

## **SQA Advanced Unit specification: general information for centres**

This Graded Unit has been validated as part of the SQA Advanced Diploma in Travel and Tourism. Centres are required to develop the assessment instrument in accordance with this validated specification. Centres wishing to use another type of Graded Unit or assessment instrument are required to submit proposals detailing the justification for change for validation.

**Graded Unit title:** Travel and Tourism: Graded Unit 2

**Graded Unit code:** HV9L 48

**Type of Graded Unit:** Project

**Assessment Instrument:** Investigation

**Publication date:** November 2017

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 01

### **Unit purpose**

This Graded Unit is designed to provide evidence that the candidate has achieved the following principal aims of the SQA Advanced Diploma in Travel and Tourism:

- ◆ Provide a basis for future career and personal development.  
Develop organisational, research and investigative skills. The SQA Advanced Diploma will further develop skills in planning and organising and require candidates to investigate more in depth problems and issues.
- ◆ Develop ability to manage and absorb large amounts of information.
- ◆ Develop transferable skills.
- ◆ Develop ability to be flexible and work cooperatively with others.
- ◆ Develop the ability to take responsibility for one's own learning.
- ◆ Develop a more in depth understanding and application of marketing.
- ◆ Provide scope for an in depth look at the key issue of sustainability.
- ◆ Develop managerial competences in the meaningful travel and tourism context of tour operations and selected specialist areas, eg visitor attractions, airline and airport operations, business or retail travel.

### Recommended prior knowledge and skills

It is recommended that the candidate should have completed or be in the process of completing the following Units relating to the above specific aims prior to undertaking this Graded Unit:

<i>Creating a Culture of Customer Care</i>	(HP73 47)
<i>Applying Marketing Principles to Travel and Tourism</i>	(HP58 47)
<i>Tour Operations</i>	(HP50 48)
<i>Influences on the Travel and Tourism Industry</i>	(HV6Y 48)
<i>Marketing Planning in Travel and Tourism</i>	(HP56 48)
<i>Planning and Sustainable Development in Tourism</i>	(HP55 48)
<i>Providing Information on the Scottish Tourism Product</i>	(HT2E 47)
<b>or</b>	
<i>International Tourist Destinations</i>	(HP57 46)

Additionally, depending on the topic chosen, the candidate should also have completed or be in the process of completing relevant practical Units, eg retail travel practice, visitor attraction operations, air travel or business travel Units.

### Credit points and level

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

*\*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.*

### Core Skills

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this Unit. There are opportunities to develop aspects of the Core Skills in *Communication* and *Working with Others* at SCQF level 6 and *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)*, *Numeracy* at level 5 in this Unit, and these are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit specification.

### Assessment

This Graded Unit will be assessed by the use of an Investigation. The developed Investigation should provide the candidate with the opportunity to produce evidence that demonstrates she/he has met the aims of the Graded Unit that it covers.

The Assessment Exemplar 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 exemplar to ensure a comparable standard. Assessment Exemplars are available on SQA's secure website.

## **SQA Advanced Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates**

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### **Conditions of assessment**

The candidate should be given a date for completion of the Investigation. However, the instructions for the assessment task should be distributed to allow the candidate sufficient time to assimilate the details and carry out the assessment task. During the time between the distribution of the assessment task instructions and the completion date, assessors may answer questions, provide clarification, guidance and reasonable assistance. The assessment task should be marked as soon as possible after the completion date. The final grading given should reflect the quality of the candidate'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 candidate 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. In this case, a candidate's grade will be based on the achievement in the re-assessment, if this results in a higher grade.

At this level, candidates should work independently. It is up to Centres to take responsible steps to ensure that the project is the work of candidates. For example, Centres may wish to informally question candidates 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 candidate does not receive undue assistance.

To ensure authentication of work it is advisable for candidates to complete a log or diary recording progress and tasks completed. There should be regular meetings between the tutor and candidate to review progress, these meetings should be recorded. The final evaluation must be completed under open-book test conditions.

### **Instructions for designing the assessment task**

The assessment task is a project. The project undertaken by the candidate must be a complex task which involves:

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

The assessment task must require the candidate 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

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The project will be based on the investigation of a business issue relating to an organisation or a topical issue in the Travel and Tourism sector of the economy. 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 candidate to demonstrate creative solutions in response to the changing needs of the organisation or the Travel and Tourism Industry. Customer care, marketing, management would all be acceptable topics for this depth of investigation.

### Guidance on grading candidates

Candidates who meet the minimum Evidence Requirements will have their achievement graded as C — competent, or A — highly competent or B somewhere between A and C. Here are some examples of general grade-related criteria for project based Graded Units.

Grade-related criteria	
Grade A	Grade C
<p>Is a seamless, coherent piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Has sufficient evidence for all three essential stages of the project, is produced to a high standard, and is quite clearly inter-related</li> <li>◆ Is highly focused on the objectives of the investigation</li> <li>◆ Carefully selects information from a variety of sources to provide strong valid reasons to support points made</li> <li>◆ Demonstrates understanding of the concepts and issues relating to the travel and tourism industry and uses these 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 technical content</li> <li>◆ Effectively consolidates and integrates required knowledge and skills</li> <li>◆ Critically evaluates how the use of concepts, information, issues and research have been used to inform and influence own work</li> <li>◆ Effectively justifies each stage of the project and decisions made in a logical and coherent manner</li> <li>◆ Includes careful and considered reflection on the investigation which is coherently related to the original aims</li> <li>◆ Demonstrates the candidate's ability to work autonomously with minimum support or revision</li> </ul>	<p>Is a co-ordinated piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Has sufficient evidence of the three essential phases of the project, 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 which does not always support reasons given</li> <li>◆ Makes limited reference to concepts and issues relating to the travel and tourism industry and may not always use these accurately or be fully relevant</li> <li>◆ Is satisfactorily structured and language used is adequate in terms of level, accuracy and technical content</li> <li>◆ Consolidates and integrates knowledge and skills but this may lack some continuity and consistency</li> <li>◆ Demonstrates an understanding of how the concepts, information, issues and research have been used to inform and influence own work</li> <li>◆ Adequately justifies each stage of the project and decisions made</li> <li>◆ Has some limited reflection which does not provide a comprehensive basis for realistic recommendations</li> <li>◆ Has required additional support and revision during the project</li> </ul>





### Support notes

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 candidate'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 travel and tourism sector.

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, candidates 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.

Candidates should select a topic which must be discussed and agreed with the lecturer. Where a topic relates to more than one Unit, candidates may choose a combination of mandatory Units, provided all the Units are part of the programme of study followed by the candidate for this Group Award. When choosing a topic, candidates 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 candidate in relation to a organisation or the travel and tourism sector. 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 candidates 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 candidate 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 candidate's knowledge and understanding of the specific aspects of the mandatory section of the Group Award. This should enable the candidate 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 candidates 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 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 candidate.

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

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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 candidates. 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. Candidates are likely to have studied, or be in the processes of studying topics on which they base their investigation.

It is recommended that candidates 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. Candidates 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 candidate-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 candidates 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 candidates and staff alike. This will facilitate the formulation of SMART objectives which in turn provide focus and structure for the candidate investigation.

Candidates 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 candidate. The sources of information and research methodologies should be consistent with objectives identified by the candidate and should enable them to identify source material as the basis of explanation, evaluation, analysis and recommendation.

### Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There are no Core Skills embedded in this Unit, however it does offer opportunities for candidates to gather evidence which could help them demonstrate achievement for all Core Skills. The following gives further information on the Core Skills to which the Unit may contribute and on the opportunities which the Unit provides for Core Skills development.

**Problem Solving at SCQF level 6** — Investigation and analysis of a complex problem. Planning, organising and carrying out a suggested approach using identified objectives and resources.

Analysing the problem solving activity and assessing progress, implementing remedial action where appropriate and evaluating process.

**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.



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

**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.

For further information regarding the implementation of Graded Units please refer to the SQA publication *Guidance for the Implementation of Graded Units in Higher National Certificates and Higher National Diplomas*. Publication Date: April 2008. Publication code CA4405.

## 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).

## History of changes to Unit

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: Travel and Tourism: Graded Unit 2

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 Travel and Tourism, 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 travel and tourism sector of the economy.

To achieve this Unit you will produce an investigative project. This will be based on an organisation or topical issue relating to the travel and tourism sector which will you 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 you 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.