

SQA Advanced Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Fashion Merchandising (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: HT5T 47

Superclass: BA

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Version: 01

Unit purpose

The unit is designed to provide learners with an understanding of the ways in which fashion retailers have responded to new competitive challenges by adopting a variety of merchandising techniques.

This unit is an optional unit included in the framework of the SQA Advanced Certificate /Diploma in Retail Management.

Outcomes

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

- 1 Analyse and evaluate how the dynamic external environment impacts on fashion retailers.
- 2 Forecast fashion trends.
- 3 Explain the importance of fashion merchandise planning and management.
- 4 Plan a merchandise presentation appropriate for a fashion retailer's customers.

Credit points and level

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

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Recommended entry to the unit

Access to this unit is at the discretion of the centre. No prior knowledge or experience is necessary, although it would be beneficial if learners had some fashion experience and/or NC Units such as FP21 11 *Fashion: An Introduction* or H1SE 11 *Retail Fashion Industry*.

Core Skills

Achievement of this unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill	Problem Solving at SCQF level 5
Core Skill component	None

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the support notes for 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

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

Outcome 1

Analyse and evaluate how the dynamic external environment impacts on fashion retailers.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ The role of fashion merchandising
- ◆ Major drivers of fashion change
- ◆ Structure of fashion retailing
- ◆ Merchandising trends

Outcome 2

Forecast fashion trends.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Seasons of trading
- ◆ Primary and secondary sources of fashion information used to forecast fashion trends
- ◆ Appropriate fashion information and forecast new 'fashion looks' for the selected retailer, their customers and season

Outcome 3

Explain the importance of fashion merchandise planning and management.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Supply chain opportunities
- ◆ The planning process and critical path management
- ◆ Sales plans, stock management and allocation

Outcome 4

Plan a merchandise presentation appropriate for a fashion retailer's customers.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Planning stages
- ◆ Setting clear objectives
- ◆ Importance of identifying customers and their needs
- ◆ Types of fashion presentations
- ◆ Selection of appropriate themes

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- ◆ Identification of resources
- ◆ Evaluation

Evidence requirements for this unit

Outcome 1

Learners will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills in analysing and evaluating external changes that have taken place and how these have had an influence on current and future fashion merchandising activities within the retail industry. This can be in the form of written and/or oral evidence and should accurately:

- ◆ describe and evaluate the role of fashion merchandising.
- ◆ identify the drivers of change that influence fashion retailers.
- ◆ explain how these external factors have affected the structure of clothing retailing.
- ◆ identify how current and future trends will impact on the role of fashion merchandising.

Outcome 2

Learners will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills in forecasting fashion trends for a specific retailer. The learner should select an appropriate fashion retailer, identify their target customers and select a season upon which to base the assessment. The fashion trends appropriate to the fashion retailer, their customers and the season should be identified. This can be in the form of written or oral evidence and should accurately:

- ◆ identify the key seasons of trading.
- ◆ describe the primary and secondary sources of fashion information used to forecast fashion trends.
- ◆ evaluate the appropriate fashion information, forecast 'fashion looks' for the selected retailer, their customers and seasons.

Outcome 3

Learners will be required to provide evidence to show they can, with reference to a particular retailer, explain the importance of fashion merchandise planning. Oral or written evidence should accurately:

- ◆ describe and evaluate the different supply chains available to fashion retailers.
- ◆ explain the importance of critical path management.
- ◆ demonstrate numeric and analytical skills used in planning.

Outcome 4

Learners will provide evidence to show they can, with reference to a particular retail event, develop a plan that identifies the key stages involved in the presentation of fashion merchandise. Written or oral evidence to show that the learner is able to:

- ◆ select an appropriate type of fashion presentation and theme.
- ◆ determine clear objectives for the presentation.
- ◆ identify the resources required.
- ◆ prepare a schedule for the presentation.
- ◆ analyse and evaluate findings.

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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 80 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this unit

This unit is intended for learners who wish to pursue a career in the retail fashion industry and who are taking an SQA Advanced Certificate in Retail or an SQA Advanced Diploma in Retail Management. It may be delivered in Year 1 or 2.

The following notes give additional information on each outcome:

Outcome 1

Role and purpose of fashion merchandising within the retail organisation: relationship between merchandiser and buyer; efficient stock planning; five Rs: right stock, right place, right time, right quantity, right price; maximising sales and profit, minimising markdowns; commercially balanced ranges.

Major drivers of fashion change: globalisation, internet, social media, e-commerce, Omni-channel retailing, technology, ecology, ethics, sustainability; demographics and lifestyles. Also consider motivation theory, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, fashion adoption theories, fashion life cycles, fashion leaders/followers.

Structure of fashion retailing: changing high street, out of town shopping centres, pressure on independents, market leaders, virtual high street, e-commerce.

Future merchandising trends: increase in use of computerised planning systems; integration of merchandise planning with visual merchandising; integration of merchandise planning with factories/suppliers for capacity planning and deliveries.

Outcome 2

Seasonal segments: traditional seasons: Spring/Summer, Autumn/Winter. Contemporary seasons: less defined, transitional ranges, greater emphasis on satisfying customers' needs and changing lifestyles, eg all year round holidays, active leisure pursuits.

Sources of fashion information: primary research: fashion shows, surveys, forecasting agencies, eg World Global Style Network (WGSN), Promostyl, trade shows, eg Premier Vision, Pure. Secondary research: historical company information, statistical information, customer loyalty programmes, customer profiling, the media, social media, celebrity endorsement.

Fashion trends: mood boards; emerging garment types, fabrics, style, silhouettes, colours and trims.

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Outcome 3

Merchandise channels: domestic/international sources of supply; lead times of different suppliers; sustainability; horizontal or vertical integration; brands.

Planning process: historical performance; best and worst sellers; designer/buyer input; customer feedback/focus groups; new season strategy; key trends.

Sales plans: external/internal influences including planned and unplanned, eg stock turn, rate of sale, breadth/depth of stock, the weather, and supplier failure.

Merchandise management and allocation: Weekly Sales Stock and intake spreadsheets (WSSI); range plan; grading and allocations; Open to Buy forecast (OTB); critical path management.

Outcome 4

Planning process: objectives, target customers, method of presentation, theme, resources.

Setting objectives: SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound).

Target customers: importance of identifying customers and their needs, market segmentation, customer profiling.

Types of presentation: fashion shows, seminars, training, advertisement, brochure, blog, web page and other digital cultures.

Themes: seasonal, special events, new store opening, product launch.

Resources: people, budget, merchandise, props, graphics, time, space, invites, promotional material, catering.

Evaluation: Qualitative/quantitative; increase in sales, customer feedback, repeat sales, word of mouth.

Guidance on approaches to delivery of this unit

This unit can be delivered through lecturer-mediated discussion. This may be in a traditional face-to-face environment or using a virtual learning environment or by various combinations of the two.

The choice of delivery methods for the unit is particularly important as the unit lends itself to learner-centred teaching approaches which make it possible for learners to undertake research and produce suitable assessment evidence as they work through the unit. This use of e-learning through new media can improve the impact of the course on paper usage and can also be used to develop new methods of communication.

Learners are encouraged to participate in practical activities which will enable them to become familiar with the key principles which underpin fashion merchandising.

Learners should be encouraged to visit fashion retail outlets, fashion shows, trade shows/conferences, read fashion and consumer trade magazines in order to ensure they are kept abreast of all the latest fashion trends.

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Visiting speakers from the fashion industry would also be very beneficial for learners.

A useful fashion internet site is available as a free resource to fashion learners and colleges can register on the EDU portal at www.WGSN.com

Guidance on approaches to assessment of this unit

The sources outlined in the guidance on approaches to delivery of this unit will assist in gathering information and material for the following suggested method of assessments:

Outcome 1

Ten restricted response questions which satisfy all the evidence requirements. An alternative paper should be available for a second opportunity if required.

It is recommended that this assessment is carried out under controlled conditions. Learners may bring in notes of two sides of A4 paper.

Outcome 2

The assessment for this outcome could take the form of a report (approximately 1,000 words) or presentation, based on a selected fashion retailer. The choice of retailer may be taken by either learner or lecturer. Learners are encouraged to use the knowledge gained in Outcome 1 regarding the dynamic external factors which impact on fashion retailers, and apply it to the selected retailer. In addition, learners should forecast and interpret 'fashion' looks which are appropriate to the selected retailer, its customers and the season. Learners may appendix additional support material such as photographs, drawings and mood boards.

The format of the report is not part of the mandatory evidence requirements for this unit so it may be presented in any suitable form. In order to ensure that all aspects of the evidence requirements are covered, additional questions may be added to the report.

Evidence should be generated by open-book assessment.

Outcome 3

The assessment of this outcome could be in the form of a case study which would include a sales plan. The learner should be able to demonstrate their ability to complete a sales plan in a practical exercise. From the case study, the learner should identify and evaluate the source of fashion products and their appropriateness for the given retailer.

It is recommended that the assessment should be carried out in controlled conditions. Learners may bring in their own notes but textbooks are not allowed. Use of a calculator is permitted.

Outcome 4

The assessment of this outcome could be in the form of a report (approximately 1,000 words) or presentation. The report or presentation may be supplemented by additional questions to ensure all aspects of the evidence requirements are covered. The format of the report is not part of the mandatory evidence requirements, so may be presented in any format. Learners are encouraged to appendix their evidence with photographs, drawings and promotional material. The presentation may take the form of a fashion show, staff training or customer event.

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

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 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

Core Skills

This unit has the Core Skill of Problem Solving embedded in it, so when learners achieve this unit their Core Skills profile will be updated to show that they have achieved Problem Solving at SCQF level 5.

The delivery and assessment of this unit contributes towards the development of the Core Skill of Problem Solving. The components critical thinking, planning and organising and reviewing and evaluating may be developed through various activities required to be completed by learners throughout the unit. Examples include identifying and researching primary and secondary sources of information, forecasting fashion trends, evaluating sources of supply, completing a sales plan and planning, preparing and evaluating a presentation.

The delivery and assessment of this unit may contribute towards the development of the Core Skill of Communication. The components of written and oral communication may be developed through various activities such as the preparation and production of reports, and the preparation and delivery of presentations.

The delivery and assessment of this unit may contribute to the Core Skill Numeracy. The components of using number and graphical information may be developed through activities such as forecasting trends, analysing demographic statistics, calculating costs and preparing sales plans.

The delivery and assessment of this unit may contribute towards the development of the Core Skill Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The component of Accessing Information may be developed through various activities including accessing websites to identify sources, carrying out research and presenting information. The component of Providing/Creating Information may be developed through various activities such as developing digital cultures for use in presentations and reports.

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Essential skills

Whilst undertaking this unit learners will develop skills which support employability, develop confidence, independent learning and citizenship, as they research and learn the key concepts of the unit.

By undertaking this particular unit learners will have developed full knowledge and skills regarding sustainable development policies that can be employed both on a business and personal level.

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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: Fashion Merchandising (SCQF level 7)

This optional unit is designed to give you an understanding of the importance of the role of merchandising to the fashion retailer in aiding survival in an ever changing competitive environment.

It explores the major drivers of change and evaluates how fashion retailers have responded using more efficient merchandising methods.

It gives you the opportunity to research and forecast fashion trends using a variety of on-line resources.

Planning and management of stock is addressed theoretically whilst practical exercises enrich your knowledge and skills in this area.

Planning and presentation of a fashion event enables the learner to develop and implement the key stages involved in setting up a fashion merchandise presentation. You will also need to evaluate the process post presentation.

Throughout the teaching and learning of this unit, you are encouraged to visit fashion retailers, fashion shows, access all on line resources and media to keep up-to-date with current fashion trends.

There are a number of assessment options available at SQA Advanced level and these are provided at the discretion of your centre. However, for this unit it is recommended that in order to complete the unit successfully you will be required to achieve the satisfactory level of performance on four pieces of assessed work covering each of the outcomes:

Outcome 1 — Restricted response questions

Outcome 2 — A report or presentation of approximately 1,000 words

Outcome 3 — A case study which includes a sales plan

Outcome 4 — A report or presentation of approximately 1,000 words

Whilst undertaking this unit, you will develop a range of core skills within Communication, Numeracy, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Problem Solving.

This unit has the Core Skill of Problem Solving embedded in it, so when you achieve this unit your Core Skills profile will be updated to show that you have achieved Problem Solving at SCQF level 5.

By undertaking this unit, you will develop skills which will support employability, sustainability, and develop confidence, independent learning and citizenship, as you research and learn the key concepts of the unit.