

SQA Advanced Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Providing Information on the Scottish Tourism Product

Unit code: HT2E 47

Unit purpose: This unit is designed to enable the candidate to develop a broad knowledge of the Scottish tourism product and to provide information in response to typical enquiries generated by visitors and travel organisers. The candidate will also be able to plan both general and specialist touring itineraries of Scotland. The scope of the unit will be wide with the candidate developing a working knowledge of the geography, leisure and business environment of Scotland and the contribution of heritage, culture and other visitor attractions to the Scottish tourism product. Essentially the unit is designed as a practical unit involving the candidate in acquiring and applying knowledge of the tourism product in the context of the domestic and incoming tourism industry. The requirements for the specialist knowledge which the unit aims to develop can be applied across all industry sectors e.g. tour operations, visitor attractions, hospitality, public sector destination marketing organisations and visitor services departments.

On completion of this unit, the candidate will be able to:

1. apply general knowledge of the geography of Scotland, its main tourist areas and principal communication networks
2. explain the principal elements of Scottish history which are of general interest to visitors in Scotland
3. explain the principal features of Scottish culture and tradition which contribute to the visitor experience
4. apply general knowledge of the notable leisure opportunities and special-interest activities available to visitors in Scotland
5. provide information on a range of visitor facilities in Scotland
6. plan touring programmes and itineraries offering differing experiences in Scotland

Credit points and level: 2 SQA Credits at SCQF level 7: (16 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7*)

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from National 1 to Doctorates.*

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Recommended prior knowledge and skills: A basic knowledge of the geography and history of Scotland and its main tourist areas is desirable. This may be evidenced by possession of relevant NQ travel and tourism units. Competence in communication is required and this may be evidenced by possession of English at National 5 or above, or an equivalent unit in communication. In addition, candidates will benefit from possession of History or Geography at National 5 or above. If candidates do not possess this level of experience, they may have difficulty in achieving the unit in the allotted time.

Core skills: There may be opportunities to gather evidence towards core skills in this unit, although there is no automatic certification of core skills or core skills components.

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. Normally the unit is taught and delivered within the SQA Advanced Certificate in Tourism and the SQA Advanced Diploma in Tourism frameworks.

Assessment: Assessment in a face-to-face situation, such as information-giving role plays is desirable given the vocational nature of this unit. However it is acknowledged that this can be difficult to manage with a large class and so all proposed instruments of assessment are designed as written tests, contextualised to authentic situations where possible.

The breadth of topics to be covered is wide and therefore most outcomes are assessed by end-of-topic unseen tests, some being closed book for practical reasons. Experience has also shown that candidates find a step-by-step approach to assessment in this subject easier to deal with than project-based holistic assessment.

Time is allowed within the unit for assessment and reassessment. Where a candidate has not attained the standard necessary to pass a particular outcome or outcomes, they should have the opportunity to be reassessed. Reassessment should focus on the outcome(s) concerned and as a general rule, should be offered on one occasion following further work on areas of difficulty. In Outcomes 1 to 3, which test candidates' ability to recall knowledge and understanding, candidates will be required to undertake a new instrument designed to assess the particular outcome(s) in which they were unsuccessful. In Outcomes 4, 5 and 6 candidates will be required to resubmit work which has been revised to take account of earlier weaknesses.

SQA Advanced Unit specification: statement of standards

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

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

Apply general knowledge of the geography of Scotland, its main tourist areas and principal communication networks

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ major scenic, physical and environmental features
- ◆ main tourist areas of Scotland
- ◆ major gateways and transport networks
- ◆ national tourist routes and theme trails
- ◆ ability to identify all of the above on maps of Scotland

Evidence requirements

The candidate should be able to demonstrate an ability to apply knowledge of the geography of Scotland and its related features to provide accurate information to the visitor or travel organiser. Evidence will cover each of the bullet points listed above.

Assessment guidelines

Closed-book, end-of-outcome test featuring 10 structured questions which cover the knowledge and skills covered in the outcome. Tutors are permitted to advise candidates on subject matter to be covered in preparation for the test. Time allowance should be 30 minutes. To pass the test the candidate must answer 8 questions correctly with no more than one error in each section. Sections will correspond to the bullet points listed above, so there will be two questions per bullet point.

Outcome 2

Explain the principal elements of Scottish history which are of general interest to visitors in Scotland

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ important periods in Scottish history
- ◆ well-known Scottish historical figures
- ◆ notable events in Scottish history
- ◆ famous Scots who have contributed to arts, sciences, and other notable fields of achievement
- ◆ government and Scottish institutions
- ◆ important tourist sites associated with Scottish history

Evidence requirements

The candidate should be able to explain major aspects of Scottish history, characters and events and place these in the context of visits to attractions and sites of historical significance.

Assessment guidelines

Closed-book, end-of-outcome test featuring 12 structured questions which cover the knowledge and skills covered in the outcome. Tutors are permitted to advise candidates on subject matter to be revised in preparation for the test. Time allowance should be 45 minutes. To pass the test the candidate must answer 9 questions correctly with no more than one error in each section. Sections will correspond to the bullet points listed above so there will be two questions per bullet point.

Outcome 3

Explain the principal features of Scottish culture and tradition which contribute to the visitor experience

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ principal aspects of Scotland's cultural heritage
- ◆ national and local events of cultural and/or traditional significance
- ◆ Scottish products
- ◆ visitor attractions associated with Scottish produce, culture and tradition

Evidence requirements

Evidence that the candidate can explain the principal features of Scotland's culture, traditions and achievements, to respond to the information needs of the visitor or travel organiser.

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Assessment guidelines

Closed-book, end-of-outcome test featuring 8 structured questions which cover the knowledge and skills covered in the outcome. Tutors are permitted to advise candidates on subject matter to be revised in preparation for the test. Time allowance should 25 minutes. To pass the test the candidate must answer 6 questions correctly with no more than one error in each section. Sections will correspond to the bullet points listed above so there will be two questions per bullet point.

Outcome 4

Apply general knowledge of the notable leisure opportunities and special-interest activities available to visitors in Scotland

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ leisure, sporting and special-interest activities of particular relevance to tourism in Scotland
- ◆ practical considerations of participating
- ◆ appropriate locations for participation

Evidence requirements

Evidence that the candidate can apply knowledge of provision for leisure and special-interest activities to respond to the information needs of the visitor or travel organiser.

Assessment guidelines

Assignment – please refer to Outcome 6

Outcome 5

Provide information on a range of visitor facilities in Scotland

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ examples of the range of accommodation and catering facilities available to visitors
- ◆ principal travel and transport companies operating in Scotland
- ◆ business tourism venues – meeting, conference and incentive venues
- ◆ operation and objectives of quality-assurance schemes covering visitor facilities in Scotland

Evidence requirements

Evidence to demonstrate the candidate's knowledge and understanding of the range, significance, location and operations of visitor facilities and ability to explain how the relevant quality-assurance schemes operate to benefit both industry and visitor.

Assessment guidelines

Assignment – please refer to Outcome 6

Outcome 6

Plan touring programmes and itineraries offering differing experiences in Scotland

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ appropriate choice of destinations, accommodation and catering, transport and range of activities and visits
- ◆ feasible itineraries in terms of time, distance and geographical location

Evidence requirements

Evidence to demonstrate the candidate's ability to apply knowledge of the tourism product to plan tours to satisfy the requirements of different client types.

Assessment guidelines

The assessment for this outcome can be combined with Outcomes 4 and 5 within two integrated assignments. Candidates will be required to research appropriate information to satisfy two different client briefs. The candidate will plan two touring programmes, one will be centre based and the other will be a touring itinerary. Research for the assignment will be done in the candidate's own time, but final writing up of the programmes and itinerary is under normal supervision in the classroom. The test will be open book with the candidate being allowed access to all sources of reference used in the delivery of the unit. The candidate should achieve this within 1½ hours.

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Administrative Information

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SQA Advanced Unit Specification: support notes

Unit title: Providing Information on the Scottish Tourism Product

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 80 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this unit

The content primarily reflects the emphasis on specialist knowledge required for work in Scottish tourism, as well as the practical skills required in assembling touring programmes and itineraries. As far as possible, therefore, the context should reflect the oral, written and telephone communication requirements involved in the day-to-day operations of tourism businesses.

Ideally delivery of the unit should make maximum use of tourism materials in current use in the industry and the emphasis throughout should be on the practical application of knowledge of the tourism product. The candidate should achieve the level of competence of someone who may be called upon to provide general information in a range of contexts representative of the many different categories of tourism enquiry.

In addition to the essential knowledge and skills outlined in the Statement of Standards, the following should be covered to gain full benefit from undertaking the unit:

The geography of Scotland, its main tourist areas and communication networks

Size – distances from north to south, east to west

Main geographical divisions, including Highlands/Central Lowlands/Southern Uplands

Principal landscape features, including mountain areas: Ben Nevis and Glencoe; Torridon, The Cuillins, and The Grampians, including The Cairngorms

Definition of ‘Munros’

Lochs: Lomond, Ness, Tay, Awe

Glens: Great Glen, Glen Nevis

Other famous physical features: The Five Sisters of Kintail, The Quiraing, Fingal’s Cave, Bass Rock, Ailsa Craig, Scott’s View, The Old Man of Hoy, and Rannoch Moor

Rivers: Tweed, Clyde, Tay, Spey, Dee

Firths: Solway, Clyde, Forth, Tay, Moray and Pentland

Other coastal areas: The Minch, Loch Linnhe, Loch Fyne

Islands: Inner Hebrides Arran, Islay, Mull, Skye; Outer Hebrides – Barra, South and North Uist, Harris, Lewis; Orkney and Shetland

Scotland’s six cities (Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Dundee, Inverness and Stirling) and approximate populations. Distribution of population

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Main tourist areas of Scotland should include ATB areas; distinct touring areas such as the Trossachs, Burns Country and Royal Deeside; resorts and touring centres such as St Andrews, Braemar, Strathpeffer, Pitlochry, Aviemore, Oban, Fort William, Nairn, Dumfries and Moffat; major resort hotels such as Gleneagles, Turnberry, Crieff and Peebles

Major gateways and transport networks should include ports (Stranraer, Cairnryan, Troon, Ardrrossan, Oban, Rosyth, Scrabster, Ullapool, Aberdeen and associated ferry routes) and airports (Prestwick, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Inverness, Kirkwall, Sumburgh, Stornoway, Benbecula, Barra, and Islay) and major road and rail routes

Tourism signposting. National tourist routes and signposted theme trails e.g. Trossachs Trail, Malt Whisky Trail and Castle Trail

Flora and Fauna: Important visitor attractions such as the Osprey reserves at Loch Garten and Loch of the Lowes; the Seabird centre at North Berwick, the reserves at Caerlaverock, Loch Druidibeg and Vane Farm. and the bird observatory on Fair Isle; Bottlenose dolphin cruises in the Moray Firth, the otter sanctuary on Skye, Highland Wildlife Park, the history of Scotland's woodlands including the Caledonian Pinewood at the Landmark Forest Heritage Park; Various visitor centres in Forest parks – Tay, Galloway, Glen More, Queen Elizabeth, Argyll, Tweed Valley

Scotland's National Parks: Loch Lomond and Trossachs, The Cairngorms

Television and film locations

The candidate should become familiar with the location of all of the above and be able to identify items/places listed on maps of Scotland.

The principal elements of Scottish history

As this is a potentially huge area of study, learning should focus on topics which the non-specialist visitor is most likely to be interested in. Candidates wishing to focus on more detailed studies should refer to SQA Advanced Unit (HT2C 47) Role of History, Culture and Genealogy in Scottish Tourism.

Topics which should be covered in this unit are:

Important periods in Scottish History – chronological overview from pre-history, Picts, Romans, Vikings etc to the present day, to provide a historical framework on which to build up a more specific knowledge

Well-known Scottish historical figures – St Columba, MacBeth, St Margaret, William Wallace, Robert the Bruce, the Stewart monarchs focusing on Mary Queen of Scots and Bonnie Prince Charlie, John Knox, Rob Roy

Notable events in Scottish History – Wars of Independence, Covenanters, Reformation, Union of the Crowns, the Act of Union, Jacobite Risings, Clearances, Scottish Enlightenment, Industrial Revolution, Devolution

Famous Scots who have contributed to arts, sciences, and other notable fields of achievement; the selection should include those whose influence can be viewed by visitors e.g. in architecture; or those who now have museums, monuments, art galleries, etc dedicated to their work e.g. William and Robert Adam, Charles Rennie MacIntosh, Thomas Telford, Sir Walter Scott, Robert Burns, Robert Louis Stevenson, J M Barrie, John Buchan, Andrew Carnegie, David Livingstone, and Adam Smith

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Government and Scottish institutions: The Scottish Parliament and its Executive, local authorities, the church, education, banking and the legal system

Important tourist sites associated with Scottish History: Skara Brae, Maeshowe, Brodgar, Callanish, Dunadd, Iona, Scone, The Border Abbeys, Dunfermline, Stirling Castle and the Wallace Monument, Bannockburn, Falkland Palace, Linlithgow Palace, The Palace of Holyroodhouse, Edinburgh Castle, Flodden, Loch Leven Castle, Glenfinnan, Glencoe, Culloden, Fort George, New Lanark, Old and New Towns of Edinburgh, Abbotsford, Burns' Cottage. Other famous castles and stately homes: e.g. Eilean Donan, Urquhart, Culzean, Blair, Dunrobin, Hopetoun. The role of the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) and Historic Scotland

The principal features of Scotland's culture, produce and traditions

The outcome is intended to create an awareness in the candidate of the cultural heritage of Scotland and an appreciation of the people, traditions and other aspects of Scottish life which contribute to its unique attraction for visitors.

Cultural heritage: emblems, symbols, clans, customs, language, literature, art, architecture, music and the performing arts

National and local events of cultural and/or traditional significance: Hogmanay traditions and Ne'er Day festivities, Burns' Suppers, Border Ridings and Festivals, Beltane festival, Celtic Connections, Up-Helly-Aa, The Edinburgh International Festival, The Fringe, The Edinburgh Military Tattoo, and National and International Sporting Events

Scottish products: national and local specialities in food and drink, cuisine. Tartans and Woollens. Arts, crafts and industrial products

Visitor attractions associated with Scottish produce, culture and tradition e.g. whisky distilleries – Speyside and Islay; mills and factory outlets; notable heritage centres and other purpose-built visitor centres; Scottish restaurants

Leisure and special-interest activities

The main area of investigation should be the examination of those areas of particular relevance to tourism in Scotland e.g. golf, fishing, shooting, stalking, climbing, walking and sailing. Practical considerations should include rules, regulations, codes of conduct, customs, access restrictions, equipment hire, instruction and requirements for advance bookings.

Candidates should also be aware of the wider range of activities available in Scotland including skiing, pony trekking, spectator sports such as soccer, rugby, shinty and curling, and other special-interest holidays e.g. photography, archaeology. Although an in-depth treatment of these would be unrealistic, an awareness of the range and the ability to advise through knowledge of appropriate source materials is required.

The candidate should be aware of leisure opportunities in the local area e.g. theatres, cinemas, leisure centres, golf courses, sports stadia etc.

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Provision of information on visitor facilities

Information provided throughout the outcome should take account of appropriateness for client type – leisure and business; families; individuals, groups, etc, and of the flexibility of some venues to fulfil different functions for different client types eg visitor attractions as conference/ meetings venues; historic houses as venues for incentive and corporate events.

Examples of the range of accommodation and catering facilities available to visitors – well-known deluxe hotels eg Gleneagles, Turnberry, Inverlochy Castle, Cameron House, Skibo Castle. Examples of hotels, independent or chains, B&B, self-catering, camping and caravanning, youth hostels

Major visitor attractions which haven't been covered in previous outcomes: site, event, natural, built, contemporary etc. Museums, arts centres, gardens etc. NTS, ASVA

Principal travel and transport companies operating in Scotland

Business tourism venue; meeting, conference and incentive venues; purpose-built centres, hotels, castles and stately homes; visitor attractions

Operation and objectives of quality-assurance schemes covering visitor facilities in Scotland eg Visit Scotland Grading and Classification, AA.

Planning tours

Route planning should cover time/distance factors in travel such as types of road, terrain, vehicle and relative speeds and journey times; seasonal factors.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this unit

A candidate-centred, resource-based and practical approach to the unit should be adopted, to encourage expertise in the use of source materials and to develop the skills required in the workplace. Access to a wide range of up-to-date source materials – maps, brochures, guidebooks, trade publications, research and reference materials for historical and cultural background – is essential for the design and implementation of classroom-based activities and for the candidate to develop the breadth and depth of knowledge required of the unit. Access to modern media sources e.g. DVD, video, is also recommended.

The desirable emphasis is on contextualised learning – exposure to product knowledge in the context of the sites to which visitors have access. As tourism product knowledge is most effectively gained at first hand it is recommended that this unit is delivered concurrently with the Practical Travel and Tourism visit unit. The ability of centres to arrange visits to tourism facilities will greatly enhance the candidate's learning experience and it is strongly recommended therefore that learning is supported in this way where possible.

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The study of Scottish history is a vast area and, to keep it within the scope of the unit, its treatment should be in terms of the average visitor experience. A sound overview of the main people and events in Scottish history takes time to develop and a suggested approach would be to introduce this topic at the beginning of the unit. The candidate may then construct a time line to which notable people, places and events can be added on a regular basis. Formal tutor input can be supported, and class-based learning consolidated, by visits to historic sites, by video, by investigation and presentation, by researching and devising programmes on a historical theme etc., so that candidates should be able to describe certain historic sites and locations in relation to characters and events in Scotland's past and vice versa.

Outcomes 3 and 4 require more direct tutor input, but also lend themselves to desk research backed up by visits to associated visitor attractions.

Care should be taken in the design of learning activities to mirror as much as possible the applications of knowledge in the workplace – good industry links or recent industrial experience on the part of tutors may provide examples of enquiries/requests for sample itineraries/the opportunity to assume the role of tour operations or tourist information centre assistants, in devising programmes to match customer requirements, especially in Outcomes 5 and 6.

The nature of tourism means an ongoing investment in resources by centres offering this unit. Essential print material changes on an annual basis and tutors will always have the responsibility to update and renew reference sources and classroom sets of essential tourism materials such as brochures, guides, maps etc. Tutors will have to keep abreast of current developments to acquire authentic materials and other resources. This, along with arranging visits, is an essential, but time-consuming task, for which specific allocation of staff time should be made, if possible, within departmental planning. However the burden of renewing and updating basic materials should not all fall on the tutor as it is desirable for a certain amount of free information to be collected by candidates themselves. It is also desirable that a dedicated classroom is provided for the delivery of this unit due to the need for candidates to routinely have access to large amounts of tourism material and for displays of wall maps, posters and other visual materials.

Open learning

While the contextualised learning approach suggested above is desirable, the unit could be delivered by open learning. Learning materials could be developed in the traditional paper-based way, or online, incorporating interactive activities and links to industry websites. Candidate progress could be monitored through tutor marked assignments.

Equality and inclusion

This unit specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

General information for candidates

Unit title: Providing Information on the Scottish Tourism Product

Practitioners have always identified good product knowledge as an essential requirement for candidates seeking employment in Scottish tourism. The unit is designed to provide you with a broad knowledge of the Scottish tourism product. By the end of it you should be able to provide information in response to typical enquiries generated by visitors and travel organisers. You will also be able to plan both general and specialist touring itineraries of Scotland.

There are six outcomes in the unit. In the first outcome you will develop a working knowledge of the geography of Scotland, then the next two outcomes cover Scotland's history and culture. In the fourth you learn about opportunities in Scotland for leisure pursuits and special-interest activities. Then you will investigate the various providers of tourist facilities in Scotland before completing two touring programmes in the final outcome. The unit is essentially practical and will involve you in acquiring and applying knowledge of the tourism product through a variety of learning methods.

To demonstrate that you are able to provide information to the standard required in the unit you will be assessed by your lecturer/tutor. In this unit there are four assessment tasks to complete. The tasks include three end-of-outcome tests and one practical assignment. The end-of-outcome tests are unseen and closed book while in the assignment you will be able to use relevant tourism materials which you will have been accustomed to using in class, such as maps, brochures and guidebooks.