

-SQA- SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

HIGHER NATIONAL UNIT SPECIFICATION

GENERAL INFORMATION

-Unit Number- **6451325**
-Superclass- **EA**
-Title- **EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS**

-DESCRIPTION-

GENERAL COMPETENCE FOR UNIT: Analysing the main features of the European Union and the functioning of, and interaction between, the main European Union Institutions.

OUTCOMES

1. analyse the nature of the European Union;
2. analyse the functions of the main European institutions;
3. analyse the mechanisms by which the European institutions formally and informally interact.

CREDIT VALUE: 2 HN Credits

ACCESS STATEMENT: Access to this unit is at the discretion of the centre. However it would be beneficial if candidates had competence in communication. This may be evidenced by possession of one of the following: National Certificate Module 7110055 Communication 4; Higher National Unit 7400350 Communication: Selecting and Presenting Complex Information; SCE Higher Grade English or equivalent.

For further information contact: Committee and Administration Unit, SQA, Hanover House, 24 Douglas Street, Glasgow G2 7NQ.

Additional copies of this unit may be purchased from SQA (Sales and Despatch section). At the time of publication, the cost is £1.50 (minimum order (£5.00)).

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STATEMENT OF STANDARDS

UNIT NUMBER: 6451325

UNIT TITLE: EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS

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

OUTCOME

1. ANALYSE THE NATURE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) Analysis of developments leading to the establishment of the European Community is accurate with respect to the economic, political and social context in Europe after 1945.
- (b) Analysis of the development of the European Community since 1957 is accurate with respect to economic, social and political developments in Europe after 1957.
- (c) Interpretation of the varying concepts of sovereignty as applied to the European Union is comprehensive in terms of current political theory and practice.
- (d) Evaluation of current legal instruments of the European Union is accurate in terms of the essential distinctive features of each.

RANGE STATEMENT

Post 1945: wartime cooperation; post-war consensus; threat of communism; rise of USA; historic consideration; role of Monnet/Schumann; UK position.

Post 1957: growing membership; Single European Act; Maastricht; changing socio/economic climate; political factors significance of opt-outs and protocols.

Sovereignty Issues: Federal and Conferral views; pooled sovereignty; reduction in role of nation state.

Legal instruments: treaties; directives; regulations; decisions; international agreements; general principles of European law, distinction between primary and secondary legislation.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Written and/or oral evidence to cover all performance criteria and the full range.

OUTCOME

2. ANALYSE THE FUNCTIONS OF THE MAIN EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) Evaluation of the main roles of the European Commission is accurate in terms of current organisational arrangements.
- (b) Evaluation of the main roles of the key advisory bodies is accurate in terms of current organisational arrangements.
- (c) Evaluation of the main roles of the constituent elements of the Council of Ministers is accurate in terms of current organisational arrangements.
- (d) Evaluation of the key political and organisational roles of the European Council is accurate in terms of current organisational arrangements.
- (e) Evaluation of the jurisdiction and powers of the European Court of Justice is accurate in terms of current European law.

RANGE STATEMENT

European Commission: Role of Commissioners; Directorate Generals; legislative; administrative; watchdog and policy development roles; nature of the organisation; open structure.

Advisory Bodies: European Parliament; Committee of the Regions; Economic and Social Committee.

Council of ministers: Working Groups; Coreper (1 and 2); councils.

European Council: nature; role; organisation.

European Court: preliminary rulings; enforcement actions; effect of the primacy of European laws.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Written and/or oral evidence to cover all performance criteria and the full range.

OUTCOME

3. ANALYSE THE MECHANISMS BY WHICH THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS FORMALLY AND INFORMALLY INTERACT

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- (a) Assessment of the roles of the key institutions in the secondary legislative process is accurate in terms of currently accepted understanding.
- (b) Assessment of the impact of European Law in the United Kingdom is comprehensive in terms of the current legal situation.
- (c) Outline of the scrutiny and enforcement role of European Institutions is accurate in terms of the current effectiveness of the processes.
- (d) Assessment of the role of pressure groups in interacting with European Institutions is realistic in terms of current experience.
- (e) Assessment of the crucial role of the European council in key political decisions is comprehensive in terms of current accepted practice.

RANGE STATEMENT

Secondary Legislation Process: contrast of practice with formal powers; the consensus model; consultation; co-operation; co-decision; assent procedures.

European Law in the UK: primacy; direct applicability; direct effect; British case law on primacy.

Scrutiny Role: European Parliament; effectiveness with other institutions; Court of Auditors.

Pressure group: nature; type; mode of operation.

European Council: developmental role; use of the Presidency.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Written and/or oral evidence to cover all performance criteria and the full range.

MERIT A candidate who achieves all performance criteria for all outcomes will be awarded a pass. A pass with merit may be awarded to a candidate who consistently demonstrates some or all of the following:

- (a) evidence of sustained use of current examples;
 - (b) superiority of analysis through the use of extrapolation or integration;
 - (c) the ability to produce original reasoned arguments.
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ASSESSMENT

In order to achieve this unit, candidates are required to present sufficient evidence that they have met all the performance criteria for each outcome within the range specified. Details of these requirements are given for each outcome. The assessment instruments used should follow the general guidance offered by the SQA assessment model and an integrative approach to assessment is encouraged. (See references at the end of support notes.)

Accurate records should be made of the assessment instruments used showing how evidence is generated for each outcome and giving marking schemes and/or checklists, etc. Records of candidates' achievements should be kept. These records will be available for external verification.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Proposals to modify outcomes, range statements or agreed assessment arrangements should be discussed in the first place with the external verifier.

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SUPPORT NOTES

UNIT NUMBER: 6451325

UNIT TITLE: EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS

SUPPORT NOTES: This part of the unit specification is offered as guidance. None of the sections of the support notes is mandatory.

NOTIONAL DESIGN LENGTH: SQA allocates a notional design length to a unit on the basis of time estimated for achievement of the stated standards by a candidate whose starting point is as described in the access statement. The notional design length for this unit is 80 hours. The use of notional design length for programme design and timetabling is advisory only.

PURPOSE This unit is designed to provide the candidate with the opportunity to develop an understanding of the unique nature of the European Union when contrasted with other international institutions. It will also ensure candidates understand the functions of the main institutions and the means by which they interact.

CONTENT/CONTEXT This unit should be seen in the context of providing a comprehensive understanding of the functioning of the major European Institutions within the European Union.

Corresponding to Outcomes:

Outcome 1

For PC (c) candidates should also be aware of the following sovereignty issues:

United States of Europe versus united market; widening/deepening concepts; subsidiarity and convergence.

Outcome 2

PC (b) should also include reference to advisory, legislative, supervisory roles, organisational arrangements, development of roles and democratic deficit when covering the main roles of advisory bodies.

PC (c) should also include reference to the legislative and political roles, administrative arrangements, the developing role of the Presidency and Commission links when covering the Council of Ministers.

PC (d) reference should also be made to the organisation of the European Council agenda setting, legislative, political aspects, setting disputes and organisation difficulties when covering the organisational role of the European Council.

Outcome 3

PC (a) reference should also be made to the recognition of the dynamic nature of relationships and links between institutions, both formal and informal, when covering the Secondary Legislative process.

PC (c) reference should also be made to the Commission/Court of Justice links on enforcement, answerability of Council of Ministers and member states when covering the scrutiny and enforcement role of European Institutions.

PC (e) the use of current political issues raised by the Presidency would be beneficial to the study of the European Council.

APPROACHES TO GENERATING EVIDENCE Wherever possible candidates should be encouraged to relate outcomes to their own experience. Approaches that would be particularly helpful are:

- case studies based on current European Issues
- a study project that followed an issue through could generate evidence contributing to the assessment of more than one outcome
- visits linked to questionnaires, interviews and talks
- debates
- group discussion.

It is important that exemplar material is current, relevant and allows candidates to relate to European decision making machinery.

Extensive use should be made of the wide range of European documentation provided by the Commission and to a lesser extent by the European Parliament.

Practical exemplars of European involvement in local government and/or with quasi-governmental bodies would be helpful.

Visiting speakers from the European Parliament and the European Commission or visits to the institutions would be extremely helpful.

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

Outcome 1

PC (a)and (b) the candidate could produce a project report that allows evidence to be generated for both performance criteria.

PC (c) and (d) the candidate could produce an extended response that links approaches to sovereignty to different legal instruments.

Outcome 2

PC (a)-(d) the candidate could produce an extended response that allows evidence to be generated for all four performance criteria.

PC (e) the candidate could produce answers to a series of short case studies that would generate evidence for this performance criterion.

Outcome 3

The candidate could be presented with an assignment brief that enables evidence to be generated for all performance criteria.

Evidence should be devised from:

verbal or written answers to questions;
observation of case studies, role plays or simulations;
informal reports, verbal or written on structured scenarios.

REFERENCES

1. Guide to unit writing.
2. For a fuller discussion on assessment issues, please refer to SQA's Guide to Assessment.
3. Information for centres on SQA's operating procedures is contained in SQA's Guide to Procedures.
4. For details of other SQA publications, please consult SQA's publications list.

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