SQA Advanced Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Visual Merchandising (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: HT5N 47

Superclass:	BA
Publication date:	August 2017
Source:	Scottish Qualifications Authority
Version:	01

Unit purpose

This unit is designed to enable learners to recognise the main components and techniques of visual merchandising and understand how this function aids a retailer to reach its objectives in attracting customers, contributing towards an enjoyable shopping experience and optimising sales.

Outcomes

On completion of the unit the learner should be able to:

1   Explain how various design, colour, light and typography formats can affect customers' perception of retail images.
2   Evaluate the importance of effective display arrangements to the retailer.
3   Devise an appropriate visual merchandising plan suitable for the retail environment.

Credit points and level

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

Recommended entry to the unit

Access to this unit is at the discretion of the centre. No prior knowledge is necessary, however, it would be beneficial if learners have some knowledge or work experience in visual merchandising.

Core Skills

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following Core Skills component:

Complete Core Skill   None
Core Skill component   Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6

There are also opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills which are highlighted in the support notes of this unit specification.

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

Unit title: Visual Merchandising (SCQF level 7)

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

Outcome 1

Explain how various design, colour, light and typography formats can affect customers' perception of retail images.

Knowledge and/or skills

♦ Composition and layout of displays
♦ Colour theory
♦ Types and effects of lighting
♦ Graphics, lettering styles and application

Outcome 2

Evaluate the importance of effective display arrangements to the retailer.

Knowledge and/or skills

♦ Preparation of the display area
♦ Display locations within the store
♦ Display techniques and objectives
♦ Handling of display merchandise
♦ Selection and positioning of graphics, signs, tickets
♦ Appropriate display fixtures and fittings

Outcome 3

Devise an appropriate visual merchandising plan suitable for the retail environment

Knowledge and/or skills

♦ Display themes
♦ Selection of appropriate fixtures and fittings
♦ Plan of display
♦ Timing of installation
♦ Measures of display effectiveness

Evidence requirements for this unit

Outcome 1

A learner will be required to provide evidence that s/he can explain how the use of various design, colour, light and typography formats can enhance the images of at least two retailers

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from different sectors of the industry. This can be in the form of written or oral evidence. The evidence should accurately:

♦   identify design elements including composition and layouts used in displays.
♦   indicate different colour schemes used by the two retailers and discuss the psychological effects their application may have on customers.
♦   describe the main types of lighting systems used by the two retailers to create two specific impressions.
♦   explain how graphics and specific styles of lettering can be used to communicate different meanings about a retail organisation and its products/service.

Outcome 2

A learner will be required to provide evidence that s/he can discuss the importance of effective display arrangements applied by at least two retailers from different sectors of the industry. This can be in the form of written or oral evidence. The evidence should accurately:

♦   outline the steps involved in the preparation of an area for the installation of a display arrangement.
♦   identify the areas within a store that are suitable for locating displays.
♦   describe the various display techniques used for product presentation.
♦   explain the various methods of handling merchandise for display purposes.
♦   justify the choice and positioning of graphics, signs and tickets.
♦   comment on the types and appropriateness of display fixtures and fittings.

Outcome 3

A learner will be required to provide evidence to demonstrate that s/he is able to devise a visual merchandising plan appropriate for a selected retailer. The evidence should accurately:

♦   identify the visual merchandising objectives.
♦   describe the display theme(s).
♦   select appropriate fixtures and fittings.
♦   provide a plan of the display area.
♦   calculate the timing of the display installation.
♦   identify the method(s) used to measure the effectiveness of the display(s).

Evidence should be generated through open-book assessment where learners can refer to textbooks, handouts, the internet and any other materials.

Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Visual Merchandising (SCQF level 7)

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

The unit is intended for learners who wish to pursue a career in the retail industry and who are taking an SQA Advanced Certificate in Retail or SQA Advanced Diploma in Retail Management, either on a full-time or part-time basis, in which Visual Merchandising is an optional unit for both the SQA Advanced Certificate and SQA Advanced Diploma. It may also be undertaken as a standalone unit by learners in employment wishing to develop their visual merchandising skills.

The following notes give additional information on each outcome:

Outcome 1

Types of window display and interior displays including prestige, mass, open, technical, used to illustrate application of **composition and layout** including symmetric/asymmetric balance, lines of sight, focal points, repetition, alternation, radiation; **types of lights**, eg fluorescent and spotlights used to create different moods.

Highlight how visual merchandising helps to promote a retailer through not just window/ interior displays but also through packaging/wrapping, carrier bags, labels, etc.

Outcome 2

Display locations — windows, aisles, fixtures (types and positioning); security
Display techniques and objectives — open, themed, lifestyle, co-ordinated, category dominant, power aisles;
Methods of handling merchandise — carding, layering, draping, grouping, blocking, suspending; accessorising;
Display tools: staple gun, pin hammer, screwdriver, scissors, etc
Display fixtures — different types including mannequins, props, shelves, tables
Legal requirements in relation to health and safety, sale of goods and trade descriptions

Outcome 3

Visual merchandising objectives — enhance store image, attract customers, increase customer spend, stimulate impulse purchases, provide information about new products etc.
Resources — budget, staff, materials, fixtures and fittings — gondolas, dump bins, wall slats, mannequins, props
Display themes — calendar of events
Display plans — display schedule, perspective drawing, and floor plan
Timing of installation — installation date matched to event, length of time from installation to change-over of display

Measurement of display effectiveness — observation of customers, monitoring of sales trends, surveys of staff and customers

Guidance on approaches to delivery of this unit

This unit is an optional unit offered as part of the SQA Advanced Certificate/Diploma in Retail Management. If delivered along with the unit HT5L 47 Stock Presentation, the overlap between the two units allows for integration of assessments and therefore flexibility in time allocation.

This unit can be offered as a free-standing unit as it is not dependent on any previous or wider retail knowledge.

Guidance on approaches to assessment of this unit

It is recommended that a single instrument of assessment be adopted for Outcomes 1 and 2 of this unit. The learner should explain how various design, colour, light and typography formats have enhanced at least two retailers' images while also highlighting the importance of effective display arrangements applied by those retailers, who should be from different sectors of the industry. For example, towards the end of Outcome 2, learners could be set an assignment that requires them to carry out research and produce a report/presentation on their findings. Reports/presentations should be supplemented with drawings/photographs.

For Outcome 3 assessment, learners will undertake an assignment that does not require being in a controlled environment. The learner will select a retailer and devise an appropriate visual merchandising schedule that covers no less than a three-month period, together with associated perspective drawing and floor plan.

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

The delivery of this unit and subsequent assessment will provide learners with the opportunity to develop the Core Skills of Communication, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Problem Solving.

Oral Communication at SCQF level 5

The delivery and assessment of this unit may offer opportunities to develop this Core Skill. Oral Communication at SCQF level 5 involves conveying all essential information, opinions or ideas with supporting detail accurately and coherently, and with varied emphasis as appropriate. This could be demonstrated in Outcomes 1 and 2 as learners work on the preparation and production of reports, and/or the preparation and delivery of presentations.

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 work on the preparation and production of a report to detail the findings of their investigation.

Using Graphical Information at SCQF level 6

The delivery and assessment of this unit may offer opportunities to develop this Core Skill. Using Graphical Information at SCQF level 6 involves use of an appropriate form of table, graph, chart or diagram, to communicate information. This could be demonstrated in Outcomes 1 and 2 where reports/presentations should be supplemented with drawings/photographs.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT): Providing/Creating Information at SCQF level 5

The delivery and assessment of this unit may offer opportunities to develop this Core Skill. Providing/Creating Information at SCQF level 5 involves selecting appropriate websites/data sources to research a current issue and presenting findings in an appropriate format, which can be demonstrated in Outcomes 1, 2 and 3.

Problem Solving: Critical Thinking at SCQF level 5 and SCQF level 6

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 Outcomes 1 and 2 where learners will have the opportunity to conduct a research project into at least two retailers in relation to visual merchandising.

This unit has the Critical Thinking component of Problem Solving embedded in it. This means that when learners achieve the unit, their Core Skills profile will also be updated to show they have achieved Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6.

Problem Solving: Planning and Organising at SCQF level 6

The delivery and assessment of this unit may offer opportunities to develop this Core Skill. Planning and Organising at SCQF level 6 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 Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 where learners could produce a report or presentation to detail the findings of their investigation.

Administrative information

Version	Description of change	Date

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: Visual Merchandising (SCQF level 7)

This unit is designed to give you an understanding of the main techniques that are used in visual mechanising in the retail environment. It explores the main visual merchandising techniques adopted by various types of retailer from different sectors of the industry. It also covers the main considerations in planning a display. You should visit a variety of retailers, noting the various approaches used to display merchandise and/or a service.

Overall, you will be expected to use the knowledge and skills from this unit to enable you to evaluate how a variety of retailers apply the techniques of visual merchandising and plan an actual display for a selected retailer of your choice.

In order to complete the unit successfully, you will be required to achieve a satisfactory level of performance on two pieces of assessed work. Towards the end of Outcome 2, you will be allocated time to carry out research relating to two different retail approaches to visual merchandising. Although instruments of assessment are at the discretion of your centre, it is recommended in this unit that you will be required to produce a report or a presentation on your findings. Your report/presentation should be supplemented with drawings/photographs. Your lecturer will give you a timescale for completion.

For Outcome 3 assessment, you will undertake an assignment that does not require being in a controlled environment. This assessment will take the form of the production of a visual merchandising schedule, covering a minimum of a three-month period, and associated plans for a specified retailer.

This unit has the Critical Thinking component of Problem Solving embedded in it. This means that when you achieve the unit, your Core Skills profile will also be updated to show you have achieved Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6.