

## SQA Advanced Unit Specification

### General information for centres

This graded unit has been validated as part of the SQA Advanced Diploma in Retail Management. Centres are required to develop a project-based assessment in accordance with this validated specification.

**Graded unit title:** Retail Management: Graded Unit 2  
(SCQF level 8)

**Graded unit code:** HT61 48

**Type of Project:** Investigation

**Publication date:** August 2017

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 01

### Graded unit purpose

This graded unit is designed to provide evidence that the learner has achieved the following principal aims of the SQA Advanced Diploma in Retail Management:

- ◆ Prepare for employment in the retail industry in a supervisory/team leader/manager.
- ◆ To prepare learners for articulation to higher education provision in retailing or related areas.
- ◆ Develop a sound understanding of the current and future trends in the environment in which the retail sector operates and their impact on organisations.
- ◆ To build on previously acquired transferable skills.
- ◆ Broaden and deepen knowledge, understanding and skills in key areas of management, human resources, finance and marketing.
- ◆ To provide learners with in-depth knowledge and understanding in a range of specialist retail areas.

### Credit points and level

2 SQA Credits at SCQF level 8: (16 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8)

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### Recommended entry to the graded unit

It is recommended that the learner should have completed or be in the process of completing the following units relating to the above principal aims prior to undertaking this graded unit:

The mandatory units that comprise the SQA Advanced Certificate in Retail plus the following units:

- ◆ *Marketing Practice: An Introduction*
- ◆ *Consumer Behaviour and the Marketing Process*
- ◆ *Using Financial Accounting Statements*
- ◆ *Recruitment, Selection and Induction*
- ◆ *Managing People*
- ◆ *Contemporary Issues in Retailing*
- ◆ *Retail Corporate Image*
- ◆ *Store Design*

### Core Skills

Achievement of this graded unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill                      Problem Solving at SCQF level 6

Core Skill component                      None

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

### Assessment support pack

The assessment support pack for this unit provides assessment and marking guidelines that exemplify the national standard for achievement. It is a valid, reliable and practicable instrument of assessment. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the Assessment Support Pack to ensure a comparable standard. Assessment support packs are available on SQA's secure 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](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements).

### Unit specification: statement of standards

**Graded unit title:** Retail Management: Graded Unit 2 (SCQF level 8)

### Assessment

This graded unit will be assessed by the use of an *investigation* developed by centres. The project should provide the learner with the opportunity to produce evidence that demonstrates they have met the aims of this graded unit.

The project undertaken by the learner must be a complex task which involves:

- ◆ variables which are complex or unfamiliar
- ◆ relationships which need to be clarified
- ◆ a context which may be unfamiliar to the learner

The project must require the learner to:

- ◆ analyse the task and decide on a course of action for undertaking the project
- ◆ plan and organise work and carry it through to completion
- ◆ reflect on what has been done and draw conclusions for the future
- ◆ produce evidence of meeting the aims which this graded unit has been designed to cover.

### Conditions of assessment

The learner should be given a date for completion of the project. However, the instructions for the project should be distributed to allow the learner sufficient time to assimilate the details and carry out the project. During the time between the distribution of the project instructions and the completion date, assessors may answer questions, provide clarification, guidance and reasonable assistance. The project should be marked as soon as possible after the completion date. The final grading given should reflect the quality of the learner's evidence at the time of the completion date.

The evidence for the project is generated over time and involves three distinct stages, where each stage has to be achieved before the next is undertaken. Thus any re-assessment of stages must be undertaken before proceeding to the next stage.

If a learner fails the project overall or wishes to upgrade, then this must be done using a *substantially different* project, ie all stages are undertaken using a new project, assignment, case study, etc. In this case, a learner's grade will be based on the achievement in the re-assessment, if this results in a higher grade.

At this level, learners should work independently. It is up to centres to take responsible steps to ensure that the project is the work of learners. For example, centres may wish to informally question learners at various stages on their knowledge and understanding of the project on which they have embarked. Centres should ensure that where research, etc is carried out in other establishments or under supervision of others that the learner does not receive undue assistance.

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To ensure authentication of work it is advisable for learners to complete a log or diary recording progress and tasks completed. There should be regular meetings between the tutor and learner to review progress, these meetings should be recorded.

The project will be based on the investigation of a business issue relating to an organisation or a topical issue in the retail industry. The issue selected should focus on at least one of the main aims of the course, and should involve an investigation which provides a solution to an identified issue. The investigation should allow the learner to demonstrate creative solutions in response to the changing needs of a retail organisation or retail industry.

### Evidence requirements for this graded unit

The project undertaken by learners will consist of three stages: planning; developing; and evaluating. The following table specifies the minimum evidence required to pass each stage.

Project stage	Minimum evidence requirements	% Mark Allocation
Stage 1 — Planning	<p>An action plan which includes:</p> <p>Evidence of an action plan which will enable the learner to carry out the instructions given with the case study, in a logical and organised manner, making the best use of time and resources. The plan will include a action plan which includes:</p> <p>A brief, outlining the proposed investigation of an issue relating to a retail business in either the public, private or voluntary sector. The issue must be directly related to a topic or topics covered as part of the group award. The brief must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ The title of the investigation report</li><li>◆ The objective(s) of the investigation</li><li>◆ The rationale for choosing this issue for investigation (if choice has been allowed), with the anticipated benefits which will result for the organisation and/or its customers</li><li>◆ Identification of the sources of information which will be used for the investigation with an explanation of why each has been selected</li><li>◆ Explanation of how the investigation will be conducted with reasons for the choice of methods adopted</li><li>◆ Statement of the criteria which will be used to assess the implications of the issue and the reasons why each has been selected. The criteria chosen and the justification for each criterion should be directly related to a topic or topics covered as part of the group award.</li></ul>	20%

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Project stage	Minimum evidence requirements	% Mark Allocation
	<p>A plan, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Timescale for conducting the investigation, including final and interim completion dates</li> <li>◆ Identification of resources required to carry out investigation</li> </ul> <p>Written evidence of both of the above must be submitted by a date specified by the assessor. It may be supplemented by evidence provided orally by the learner in a discussion with the assessor. If this is the case, a written or taped record of the points of the discussion should be provided.</p> <p><i>The learner <b>must</b> achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Planning stage.</i></p>	
<p>Stage 2 — Developing</p>	<p>An investigation report, which clearly demonstrates a solution to a problem, or suggests a new approach in response to the changing needs of the retail organisation and/or its customers. It should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Contents page</li> <li>◆ Description of the retail business upon which the investigation is based</li> <li>◆ Detailed explanation of the problem or area where a new approach is required in response to the changing needs of the retail organisation and/or its customers</li> <li>◆ The objective(s) to be achieved</li> <li>◆ Relevant theory — directly relating to the topic chosen for investigation from the mandatory and/or optional unit(s) which make up the group award</li> <li>◆ Summary of research findings</li> <li>◆ Conclusions drawn from the investigation</li> <li>◆ Specific recommendations</li> <li>◆ A list of acknowledgements of sources and references</li> <li>◆ An appendix containing any additional relevant material (eg copy of questionnaire, planograms, photographs, etc)</li> </ul>	<p>60%</p>

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Project stage	Minimum evidence requirements	% Mark Allocation
	<p>The report will also include evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Collection and collation of relevant data</li> <li>◆ Interpretation/analysis of research data</li> <li>◆ Effective use of research material</li> </ul> <p>The report should be 2,500–3,500 words and be presented in a format suitable for a business report, which includes an introduction, findings, conclusions and recommendations. It may be supplemented by evidence provided orally by the learner in a discussion with the assessor. If this is done, a written record of the main points of the discussion should be provided.</p> <p><i>The learner <b>must</b> achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Developing stage.</i></p>	
<p>Stage 3 — Evaluating</p>	<p>An evaluation relating to the effectiveness of all parts of the investigation. It should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ A brief outline of the investigation</li> <li>◆ Assessment of the extent to which the original objectives were achieved. This should include details of any modifications made or considered, with sound reasons given for the action taken</li> <li>◆ In-depth evaluation of the effectiveness of the planning stage, highlighting any problems which arose, how they were dealt with and any modifications made to the original plan</li> <li>◆ Commentary on the investigation activity and the effectiveness of research methods adopted, highlighting any difficulties experienced in gathering data and how these difficulties were resolved and suggesting any alternative strategies which could have been adopted to achieve the objectives</li> <li>◆ The strengths and weaknesses of the main body of the report</li> <li>◆ Description of any new knowledge or skills which have been learned and any areas of personal strength or weakness which have been identified during the investigation</li> </ul>	<p>20%</p>

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Project stage	Minimum evidence requirements	% Mark Allocation
	<p>◆ Reflection on the success of the investigation undertaken with recommendations for improvements on future occasions for each of the three stages. These recommendations should be substantiated by credible reasons</p> <p>This evaluation stage could be assessed by either a written report or an oral presentation.</p>	
	<p><i>The learner <b>must</b> achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Evaluating stage.</i></p>	

### Assessing and grading learners

The overall project will be marked out of **100**. Only whole marks should be used.

The percentage of marks allocated to each stage of the project is outlined in the **evidence requirements**.

It is a requirement that learners must meet the minimum *evidence requirements* for the *Planning* stage before progressing to the *Developing* stage before progressing to the *Evaluating* stage. Learners may produce evidence over and above that specified in the minimum *evidence requirements* and deserve more than half the available marks for that stage. Assessors should use the Grade Related Criteria outlined below to judge learner performance.

Learners are required to work independently to meet the *evidence requirements* of the graded unit. At the same time, learners need appropriate support. SQA uses the term reasonable assistance to describe the balance between supporting learners in their project and not providing too much assistance.

At the end of *each* stage there should be opportunities for remediation and re-assessment of learners for that particular stage. This includes the final *Evaluation* stage. Any re-assessment should be carried out in line with the centre's own assessment policy.

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Grade Related Criteria	
Grade A	Grade C
<p>Is a seamless, coherent piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Demonstrates clear, explicit links between the three stages of the investigation and is produced to a high standard</li> <li>◆ Is highly focused throughout on the objectives set for the investigation</li> <li>◆ Carefully selects information from a variety of sources to provide strong and valid reasons to support points made</li> <li>◆ Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of concepts, theories and issues relating to the retail industry and uses them accurately and relevantly to support points made</li> <li>◆ Is clear and well-structured throughout and language used is of a high standard in terms of level, accuracy and specialist content</li> <li>◆ Effectively consolidates and, where appropriate, integrates required knowledge and understanding from across units</li> <li>◆ Offers conclusions and recommendations which are coherently related to the objectives of the investigation</li> <li>◆ Includes a careful and considered reflection on the investigation which provides a strong basis for judging its success and making realistic recommendations for the future</li> <li>◆ Demonstrates the learner's ability to work autonomously</li> </ul>	<p>Is a co-ordinated piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Contains sufficient evidence to meet the minimum requirements of each of the three stages of the investigation and is produced to an adequate standard</li> <li>◆ Meets the objectives of the investigation but not in a consistent or fully comprehensive manner</li> <li>◆ Uses information from a limited range of sources, in a manner which does not always support the rationale</li> <li>◆ Makes limited reference to concepts, theories or issues relating to the retail industry and may not always use them accurately or relevantly to support points made</li> <li>◆ Is satisfactorily structured and uses language which is adequate in terms of level, accuracy and specialist content</li> <li>◆ Consolidates and integrates knowledge and skills, where appropriate, but this may lack some continuity and consistency</li> <li>◆ Offers conclusions and recommendations, related to the objectives of the investigation, which are limited, weak, or lack coherence</li> <li>◆ Includes limited reflection on the investigation which fails to provide a comprehensive basis for judging its success or making realistic recommendations for the future</li> <li>◆ Demonstrates independent learning with minimum support and revision during project</li> </ul>

The marks allocated to each stage will then be aggregated to arrive at an overall mark for the project. Assessors will then assign an overall grade to the learner for this graded unit based on the following grade boundaries.

- A = 70%–100%
- B = 60%–69%
- C = 50%–59%

These grade boundaries are fixed and should **not** be amended.



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If a learner does not achieve a pass or wishes to upgrade, then this must be done using a substantially different project, ie all stages are undertaken using a new project (case study, investigation or practical assignment). In these circumstances, the highest grade achieved should be awarded.

More information on reasonable assistance, remediation and re-assessment may be found in the SQA publication *Guidance for the Implementation of graded units in Higher National Certificates and Diplomas* (SQA, 2008, Publication code: CA4405).

### Unit specification: support notes

**Graded unit title:** Retail Management: Graded Unit 2 (SCQF level 8)

### Guidance on approaches to delivery and assessment of this graded unit

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.

This unit is designed to assess the learner's ability to integrate knowledge and skills, and display organisational and investigative skills to a chosen business issue relating to a business or organisation in the retail industry.

The unit should develop skills and competences that meet the criteria of SCQF level 8 — the ability to analyse, present and evaluate arguments, information and ideas that are routine to the subjects' disciplines. Additionally, learners should be able to develop competencies in a range of specialised areas of their choice in line with preferred career options or courses of further study.

Learners should select a topic which must be discussed and agreed with the lecturer. Where a topic relates to more than one unit, learners may choose a combination of mandatory units, provided all the units are part of the programme of study followed by the learner for this group award. When choosing a topic, learners should make sure that it will be a sufficient basis for an investigation which meets all the requirements of this graded unit.

The unit is designed to build upon previously acquired transferable skills which can be best developed through application to an issue identified by the learner in relation to an organisation or the retail industry. This approach will facilitate the contextualisation of the knowledge and skills from the group award and promote the importance and understanding of integration of the knowledge of business topics and concepts and the development of transferable skills including planning, organisation, time management, research techniques, problem solving, evaluation and presentation. Using this approach learners will be able to develop their knowledge and understanding of the key competencies and will be provided the opportunity to apply innovative and creative approaches to issues pertinent to their chosen topic.

The investigation requires the learner to demonstrate required knowledge and skills through the assessment of a challenging business or topical issue. The issue should test the breadth and application of the learner's knowledge and understanding of the specific aspects of the mandatory section of the group award. This should enable the learner to demonstrate their depth of knowledge in specific areas of these units and provide innovative and creative problem solving approaches and evaluation of a challenging issue in a business environment.

The unit should be delivered and assessed over an extended period of the SQA Advanced Diploma programme to enable learners to have completed or be in the process of completing the mandatory units prior to embarking upon the graded unit. It is strongly recommended that a centre utilises the appropriate SQA exemplar material and support documentation that exist to support the validity and reliability of assessment evidence. Staff

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delivering and assessing this unit would be advised to discuss examples of outcomes from within the mandatory units of the award that would make suitable topics for an investigation of this nature. It is expected this will facilitate the negotiation of a suitable topic for the project between the lecturer and learner.

It is best practice for a centre to ensure that all the staff involved in the delivery of the course programme and in particular, those involved in the delivery of the mandatory units of recommended prior knowledge and skills are made aware of the requirements of the graded unit. Whilst there is no one best way to deliver and assess the unit, many instances of good practice have been noted where subject experts discuss possible options for investigation with the learners. Centres should be aware that the scheduling of mandatory units within the course programme will have an impact upon the choice of suitable topics and the development of chosen topics. Learners are likely to have studied, or be in the process of studying topics on which they base their investigation.

It is recommended that learners discuss the feasibility of possible investigations with their tutor and negotiate appropriate resources, including time that should be utilised and managed throughout the course of the investigation. Learners must keep a record of their experience through the planning and development stages to facilitate and support the evaluation process. This could be done through some form of reflective log, diary or blog. The tutor should provide a mentor/support role and facilitate a learner-led investigation. The importance of planning, SMART objectives, time management, organisation and evaluation should be discussed and reinforced on a regular basis by the tutor. In addition, examples of good practice in terms of assessment verification have existed where second marking or cross marking has taken place to satisfy the requirements of internal and external quality processes.

Centres may wish to use previous investigation topics as a useful stimulus for learners to assist them in their choice of issue. This can in turn provide an opportunity for delivery staff to provide reflective feedback and promote constructive discussion. In general terms, the more specific the topic chosen for the investigation, the more manageable the investigation shall be for learners and staff alike. This will facilitate the formulation of SMART objectives which in turn provide focus and structure for the learner investigation.

Learners should be encouraged to research a range of primary and secondary sources of information to ensure appropriate data is available for the investigation. The methodologies chosen for investigation should be clearly explained and justified by the learner. The sources of information and research methodologies should be consistent with objectives identified by the learner and should enable them to identify source material as the basis of explanation, evaluation, analysis and recommendation.

### Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

The following gives further information on the Core Skills to which the unit may contribute to developing:

**Communication at SCQF level 6** — The reading and understanding of complex information relating to the vocational area, with analysis and evaluation of key concepts and terminology. Producing a well-structured document containing complex information. Discussing a complex issue through an interview and during discussions and negotiation with the tutor.

**ICT at SCQF level 5** — Presentation of information using appropriate software packages. Accessing and communicating information using ICT facilities.

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**Numeracy at SCQF level 5** — Statistical analysis of organisational and/or market data. Production, analysis and presentation of graphical data.

**Working with Others at SCQF level 6** — Review of involvement in the presentation of evidence of the evaluation stage. Negotiation with lecturing staff to agree suitable topics. Organisation of and participation in presentation of evaluation stage of the investigation. Seeking support of others and providing support for others through audience interaction.

This graded 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 6

## 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

#### **Graded unit title:** Retail Management: Graded Unit 2 (SCQF level 8)

This unit will give you the opportunity to demonstrate your ability to integrate, evaluate and apply the knowledge and skills you have gained from a range of units from the SQA Advanced Diploma in Retail Management, and should therefore be completed toward the end of your course. You will be allocated a grade of A, B or C for the unit on successful completion of the project.

While there is no new content within the unit, you will however work with your lecturer in identifying a suitable topic for investigation and in developing the necessary techniques and approaches to enable you to use the knowledge and understanding you have already gained and apply it to a business issue in the retail industry.

To achieve this unit you will produce an investigative project. This will be based on an organisation or topical issue relating to the retail industry which you will identify in discussion with your tutor. The choice of an appropriate investigation and SMART objectives are vital and it is strongly recommended that tutor support and mentoring is provided to ensure a realistic and manageable issue is chosen for your investigation. You must keep a record of your experience through the planning and development stages to facilitate and support the evaluation process. This could be done through some form of reflective log, diary or blog.

The investigation is divided into three stages; Planning, Development and Evaluation. Planning involves production of an action plan and this provides the basis for the subsequent stages. The Development Stage is the output of your activities as you collect and collate data, interpret and analyse information and summarise findings and draw conclusions. For the evaluation you have to look back and comment on your approach to the project, how the planning went, how the developing went and comment on how this experience was in terms of the decisions you made, positive aspects of the process and what improvements you would make should you undertake a project again.

Remember that a grade will not be given until the final stage is complete and your work can be viewed as a whole. Grades are subject to external verification by SQA.

You will be given the opportunity during tutorials and/or progress interviews to discuss your progress. Feedback will be ongoing as part of the process and you will be encouraged to use a log book which you should maintain throughout your project and take to tutorials and/or progress interviews. This is your opportunity to discuss the work you have undertaken and agree next steps.

In undertaking this project you are required to display your ability to work independently to meet the standards required. At the same time, however, you will be under supervision and may need some support from your tutor. Reasonable assistance can be given, however, if you require more than what is deemed to be reasonable this will affect your grade as the degree of autonomous working is a criterion for a grade A.

Arrangements for remediation and re-assessment will be in line with your centre's policy, however, if for any reason you were to be unsuccessful in the project overall, re-assessment must be on a substantially different project. It should be noted that your centre may not be able to provide the opportunity to undertake a substantially different project within the same academic year.

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This graded 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 6