

SQA Advanced Unit specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Scottish Tourism Product: Niche Markets

Unit code: HV7D 47

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed to enable the candidate to develop knowledge of niche markets in the Scottish tourism product, and to understand the importance of effective marketing for this sector. The candidate will develop a working knowledge of Scottish niche products in both the leisure and business markets. The Unit is designed as a practical Unit involving the candidate in acquiring and applying knowledge of the Scottish tourism product in the context of special-interest products. The Unit is appropriate for candidates undertaking a relevant SQA Advanced Certificate/SQA Advanced Diploma programme and/or to support the continuing professional development of staff already working in the domestic and inbound tourism industry.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

- 1 Research the market for the Scottish tourism niche product.
- 2 Provide information on the range of visitor facilities and activities for selected Scottish niche markets.
- 3 Produce a marketing plan for a niche market product.

Credit points and level: 1 SQA Credit at SCQF level 7: (8 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.*

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, and/or SQA Advanced Units related to the Scottish Tourism Product and the Role of History, Culture and Genealogy in Scottish Tourism. Competence in communication is required. Possession of English at National 5, or an equivalent Unit in Communication is advised. Candidates will benefit from possession of National 5 History or Geography.

The candidate should already be aware of the principal features of Scotland's culture, produce and traditions and have an appreciation of other aspects of Scottish life, which contribute to its unique attraction for visitors. The candidate will acquire some knowledge of leisure and special-interest activities of particular relevance to tourism in Scotland, eg 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.

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Candidates will 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 types of special interest holidays, eg photography, archaeology. The candidate should be aware of leisure opportunities in their local area, such as theatres, cinemas, leisure centres, golf courses and other sporting locations. If candidates do not possess this level of experience, they may have difficulty in achieving the Unit. Some prior marketing knowledge would be beneficial. This may be evidenced by HP58 47 Applying Marketing Principles in Travel and Tourism.

Core Skills: There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of Problem Solving at SCQF level 5 and Using Graphical Information at SCQF level 4 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.

Assessment: While assessment will comprise materials produced by the candidate or responses to questions based on the course material, it is envisaged that observation and one-to-one interviews would add value if this subject is assessed at venues seeking VisitScotland accreditation in quality assurance.

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

Research the market for the Scottish tourism niche product

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Special-interest leisure activities in Scottish tourism
- ◆ Current trends/changes in holiday taking patterns
- ◆ Survey design and conducting a survey
- ◆ Presenting survey results
- ◆ Interpret the results making valid conclusions and recommendations based on the collected data

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ demonstrate knowledge of changing visitor trends
- ◆ outline the principal features of the market segments generating the demand for Scotland's niche markets

This should be demonstrated through candidate-designed market research that could be used as the basis of a marketing plan.

Assessment Guidelines

This Outcome will be assessed through the candidate undertaking market research to identify customer requirements and expectations, in relation to Scotland's niche markets. The research generated for this Outcome could be used in Outcome 2 and 3.

Outcome 2

Provide information on the range of visitor facilities and activities for selected Scottish niche markets

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Elements involved in the selected niche products, (locations, accommodation, catering arrangements, size and volume of the market, special provisions and considerations, facilities and services)
- ◆ How to meet and exceed customer expectations
- ◆ Potential customers for niche markets

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Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ supply information in relation to services, terminology, facilities and/or special interest activities, for a minimum of two specific niche markets in Scotland (these should be drawn from current priorities identified by VisitScotland)
- ◆ create customer profiles for the chosen niche markets

Assessment Guidelines

It is recommended that the assessment for this Outcome by structured questions designed to cover the Knowledge and Skills covered in the Outcome.

In addition, research results from Outcome 1 and secondary research may be used in creating the customer profiles.

Outcome 3

Produce a marketing plan for a niche market product

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Influences that effect planning at both macro and micro level (Political, Economic, Social and Technological (PEST) analysis)
- ◆ Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis
- ◆ Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time (SMART) business aims and objectives
- ◆ How to design a professional, competitive, sustainable niche tourism product which has the potential to exceed customer expectations
- ◆ The use of technology to communicate effectively with the customer, provide information, and improve accessibility
- ◆ How to promote the niche market product to existing and new markets, and identify what support is available nationally

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ Produce a marketing plan for a niche market product for previously identified market segment for one of the niche markets researched in Outcome 1. The plan should include:
 - An analysis of a niche market taking into account relevant PEST influences, current market conditions and trends
 - a SWOT analysis of the market for niche tourism
 - the market analysis and the SWOT will provide the information for a development of a set of SMART marketing aims/objectives
 - The development of an action plan including a promotional plan, using a variety of media technology and other opportunities, eg a specialist exhibition focussing on meeting/exceeding customer expectations

Assessment Guidelines

Candidates should be instructed to complete a marketing plan for one of the niche markets researched in Outcome 1.

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Administrative Information

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| Unit code: | HV7D 47 |
| Unit title: | Scottish Tourism Product: Niche Markets |
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History of changes:

| Version | Description of change | Date |
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Source: SQA

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

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SQA Advanced Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Scottish Tourism Product: Niche Markets

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 40 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's niche markets. The context should be rooted in the day-to-day operations of tourism businesses. The emphasis throughout should be on the practical application of knowledge of the niche tourism product and on developing niche tourism as a market orientated business.

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 content of the Unit should raise an awareness of the importance of technology in this sector. The candidate should understand that direct communication between business and the customer via technology means that more than ever, businesses must be effective and responsive.

Outcome 1

Thinking about a business from the consumer perspective

Who are they? What are they looking for? Planning should evolve in line with consumer needs and aspirations to ensure staying one step ahead of the competition. Maintaining a continual awareness of market trends is being prepared to adapt and respond accordingly to ensure a sustainable product.

Actively seeking customer feedback

Where customers come from, how they found out about the business and why it appealed to them. Using actual customer details as the basis for a mailing list to use when marketing. Finding out from actual customers what would make time in/at an attraction really special, and introducing changes in line with feedback to ensure repeat customers and word-of-mouth recommendation.

The candidate should design research materials that enable him/her to monitor performance in Scotland's niche tourism sector, identify trends in the market; and find explanations for the changes. Trends could include the growth in short-breaks, seasonality and the opportunities for off-season growth, and business tourism. Changing visitor trends might include markets for eco-tourism and healthy pursuits, activity and sports holidays, and rural tourism. The research should be effective in identifying major technological changes impacting the market; these might include e-commerce, and e-bookings.

Outcome 2

The candidate should provide accurate information on a range of visitor facilities for the Scottish niche markets studied. Candidates must demonstrate knowledge, and be aware that the ability to meet and exceed customer expectations is key to business success.

In 2007 VisitScotland identified the following product areas as the focus for marketing and product development: activities — walking, cycling, golf, water-sports; all types of touring, wildlife, nature;

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business tourism — conferences, meetings, incentives, exhibitions; culture and heritage tourism, including city breaks, festivals, the arts, ancestral tourism, and including an extensive and varied programme of events. Assessment for this specification will require specialist knowledge of niche products in any two of the above categories.

The ability to identify the visitor profile the niche business has the potential to attract, meet their needs and even exceed their expectations. To demonstrate an ability to apply his/her knowledge by creating customer profiles for the chosen niche markets, research results from Outcome 1, and secondary research should be used to create the customer profiles. The candidate should be able to identify secondary research through websites such as www.scotexchange.net. An example of a simple customer profile for niche market products might be eg car owners, with the free time to be able to take several short breaks throughout the working year, and with no children.

Outcome 3

Given that Scotland's niche markets form only a small proportion of the Scottish tourism industry, the production of a Marketing Plan will give the candidates who may already be employed in the industry, the opportunity to gain an insight into marketing and business planning that might not otherwise be available.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

Study and assessment could be through the use of printed materials or delivered online.

The Unit is intended to be essentially practical and will involve the candidate acquiring and applying knowledge of the niche tourism product through a variety of learning methods.

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 would be invaluable.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There may be opportunities to gather evidence towards the Core Skills of problem solving at SCQF level 5 and using graphical information at SCQF level 4 although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

Open learning

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 observation and 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: Scottish Tourism Product: Niche Markets

Practitioners have always identified good product knowledge as an essential requirement for candidates seeking employment in Scottish tourism. This Unit is designed to provide a knowledge of the niche markets of Scottish tourism product currently considered a priority by VisitScotland. By the end of it you should be able to provide information in response to typical enquiries generated by visitors and travel organisers, and have an understanding of the industry and its future development.

There are three Outcomes in the Unit. In the first Outcome you will, through research, develop a working knowledge of the current characteristics of Scottish tourism's niche markets. Outcome 2 builds an awareness of the special interest activities available to visitors in Scotland, linked to Scotland's history and culture and about opportunities in Scotland for leisure pursuits and special interest activities. In Outcome 3 you learn how to effectively plan the development and delivery of niche products and services to potential consumers.