

SQA Advanced Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Retail Environment (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: HT5K 47

Superclass: BC

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Version: 01

Unit purpose

This unit is designed to give learners an understanding of today's retail environment. Learners will look at the development of the retail industry and the factors that cause change in the sector. Learners will also be given the opportunity to analyse the retail decisions of an organisation in the sector. The unit will provide a basis for further study of retail and will give learners the opportunity to develop skills relevant to employment.

Outcomes

On successful completion of the unit the learner will be able to:

- 1 Explain the development of the retail industry.
- 2 Analyse the changing retail environment and the factors contributing to these changes.
- 3 Evaluate the application of the retail mix for a specific retail organisation.

Credit points and level

1 SQA Credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7)

Recommended entry to the unit

Entry to this unit is at the discretion of the centre.

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Core Skills

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the support notes for this unit specification.

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this unit.

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.

The Assessment Support Pack (ASP) for this unit provides assessment and marking guidelines that exemplify the national standard for achievement. It is a valid, reliable and practicable assessment. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the ASP to ensure a comparable standard. A list of existing ASPs is available to download from SQA's website.

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.

Unit specification: statement of standards

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Acceptable performance in this unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

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. Learners 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 development of the retail industry.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ The mercantile era
- ◆ The modern retail era
- ◆ The digital era
- ◆ Key trends and developments in the retail sector

Outcome 2

Analyse the changing retail environment and the factors contributing to these changes.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Political and legal factors
- ◆ Economic factors
- ◆ Social trends — the changing consumer
- ◆ Technological advancements
- ◆ Environmental/ethical concerns in the retail sector
- ◆ The competitive market-place

Outcome 3

Evaluate the application of the retail mix for a specific retail organisation.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Target markets/brand positioning
- ◆ Location
- ◆ Layout/merchandising
- ◆ Products/assortment
- ◆ Quantity/quality of products and market research and feedback
- ◆ Promotional methods and pricing strategy
- ◆ Customer service/processes and procedures

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Evidence requirements for this unit

Learners will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills across all outcomes by showing that they can:

- ◆ describe the key stages in the development of the retail industry.
- ◆ identify key factors influencing / contributing to the current retail sector.
- ◆ identify and explain how current political and legal factors have affected the retail sector.
- ◆ explain how economic change can affect retailers.
- ◆ identify key social and cultural changes and explain how the retail industry has adapted to these changes.
- ◆ identify the key benefits of technology for retailers and consumers.
- ◆ explain the importance of environmental and ethical factors in the retail industry.
- ◆ explain factors that influence the competitive nature of the retail sector.
- ◆ identify and justify the target audience and brand position of a specific retailer.
- ◆ evaluate the retail mix decisions made by retailers based on current industry conditions.

Each outcome for this unit could be assessed individually. Alternatively, the assessment could be a project in three sections.

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Unit specification: support notes

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Unit support notes are offered as guidance and 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

Outcome 1 is designed to provide an overview of three key aspects of retail — the historical development of the retail industry, the factors affecting the current retail environment, and how retailers are adapting to a changing industry.

Mercantile Era — 1440s to the Industrial revolution. This section would cover the basics of commerce from the merchants and traders to the infancy of retailing subsidiaries/middlemen.

Modern Era — 1900s with emphasis on post-war to millennium. It is important to discuss this era as developments forged the modern retail environment. Historically and culturally, events of this century paved the way for the development of the digital era. Different types of retailers can be discussed, such as sole traders, department stores, supermarkets, and franchises could be covered here as well as the growing contribution of the sector to the economy.

Digital era — 2000s. This era focuses on the technological advancements that have made the retail industry and business in general what it is today. Focus should be given to the rise of the internet and e-commerce and how that has changed the culture of retail and the way retail business is conducted.

Other key trends and developments include omni-channel retailing, experiential retailing, mobile, and social marketing.

Outcome 2 focuses on the factors that have and can cause change in the retail environment. These factors could be categorised in the form of PESTEC — Political and legal, Economic, Social and cultural, Technological, Environmental, and Competitive.

Outcome 3 looks at how retailers have adapted to the changing retail landscape. Firstly, how retailers segment the market and target customers. Secondly, how retailers position themselves in the market by developing a 'retail mix' to differentiate themselves in a crowded market-place.

An explanation of the 'retail mix' should develop from a more sector-specific 'marketing mix' and could be an analysis of a wide range of subjects such as: Location, Layout/merchandising, Products/assortment, Quantity/Quality of products, Market research and feedback, Promotional methods, Pricing strategy, and customer service/processes and procedures.

Guidance on approaches to delivery of this unit

This unit is intended for learners who would like to pursue a career in retail industry and are currently undertaking an SQA Advanced Certificate in Retail or SQA Advanced Diploma in Retail Management. It is recommended this unit be delivered in Year 1 as it is a core unit for

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the SQA Advanced Certificate. It would be advisable to deliver it early in the course as it is an introductory unit, and lays the foundation upon which to build further knowledge and skills.

The unit is designed to introduce a basic understanding of the retail industry in Outcome 1, then develop further sector-related knowledge in Outcomes 2 and 3. In terms of delivery, a variety of learning and teaching techniques can be utilised. Presentations with slides/notes, case studies, group work, flipped classroom techniques, e-learning through Moodle and wikis, excursions and trips and group discussion would all be appropriate. Reference to current industry examples is also important.

Learners should be encouraged to gather relevant information to enforce in-class notes and discussion, particularly in Outcomes 2 and 3. Resources such as media articles, retailer and industry insight reports, and government reports and statistics, should be researched. Access to the internet in or out of the classroom should make this ongoing activity quite simple. Learners will also be able to gather valuable information by simply visiting retail outlets. This should be encouraged and could be integrated into learning activities.

Guidance on approaches to assessment of this unit

It is suggested that this unit be assessed by a report of 3,000 words (1,000 word per outcome). This could be completed as an out of class project or two or three smaller assignments. It is suggested that learners relate the assessment to a specific retailer (especially Outcomes 2 and 3). Although, a written report may be best to gather evidence, other methods such as presentations, wikis and blogs, and in-class assessments could be used.

Evidence can be generated using different types of assessment.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work and/or further and higher education.

Opportunities for e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all learner evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the evidence requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment.

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

Communication: Written Communication (Reading) at SCQF level 6

The delivery and assessment of this unit may offer opportunities to develop this Core Skill. Written Communication (Reading) at SCQF level 6 involves identifying significant information, ideas and supporting details in a written communication. This would fit the requirements for Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 which requires the learners to spend time researching and studying relevant sources of information.

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Communication: Written Communication (Writing) at SCQF level 6

The delivery and assessment of this unit may offer opportunities to develop this Core Skill. Written Communication (Writing) at SCQF level 6 involves presenting all essential information and supporting detail in logical and effective order. This would fit the requirements of Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 in which learners can produce a report to detail the findings of their investigation.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT): Accessing Information at SCQF level 5

The delivery and assessment of this unit may offer opportunities to develop this Core Skill. Accessing Information at SCQF level 5 involves learners carrying out searches and evaluating the results. This fits with the requirements of Outcome 1, 2 and 3 where learners search for and evaluate information using a range of sources.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT): Providing/Creating Information at SCQF level 4

The delivery and assessment of this unit may offer opportunities to develop this Core Skill. Providing/Creating Information at SCQF level 4 involves selecting appropriate websites/data sources to research a current issue and presenting findings in an appropriate format including referencing, which can be demonstrated in Outcomes 1, 2 and 3.

Problem Solving: Critical Thinking at SCQF level 5

The delivery and assessment of this unit may offer opportunities to develop this Core Skill. Critical Thinking at SCQF level 5 involves assessing the relevance of factors to a situation or issue. This can be demonstrated in Outcome 3 where learners are required to identify and justify the target audience and brand position of a specific retailer.

Problem Solving: Planning and Organising at SCQF level 5

The delivery and assessment of this unit may offer opportunities to develop this Core Skill. Planning and Organising at SCQF level 5 involves identifying and ensuring you have the necessary resources, selecting these from a wide range of familiar and unfamiliar sources, possibly involving a search. This would fit with Outcome 1, 2 and 3 where learners will produce a report or presentation to detail the findings of their investigation.

Problem Solving: Reviewing and Evaluating at SCQF level 5

The delivery and assessment of this unit may offer opportunities to develop this Core Skill. Reviewing and Evaluating at SCQF level 5 involves drawing conclusions, which should refer to and consider the evidence. This would fit with Outcome 3 where learners will evaluate the retail mix decisions made by retailers.

Administrative information

Version	Description of change	Date

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SQA acknowledges the valuable contribution that Scotland's colleges have made to the development of SQA Advanced Qualifications.

FURTHER INFORMATION: Call SQA's Customer Contact Centre on 44 (0) 141 500 5030 or 0345 279 1000. Alternatively, complete our [Centre Feedback Form](#).

General information for candidates

Unit title: Retail Environment (SCQF level 7)

This unit is designed to introduce you to the evolution of the current retail environment. Firstly, you will develop an understanding of the advancement of the retail industry by concentrating on three key stages — The Mercantile Era, The Modern Era, and the Digital Era. You will gain further insight into how technology has affected the retail industry as well as the other factors and current trends that have affected the sector.

In Outcome 2 you will look at how broader changes in the political, economic, social and cultural, technological and environmental landscapes have influenced retailers and their operations. You will learn about how areas such as the internet and social media, climate change and governmental decisions and referendums have affected the retail sector. You will also examine the competitive nature of the retail environment.

Outcome 3 gives you the opportunity to research a specific retailer to develop your knowledge and understanding of why they target certain groups of people and make certain decisions to allow themselves to survive and potentially thrive in a crowded market-place. You will analyse the retail mix, covering areas such as product ranges, pricing, layout and locations, promotional campaigns, and customer service.

Throughout this unit you will be expected to research relevant sources to gather information on the current retail environment. It also helps if you visit retailers and observe online and in-store practices and relate this to in-class discussion.