guide and will be revised in the light of feedback on their use.

Knowledge and Understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic Cognitive Skills	Communication, ICT and numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level include the ability to:				
<p>Demonstrate and/or work with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ knowledge that covers and integrates most, if not all, of the main areas of a subject/discipline — including their features, boundaries, terminology, and conventions ◆ a critical understanding of the principal theories, principles, and concepts ◆ a critical understanding of a range of specialised theories, principals, and concepts ◆ extensive, detailed, and critical knowledge and understanding in one or more specialisms, much of which is at or informed by developments at the forefront ◆ critical awareness of current issues in a subject/discipline and one or more specialisms 	<p>Use a significant range of the principal skills, techniques, practices, and/or materials that are associated with a subject/discipline.</p> <p>Use a range of specialised skills, techniques, practices, and/or materials that are at the forefront or informed by forefront developments.</p> <p>Apply a range of standard and specialised research or equivalent instruments and techniques of enquiry.</p> <p>Plan and execute a significant project of research, investigation, or development.</p> <p>Demonstrate originality or creativity in the application of knowledge, understanding, and/or practices.</p> <p>Practise in a wide and often unpredictable variety of professional level contexts.</p>	<p>Apply critical analysis, evaluation, and synthesis to issues which are at the forefront or informed by developments at the forefront of a subject/discipline.</p> <p>Identify, conceptualise, and define new and abstract problems and issues.</p> <p>Develop original and creative responses to problems and issues.</p> <p>Critically review, consolidate, and extend knowledge, skills practices and thinking in a subject/discipline.</p> <p>Deal with complex issues and make informed judgements in situations in the absence of complete or consistent data/information.</p>	<p>Use a range of advanced and specialised skills as appropriate to a subject/discipline — for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ communicate, using appropriate methods, to a range of audiences with different levels of knowledge/expertise ◆ communicate with peers, more senior colleagues, and specialists ◆ use a wide range of software to support and enhance work at this level and specify new software or refinements/improvements to existing software to increase effectiveness ◆ undertake critical evaluations of a wide range of numerical and graphical data 	<p>Exercise substantial autonomy and initiative in professional and equivalent activities.</p> <p>Take responsibility for own work and/or significant responsibility for the work of others.</p> <p>Take responsibility for a significant range of resources.</p> <p>Demonstrate leadership and/or initiative and make an identifiable contribution to change and development.</p> <p>Practice in ways that draw on critical reflection on own and others' roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Deal with complex ethical and professional issues and make informed judgements on issues not addressed by current professional and/or ethical codes or practices.</p>

SCQF Level 10 — (SHE level 4, Honours degrees)

NB: The descriptors set out the characteristic generic outcomes of each level. They are intended to provide a general, shared understanding of each level and to allow broad comparisons to be made between qualifications and learning at different levels. They are not intended to give precise or comprehensive statements, and there is no expectation that every qualification or programme should have all of the characteristics. The descriptors have been developed through a series of consultations and are offered as a first working guide and will be revised in the light of feedback on their use.

Knowledge and Understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic Cognitive Skills	Communication, ICT and numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level include the ability to:				
<p>Demonstrate and/or work with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ knowledge that covers and integrates most of the principal areas, features, boundaries, terminology, and conventions of a subject/discipline ◆ a critical understanding of the principal theories, concepts, and principles ◆ detailed knowledge and understanding in one or more specialisms, some of which is informed by or at the forefront of a subject/discipline ◆ knowledge and understanding of the ways in which the subject/discipline is developed, including a range of established techniques of enquiry or research methodologies 	<p>Use a range of the principal skills, practices, and/or materials associated with a subject/discipline.</p> <p>Use a few skills, practices, and/or materials that are specialised, advanced, or at the forefront of a subject/discipline.</p> <p>Execute a defined project of research, development, or investigation and identify and implement relevant Outcomes.</p> <p>Practise in a range of professional level contexts that include a degree or unpredictability and/or specialism.</p>	<p>Critically identify, define, conceptualise, and analyse complex/professional level problems and issues.</p> <p>Offer professional level insights, interpretations, and solutions to problems and issues.</p> <p>Critically review and consolidate knowledge, skills, and practices and thinking in a subject/discipline.</p> <p>Demonstrate some originality and creativity in dealing with professional level issues.</p> <p>Make judgements where data/information is limited or comes from a range of sources.</p>	<p>Use a wide range of routine skills and some advanced and specialised skills in support of established practices in a subject/discipline, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ make formal presentations about specialised topics to informed audiences ◆ communicate with professional level peers, senior colleagues, and specialists ◆ use a range of software to support and enhance work at this level and specify refinements/improvements to software to increase effectiveness ◆ interpret, use, and evaluate a wide range of numerical and graphical data to set and achieve goals/targets 	<p>Exercise autonomy and initiative in professional/equivalent activities.</p> <p>Take significant responsibility for the work of others and for a range of resources.</p> <p>Practise in ways that show a clear awareness of own and others' roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Work effectively under guidance in a peer relationship with qualified practitioners.</p> <p>Work with others to bring about change, development, and/or new thinking.</p> <p>Deal with complex ethical and professional issues in accordance with current professional and/or ethical codes or practices.</p> <p>Recognise the limits of these codes and seek guidance where appropriate.</p>

SCQF Level 9 — (SHE level 3, Ordinary degrees are examples of qualifications at this level)

NB: The descriptors set out the characteristic generic outcomes of each level. They are intended to provide a general, shared understanding of each level and to allow broad comparisons to be made between qualifications and learning at different levels. They are not intended to give precise or comprehensive statements, and there is no expectation that every qualification or programme should have all of the characteristics. The descriptors have been developed through a series of consultations and are offered as a first working guide and will be revised in the light of feedback on their use.

Knowledge and Understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic Cognitive Skills	Communication, ICT and numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level include the ability to:				
<p>Demonstrate and/or work with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ a broad and integrated knowledge and understanding of the scope, main areas, and boundaries of a subject/discipline ◆ a critical understanding of a selection of the principal theories, principles, concepts, and terminology ◆ knowledge that is detailed in some areas and/or knowledge of one or more specialisms that are informed by forefront developments 	<p>Use a selection of the principal skills, techniques, practices, and/or materials associated with a subject/discipline.</p> <p>Use a few skills, techniques, practices, and/or materials that are specialised or advanced.</p> <p>Practise routine methods of enquiry and/or research.</p> <p>Practise in a range of professional level contexts that include a degree of unpredictability.</p>	<p>Undertake critical analysis, evaluation, and/or synthesis of ideas, concepts, information, and issues.</p> <p>Identify and analyse routine professional problems and issues.</p> <p>Draw on a range of sources in making judgements.</p>	<p>Use a range of routine skills and some advanced and specialised skills in support of established practices in a subject/discipline, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ make formal and informal presentations on standard/mainstream topics in the subject/discipline to a range of audiences ◆ use a range of IT applications to support and enhance work ◆ interpret, use, and evaluate numerical and graphical data to achieve goals/targets 	<p>Exercise autonomy and initiative in some activities at a professional level.</p> <p>Take some responsibility for the work of others and for a range of resources.</p> <p>Practise in ways that take account of own and others' roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Work under guidance with qualified practitioners.</p> <p>Deal with ethical and professional issues in accordance with current professional and/or ethical codes or practices, seeking guidance where appropriate.</p>

SCQF Level 8 — (SHE level 2, Dip HE, HND, SVQ 4 are examples of qualifications at this level)

NB: The descriptors set out the characteristic generic outcomes of each level. They are intended to provide a general, shared understanding of each level and to allow broad comparisons to be made between qualifications and learning at different levels. They are not intended to give precise or comprehensive statements, and there is no expectation that every qualification or programme should have all of the characteristics. The descriptors have been developed through a series of consultations and are offered as a first working guide and will be revised in the light of feedback on their use.

Knowledge and Understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic Cognitive Skills	Communication, ICT and numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level include the ability to:				
<p>Demonstrate and/or work with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ a broad knowledge of the scope, defining features, and main areas of a subject/discipline ◆ detailed knowledge in some areas ◆ understanding of a limited range of core theories, principles, and concepts ◆ limited knowledge and understanding of some major current issues and specialisms ◆ an outline knowledge and understanding of research and equivalent scholarly/academic processes 	<p>Use a range of routine skills, techniques, practices, and/or materials associated with a subject/discipline, a few of which are advanced or complex.</p> <p>Carry out routine lines of enquiry, development, or investigation into professional level problems and issues.</p> <p>Adapt routine practices within accepted standards.</p>	<p>Undertake critical analysis, evaluation, and/or synthesis of ideas, concepts, information, and issues that are within the common understandings of the subject/discipline.</p> <p>Use a range of approaches to formulate evidence-based solutions/responses to defined and/or routine problems/issues.</p> <p>Critically evaluate evidence-based solutions/responses to defined and/or routine problems/issues.</p>	<p>Use a range of routine skills and some advanced and specialised skills associated with a subject/discipline, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ convey complex information to a range of audiences and for a range of purposes ◆ use a range of standard applications to process and obtain data ◆ use and evaluate numerical and graphical data to measure progress and achieve goals/targets 	<p>Exercise autonomy and initiative in some activities at a professional level.</p> <p>Take significant managerial or supervisory responsibility for the work of others in defined areas of work.</p> <p>Manage resources in defined areas of work.</p> <p>Take the lead on planning in familiar or defined contexts.</p> <p>Take continuing account of own and others' roles, responsibilities and contributions in carrying out and evaluating tasks.</p> <p>Work in support of current professional practice under guidance.</p> <p>Deal with ethical and professional issues in accordance with current professional and/or ethical codes or practices under guidance.</p>

SCQF Level 7 — (SHE level 1, Cert HE, HNC, Advanced Higher are examples of qualifications at this level)

NB: The descriptors set out the characteristic generic outcomes of each level. They are intended to provide a general, shared understanding of each level and to allow broad comparisons to be made between qualifications and learning at different levels. They are not intended to give precise or comprehensive statements, and there is no expectation that every qualification or programme should have all of the characteristics. The descriptors have been developed through a series of consultations and are offered as a first working guide and will be revised in the light of feedback on their use.

Knowledge and Understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic Cognitive Skills	Communication, ICT and numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level include the ability to:				
<p>Demonstrate and/or work with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ a broad knowledge of the subject/discipline in general ◆ knowledge that is embedded in the main theories, concepts, and principles ◆ an awareness of the evolving/changing nature of knowledge and understanding ◆ an understanding of the difference between explanations based in evidence and/or research and other forms of explanation and of the importance of this difference 	<p>Use some of the basic and routine professional skills, techniques, practices, and/or materials associated with a subject/discipline.</p> <p>Practise these in both routine and non-routine contexts.</p>	<p>Present and evaluate arguments, information, and ideas that are routine to the subject/discipline.</p> <p>Use a range of approaches to addressing defined and/or routine problems and issues in familiar contexts.</p>	<p>Use a wide range of routine skills and some advanced skills associated with the subject/discipline — for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ convey complex ideas in well-structured and coherent form ◆ use a range of forms of communication effectively in both familiar and new contexts ◆ use standard applications to process and obtain a variety of information and data ◆ use a range of numerical and graphical skills in combination ◆ use numerical and graphical data to measure progress and achieve goals/targets 	<p>Exercise some initiative and independence in carrying out defined activities at a professional level.</p> <p>Take supervision in less familiar areas of work.</p> <p>Take some managerial responsibility for the work of others in a defined and supervised structure.</p> <p>Manage limited resources in defined areas of work.</p> <p>Take the lead in implementing agreed plans in familiar or defined contexts.</p> <p>Take account of own and others' roles and responsibilities in carrying out and evaluating tasks.</p> <p>Work with others in support of current professional practice under guidance.</p>

SCQF Level 6 — (Higher, SVQ 3 are examples of qualifications at this level)

NB: The descriptors set out the characteristic generic outcomes of each level. They are intended to provide a general, shared understanding of each level and to allow broad comparisons to be made between qualifications and learning at different levels. They are not intended to give precise or comprehensive statements, and there is no expectation that every qualification or programme should have all of the characteristics. The descriptors have been developed through a series of consultations and are offered as a first working guide and will be revised in the light of feedback on their use.

Knowledge and Understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic Cognitive Skills	Communication, ICT and numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level include the ability to:				
<p>Demonstrate and/or work with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ generalised knowledge of a subject/discipline ◆ factual and theoretical knowledge ◆ a range of facts, ideas, properties, materials, terminology, practices, techniques about/associated with a subject/discipline ◆ Relate the subject/discipline to a range of practical and/or everyday applications. 	<p>Apply knowledge and understanding in known, practical contexts.</p> <p>Use some of the basic, routine practices, techniques, and/or materials associated with a subject/discipline in routine contexts that may have non-routine elements.</p> <p>Plan how skills will be used to address set situations and/or problems and adapt these as necessary.</p>	<p>Obtain, organise, and use factual and theoretical information in problem solving.</p> <p>Make generalisations and predictions.</p> <p>Draw conclusions and suggest solutions.</p>	<p>Use a wide range of skills — for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ produce and respond to detailed and relatively complex written and oral communication in both familiar and unfamiliar contexts ◆ select and use standard applications to process, obtain, and combine information ◆ use a wide range of numerical and graphical data in routine contexts that may have non-routine elements 	<p>Take responsibility for carrying out a range of activities where the overall goal is clear under non-directive supervision.</p> <p>Take some supervisory responsibility for the work of others and lead established teams in the implementation of routine work.</p> <p>Manage limited resources in defined and supervised areas of work.</p> <p>Take account of roles and responsibilities related to the tasks being carried out and take a significant role in the evaluation of work and the improvement of practices and processes.</p>

SCQF Level 5 — (Intermediate 2, Standard Grade Credit level, SVQ 2)

NB: The descriptors set out the characteristic generic outcomes of each level. They are intended to provide a general, shared understanding of each level and to allow broad comparisons to be made between qualifications and learning at different levels. They are not intended to give precise or comprehensive statements, and there is no expectation that every qualification or programme should have all of the characteristics. The descriptors have been developed through a series of consultations and are offered as a first working guide and will be revised in the light of feedback on their use.

Knowledge and Understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic Cognitive Skills	Communication, ICT and numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level include the ability to:				
<p>Demonstrate and/or work with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ basic knowledge in a subject/discipline that is mainly factual but has some theoretical component ◆ a range of simple facts and ideas about and associated with a subject/discipline ◆ knowledge and understanding of basic processes, materials, and terminology 	<p>Relate ideas and knowledge to personal and/or practical contexts</p> <p>Complete some routine and non-routine tasks using knowledge associated with a subject/discipline</p> <p>Plan and organise both familiar and new tasks</p> <p>Select appropriate tools and materials and use safely and effectively (eg without waste)</p> <p>Adjust tools where necessary following safe practices</p>	<p>Use a problem-solving approach to deal with a situation or issue that is straightforward in relation to a subject/discipline</p> <p>Operate in a familiar context, but where there is a need to take account of or use additional information of different kinds, some of which will be theoretical or hypothetical</p> <p>Use some abstract constructs — eg make generalisations and/or draw conclusions</p>	<p>Use a range of routine skills — for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ produce and respond to detailed written and oral communication in familiar contexts ◆ use standard applications to process, obtain, and combine information ◆ use a range of numerical and graphical data in straightforward contexts that have some complex features 	<p>Work alone or with others on tasks with minimum supervision</p> <p>Agree goals and responsibilities for self and/or work team with manager/supervisor</p> <p>Take leadership responsibility for some tasks</p> <p>Show an awareness of others' roles, responsibilities, and requirements in carrying out work and make a contribution to the evaluation and improvement of practices and processes</p>

SCQF Level 4 — (Intermediate 1, Standard Grade General level, SVQ 1)

NB: The descriptors set out the characteristic generic outcomes of each level. They are intended to provide a general, shared understanding of each level and to allow broad comparisons to be made between qualifications and learning at different levels. They are not intended to give precise or comprehensive statements, and there is no expectation that every qualification or programme should have all of the characteristics. The descriptors have been developed through a series of consultations and are offered as a first working guide and will be revised in the light of feedback on their use.

Knowledge and Understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic Cognitive Skills	Communication, ICT and numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level include the ability to:				
<p>Demonstrate and/or work with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ basic knowledge in a subject/discipline that is mainly factual ◆ some simple facts and ideas about and associated with a subject/discipline ◆ knowledge of basic processes, materials, and terminology 	<p>Relate knowledge to personal and/or practical contexts.</p> <p>Use a few skills to complete straightforward tasks with some non-routine elements.</p> <p>Select and use with guidance appropriate tools and materials safely and effectively.</p>	<p>Use with guidance given stages of a problem-solving approach to deal with a situation or issue.</p> <p>Operate in straightforward contexts.</p> <p>Identify and/or take account of some of the consequences of action/inaction.</p>	<p>Use straightforward skills — for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ produce and respond to simple but detailed written and oral communication in familiar contexts ◆ use the most straightforward features of familiar applications to process and obtain information ◆ use straightforward numerical and graphical data in straightforward and familiar contexts 	<p>Work alone or with others on straightforward tasks.</p> <p>Contribute to the setting of goals, timelines, etc.</p> <p>Contribute to the review of completed work and offer suggestions for improving practices and processes.</p> <p>Identify own strengths and weaknesses relative to the work.</p>

SCQF Level 3 — (Access 3, Standard Grade Foundation level)

NB: The descriptors set out the characteristic generic outcomes of each level. They are intended to provide a general, shared understanding of each level and to allow broad comparisons to be made between qualifications and learning at different levels. They are not intended to give precise or comprehensive statements, and there is no expectation that every qualification or programme should have all of the characteristics. The descriptors have been developed through a series of consultations and are offered as a first working guide and will be revised in the light of feedback on their use.

Knowledge and Understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic Cognitive Skills	Communication, ICT and numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level include the ability to:				
<p>Demonstrate and/or work with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ basic knowledge in a subject/discipline ◆ simple facts and ideas associated with a subject/discipline 	<p>Relate knowledge with some prompting to personal and/or everyday contexts.</p> <p>Use a few basic, routine skills to undertake familiar and routine tasks.</p> <p>Complete pre-planned tasks.</p> <p>Use with guidance basic tools and materials safely and effectively.</p>	<p>Identify with some prompting a process to deal with a situation or issue.</p> <p>Operate in familiar contexts using given criteria.</p> <p>Take account of some identified consequences of action.</p>	<p>Use simple skills, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ produce and respond to simple written and oral communication in familiar, routine contexts ◆ carry out simple tasks to process data and access information ◆ use simple numerical and graphical data in everyday contexts 	<p>Work alone or with others on simple tasks under frequent supervision.</p> <p>Participate in the setting of goals, timelines, etc.</p> <p>Participate in the review of completed work and the identification of ways of improving practices and processes.</p> <p>Identify given simple criteria own strengths and weaknesses relative to the work.</p>

SCQF Level 2 — (Access 2)

NB: The descriptors set out the characteristic generic outcomes of each level. They are intended to provide a general, shared understanding of each level and to allow broad comparisons to be made between qualifications and learning at different levels. They are not intended to give precise or comprehensive statements, and there is no expectation that every qualification or programme should have all of the characteristics. The descriptors have been developed through a series of consultations and are offered as a first working guide and will be revised in the light of feedback on their use.

Knowledge and Understanding	Practice: Applied knowledge and understanding	Generic Cognitive Skills	Communication, ICT and numeracy skills	Autonomy, accountability and working with others
Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level include the ability to:				
<p>Demonstrate and/or work with knowledge of simple facts and ideas in a subject/discipline.</p>	<p>Relate knowledge to a few simple everyday contexts with prompting.</p> <p>Use a few very simple skills.</p> <p>Carry out a few familiar tasks with guidance.</p> <p>Use basic tools and materials under supervision.</p>	<p>Use rehearsed stages for solving problems.</p> <p>Operate in personal and/or everyday contexts.</p> <p>Take some account of identified consequences of action with prompting.</p>	<p>Use very simple skills with assistance, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ produce and respond to a limited range of very simple written and oral communication in familiar/routine contexts ◆ carry out a limited range of very simple tasks to process data and access information ◆ use a limited range of very simple and familiar numerical and graphical data in familiar and everyday contexts 	<p>Work alone or with others on simple routine, familiar tasks under frequent and directive supervision.</p> <p>Given simple criteria, identify some successes and/or failures of the work.</p>

SCQF Level 1

There is no separate descriptor for level 1, which covers all provision that comes below the full achievement of level 2.

Appendix 5: Signposting Core Skills at Unit level — exemplar

Example of signposting in the support notes of a subject Unit

From a Psychology Unit

The delivery and assessment of this Unit may contribute towards the component ‘Written Communication’ of the Core Skill Communication at SCQF 6 because of the requirement for assessment in the form of an essay. The general skill for this component is ‘Produce well-structured written communication on complex topics’.

In both formative and summative assessment the candidate should be encouraged to present all essential ideas/information and supporting detail in a logical and effective order; use a structure that takes account of purpose and audience, and links major and minor points in ways that assist the clarity and impact of the writing; use conventions that are effective in achieving the purpose and adapted as necessary for the target audience; and use spelling, punctuation, and sentence structures that are consistently accurate.

These skills can be developed through formative activities, such as short essays on each theory or debate/issue, without being formally assessed for certification of Core Skill.

Candidates should be encouraged to use an appropriate referencing method for the O3 report (and for any formative essays).

The Core Skill of Working with Others at SCQF 6 could also be developed in this Unit in the work for Outcome 3. Working with Others involves the ability to work with others to plan, agree, and take responsibility for tasks; to support co-operative working in appropriate ways; and to review the effectiveness of one’s own contribution. This would fit with a group task to carry out research suitable for Outcome 3. The general skill at SCQF 6 is ‘Work with others in a group to analyse, plan, and complete a complex activity’. A group could carry out the task for O3, as it is a complex activity, although the report should then be written up individually for summative assessment of Outcome 3 of this Unit. Candidates can be encouraged to analyse the task and negotiate goals, roles, and responsibilities, anticipating and responding to needs of others, supporting co-operative working, and evaluating and drawing conclusions about the effectiveness of one’s own contribution. This Core Skill could be developed without formal certification.

The Component ‘Using Number’ of the Core Skill of Numeracy at SCQF 5 could be developed in the teaching and learning contributing to Outcome 3. The specific skills required for the component at SCQF 5 include: working confidently with a numerical concept; deciding on the numerical operations to be carried out; and carrying out complex calculations or a number of sustained calculations. This is likely to fit in to the treatment and presentation of findings required in the production of the research report, in particular in the use of descriptive statistics. It is also likely that the component ‘Using Graphical Information’ from Numeracy at SCQF 5 could also be developed in this context. The specific skills of: interpreting information from tables, graphs, charts, or diagrams; selecting an appropriate form of tables, graphs, charts, or diagrams; and communicating information in that form would also be found in the research report. This Core Skill could be developed here without formal certification.