

SQA Advanced Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Scottish Natural Heritage Tourism

Unit code: HV7E 47

Unit purpose: This Unit will help the candidate to understand the value of natural heritage tourism in Scotland. It examines the importance of natural heritage tourism in terms of the socio-economic, visitor expectations and the natural heritage itself. The candidate will also plan a touring programme to include an itinerary of natural heritage experiences.

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

- 1 Describe the importance and impact of natural heritage tourism in Scotland.
- 2 Prepare an itinerary for a touring programme which offers natural heritage tourism experiences.

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: Prior knowledge and skills are not essential for this Unit. However it would be beneficial if candidates had previous experience of Scotland's natural heritage. This could be gained in a variety of ways — vocational employment, voluntary work, or from individual NQ Units such as D837 11 *Biodiversity in Scotland* or D886 12 *Principles of Conservation* or equivalent. Experience of undertaking secondary research would also be useful.

Core Skills: There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of *Communication* at SCQF level 6 and *Problem Solving, IT* and *Working with Others* to SCQF level 5 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. It may also be delivered as a free standing Unit to support Continuing Professional Development.

Assessment: This Unit could be assessed by two separate assessments. Outcome 1 could be assessed by the production of a portfolio of evidence accompanied by a submission. Outcome 2 could be assessed by a submission which must detail a week long itinerary which includes nature heritage tourism experiences.

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

Describe the importance and impact of natural heritage tourism in Scotland

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Secondary research techniques
- ◆ Socio-economic value
- ◆ Range of operators
- ◆ Key species at national level
- ◆ Seasonal range of opportunities
- ◆ Geographical spread of opportunities
- ◆ Educational potential
- ◆ Environmental impact
- ◆ Visitor expectations

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ describe the current research relating to the socio-economic value of natural heritage tourism particularly in terms of total economic value, number of jobs provided and growth in the number and range of operators
- ◆ describe current published research regarding key species people wish to see on a trip to Scotland. Give a brief description of five of these key species attractions
- ◆ describe how five key species affect the seasonality and geographic spread of opportunities for nature tourism
- ◆ summarise the educational potential of natural heritage tourism in terms of promoting a positive appreciation of the natural heritage and our impact on it
- ◆ summarise two positive and two negative environmental impacts at both local and national level of those who participate in natural heritage tourism
- ◆ describe current research about visitor expectations in relation to the following:
 - quality of guiding
 - their overall experience
 - transport arrangements
 - accommodation
 - domestic arrangements

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This is an open-book assessment.

Assessment Guidelines

This Outcome could be assessed through the production of an evidence portfolio and accompanying submission. The portfolio material could illustrate the points contained in the submission. A submission of the equivalent of 1,500 words to exclude references and appendices should be sufficient to generate all evidence.

Outcome 2

Prepare an itinerary for a touring programme which offers natural heritage tourism experiences

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Key locations
- ◆ Key species
- ◆ Key geomorphological features of sites
- ◆ Itinerary

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that, for a location within two hours surface travel of a chosen base which offers natural heritage tourism opportunities, they can:

- ◆ evaluate the key national and local species present within this location
- ◆ evaluate the key supporting geomorphological features of interest present at three sites within this location
- ◆ prepare an itinerary for a natural heritage tourism programme to include:
 - a rationale for selection of locale
 - a six-day itinerary
 - the main details of the travel, hospitality, accommodation, risk management logistics
 - species, sites and additional geomorphological features of interest which will be encountered during the programme
 - an introductory statement which sets the scene
 - details of **three** of the natural heritage tourism experiences for the week

The programme detail must run over six full days of guided activity with the first Saturday ‘meet and greet’ and the second Saturday turnover day, leaving six days guiding Sunday to Friday.

This is an open-book assessment.

Assessment Guidelines

This Outcome could be assessed through the production of either a submission or an illustrated presentation containing the necessary evidence. A client brief could be used to set the scenario for the production of evidence. Any such case study must of course contain the necessary information to allow the candidate to generate all essential evidence

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Administrative Information

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| Unit code: | HV7E 47 |
| Unit title: | Scottish Natural Heritage Tourism |
| Superclass category: | NK |
| Original date of publication: | November 2017 |
| Version: | 01 |

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](#).

SQA Advanced Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Scottish Natural Heritage Tourism

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

Scotland has an expanding portfolio of natural heritage tourism opportunities and providers. Businesses are spread from Shetland in the north to Dumfries and Galloway in the south and range from large organisations with multi million pound turnovers to single person operations.

Natural heritage tourists spend more per head than 'standard' tourists and tend to stay longer and return more frequently.

Given this rising popularity, its socio-economic value, its 12 month season and the potential to positively influence attitudes and behaviours to the benefit of the natural heritage, it is a pastime of some importance.

Outcome 1 provides an opportunity to explore aspects of natural heritage tourism.

Socio-economic factors such as employment, income generation, year round business opportunity and rate of growth should be explored. The expanding nature of provision needs highlighted along with the seasonal opportunities – winter wildfowl, spring migration, summer invertebrates and cetaceans and the autumn rut of red deer, all set within beautiful landscape.

The resource base itself could be explored. What are the national key species and locations which attract people to Scotland? The 'top 10' wildlife attractions have been identified in some research along with the geographic spread of current operators — this should demonstrate the countrywide nature of opportunity. Although there is a 'top 10' there will inevitably be other more local attractions which will be equally sought after. For example plants don't feature in the 'top 10' at all yet the Scottish primrose is a significant draw for visitors to Orkney, Sutherland and Caithness. As well as the species themselves, the importance of the geomorphological setting is also worth exploring — a golden eagle is spectacular, but then so are the Cairngorms it flies over.

The environmental impact of natural heritage tourism activities and the potential for education could be explored. Positive aspects include income generation for conservation projects, awareness raising, influencing attitudes and behaviours and perhaps mobilisation of direct conservation orientated action. However, negative potential effects could be explored both in a local context and at a wider level — species disturbance, fuel use, consumables etc.

Visitor expectations are also important. That visitors expect a superb standard of guiding, in terms of natural heritage knowledge, almost goes without saying. However recent research has also identified other important considerations — quality of accommodation, standard of cuisine, use of locally sourced produce, vehicles used, landscape information, transport arrangements and domestic arrangements.

Outcome 2 allows the exploration of local natural heritage based tourism opportunities and is concerned with improving the candidate's appreciation of them. A brief could be used to communicate the details of what is expected. A reasonable definition of a location would be sites accessible within two hours surface travel time of a base of operations.

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After selecting an appropriate and specific time of year — first week in May or such — the candidate should identify the species which are most likely to be of interest. Note that the official national ‘top 10’ may not all be accessible and is very likely to be augmented by local specialities. Once the species are identified, or more likely as part of the same process, the best sites to encounter them need to be defined.

Additional geomorphological based attractions which will be encountered could also be noted — glacial features, remnant volcanic features, coastal plains, rock formations, fault lines etc. These represent the setting the wildlife watching takes place in and influence the species and habitats present, and as such are important.

Candidates’ touring programme details are to run over six full days of guided activity (most outfits run Saturday to Saturday with the first Saturday ‘meet and greet’ and the second Saturday turnover day, leaving six days guiding Sunday to Friday). The information produced could detail any special arrangements such as housekeeping issues, travel requirements, hospitality arrangements, emergency contact arrangements and a day by day itinerary containing information about the day’s experiences in terms of what species and habitats are expected to be encountered, meal breaks, any special equipment required or conditions which may be encountered and any other information deemed pertinent.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

Timing of the delivery of the Unit is a matter of centre choice and may be tied to a particular areas peak natural heritage activity, although in most areas there should be something of value throughout the year.

A wide range of delivery methods are appropriate. These could include lectures, classroom discussion, site visits to local areas offering good wildlife watching opportunities, participation in a professionally guided activity, candidate presentations on set topics etc. Experience of a day’s professional wildlife guiding is particularly recommended.

Throughout the Unit use should be made of websites, industry reports, research findings, conference proceedings, press cuttings and any other relevant material. Input from natural heritage tourism providers would be particularly useful.

At the time of writing the Unit the following internet sites proved useful reference points. Obviously websites change — they expand, contract and indeed vanish — but these represent a starting point:

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| www.wild-scotland.co.uk | Scotland’s Wildlife Tourism Association |
| www.greentourism.org.uk | The Tourism and Environment Forum |
| www.speysidewildlife.co.uk | } selection of tourism providers showing examples of provision |
| www.shetlandwildlife.co.uk | |
| www.porpoise-gairloch.co.uk | |
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Most websites will provide links to other useful sites. Some provide access to very useful documents — for example The Tourism and Environment Forum website has a number of useful reports available as downloads including a ‘Review of Wildlife Tourism in Scotland’ from 2002.

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The ‘top 10’ national wildlife attractions (geomorphological attractions have not been ranked, but could include such well known areas as the Cairngorms, Speyside, Wester Ross, the Hebrides) according to findings published in the Tourism and Environment Forum are as follows:

- 1 sea birds
- 2 cetaceans — whales and dolphins
- 3 otters
- 4 seals
- 5 raptors — golden eagle, sea eagle, hen harrier and osprey feature high up
- 6 deer — red and roe in particular
- 7 wildfowl — ducks and geese
- 8 woodland animals — pine marten and badger in particular
- 9 woodland birds — capercaillie, Scottish Crossbill and crested tit in particular
- 10 waders — dotterels in their breeding ground would be high on the list

It must be remembered that there are many other significant attractions out with this ‘top 10’ — plants, butterflies and dragonflies in particular. Local specialities should not be forgotten — some ideas of these could be obtained from consulting Local Biodiversity Action Plans.

In terms of assessment the production of a portfolio of material for Outcome 1 will encourage the candidate to explore a range of material sources and to relate what they find to what they are required to evidence. This may encourage greater critical appraisal of material, as would a requirement to summarise the findings displayed in the portfolio material in an accompanying submission.

Outcome 2 could be assessed by a submission or an illustrated presentation. If an illustrated presentation was done to their fellow classmates it would serve to promote good discussion and afford valuable practice in key vocational skills of talking to groups and preparing illustrated talks. It would be good practice to distribute copies of the itinerary for any group presentation.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

Although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills within this Unit there may be opportunities to develop them in a number of areas. Much material for the portfolio required for Outcome 1 could involve the use of IT in finding, reviewing and selecting material from the internet. Should the candidate word-process their answer this could also enhance IT skills to SCQF level 5. The presentation of the assessment for Outcomes 1 and 2 could enhance the Core Skill of *Communication* to SCQF level 6, the written component if a report is produced or orally through the choice of a presentation as part of the Unit delivery. *Problem Solving* to SCQF level 5 may be developed in relation to the selection and discarding of material relevant to the Evidence Requirements and also in balancing a number of factors in meeting any deadlines set.

Candidates could be encouraged to discuss their work with each other and the tutor and this, along with any group work set during Unit delivery and may develop the Core Skill of *Working with Others* to SCQF level 5.

Open learning

This Unit does offer the potential for Open Learning provision in particular Outcome 1. The candidate may benefit from involvement and interaction through group discussion and any site visits arranged by the delivering centre for Outcome 2. Such interaction may enhance their ability to formulate the comprehensive itinerary required, and consider the type of evidence they ultimately produce for this Outcome.

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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 Natural Heritage Tourism

This Unit will explore natural heritage tourism in Scotland, with an emphasis placed on wildlife and contributory geomorphological features.

You will firstly explore the resource and its importance at the national scale before devising a week-long itinerary for a locally based natural heritage holiday.

There are two Outcomes in the Unit.

In Outcome 1 you will look at the socio-economic value of natural heritage tourism, as outlined in the most recent research findings. Areas you will look at will include the total economic value of natural heritage tourism, the number of jobs it provides and the growth in the number and distribution of operators. You need to identify the 'top ten' key species, according to published research people wish to see on a trip to Scotland. Once you have identified them you will explore how these species affect the seasonality and geographic spread of opportunities — in other words where do you find them in Scotland, and when? The educational potential of natural heritage tourism, in terms of both promoting a positive appreciation of the natural heritage and highlighting our impact on it, will also be covered. Going to view wildlife will inevitably have environmental impacts. These will occur at local and national levels and these will be looked at. For example disturbance of species through viewing and the use of fossil fuels in transportation. Finally visitor expectations in relation to the quality of guiding and their overall experience, including transport, accommodation and domestic arrangements will be looked at — how do you deliver what the customer wants?

Outcome 1 will probably be assessed by the production of a portfolio of evidence and accompanying concise report which references the portfolio material against the Evidence Requirements.

In Outcome 2, for a location (within two hours' surface travel of a specified base) you need to do the following: identify a specific time of year, identify the key species in the area which are present at this time of year and where they are likely to be encountered and the other main attractions present, for example major landforms etc and prepare a submission which consists of details of a touring programme for a week and includes an itinerary for a six full days guided natural heritage tourism experience. You need to make it sound interesting and exciting to a potential customer and make it clear what they can expect by way of wildlife and other attractions.

This Outcome is most likely assessed by either a submission or an illustrated talk/presentation.

You will be assisted in this through a mix of class discussion, individual research and field trips to local sites affording good wildlife watching opportunities.

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of *Communication* at SCQF level 6 and *Problem Solving, IT* and *Working with Others* to SCQF level 5 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.