

Higher National group award Graded Unit Specification

General Information for Centres

This group award Graded Unit has been validated as part of the HND Business. Centres are required to develop the assessment instrument in accordance with this validated specification. Centres wishing to use another type of group award Graded Unit or assessment instrument are required to submit proposals detailing the justification for change for validation.

Group award Graded Unit Title: Business: Group Award Graded Unit 2

Group award Graded Unit Code: DE3V 35

Type of group award Graded Unit: Project

Assessment Instrument: Investigation

Credit value: 1 HN Credit at SCQF level 8: (8 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 Access 1 to Doctorates.*

Purpose: This group award Graded Unit is designed to provide evidence that the candidate has achieved the following principal aims of the HND Business:

- the depth of understanding of core business issues. The HNC will provide students with a basic understanding of today's key business issues and problems. The HND will enable students to consider and revisit these issues from a managerial perspective.
- the development of organisational and investigative skills. The HND will further develop skills in planning and organising and require the students to investigate in more depth business issues and problems.
- the wider range of competencies that a student can achieve (an HNC is less comprehensive and it would be expected that employers would require to develop additional competencies in those recruited from an HNC programme or sponsored for an HNC)
- develop competencies in a range of specialised areas of their choice in line with their preferred career pattern
- provide a basis for future career and personal development
- build on previously acquired transferable skills
- adopt an innovative and creative approach to their work and be able to respond quickly to the challenges posed by changes in the business environment.

General Information for Centres (cont)

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 group award Graded Unit:

Business Accounting
Preparing Financial Forecasts

Economic Issues: An Introduction
Economics 1: Micro and Macro Theory and Application
Economics 2: The World Economy

Marketing: An Introduction

Managing People and Organisations
Business Culture and Strategy

Information and Communication Technology in Business
Using Software Application Packages
Information Technology: Applications Software 1

Communication: Analysing and Presenting Complex Communication
Behavioural Skills for Business

Business Law: An Introduction
Business Contractual Relationships

Statistics for Business

The above lists all the mandatory units for this group award. Candidates may select a topic for the investigation from those covered in any of the above units. Candidates may, if they wish, select a topic from one or more of the optional units which form part of the award specification for the HND Business.

Candidates may select a topic which is confined to one unit or one which can be related to more than one unit. Where a topic does relate to more than one unit, candidates may choose a combination of mandatory and optional 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.

Core Skills: The achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Problem Solving at SCQF level 5.

Assessment: This group award Graded Unit will be assessed by the use of an investigation. The “fleshed-out” investigation should provide the candidate with the opportunity to produce evidence that demonstrates she/he has met the aims of the group award that this group award Graded Unit covers.

General Information for Centres (cont)

An exemplar instrument of assessment and marking guidelines have been produced to provide examples of the type of evidence required to demonstrate achievement of the aims of the group award covered by this integrative assessment and to indicate the national standard of achievement required at SCQF level 8.

Administrative Information

Graded Unit Code:	DE3V 35
Graded Unit Title:	Business: Group Award Graded Unit 2
Original date of publication:	October 2003
Version:	02 (September 2006)

History of Changes:

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Amendment to Core Skills statement — Page 2	20/9/06

Source: SQA

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2003, 2006

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged.

Additional copies of this Graded Unit specification if sourced by the Scottish Qualifications Authority can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Please contact the Customer Contact Centre for further details, telephone 0845 279 1000.

Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering special alternative assessment arrangements. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Alternative Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs*, which is available on SQA's website: www.sqa.org.uk.

Higher National group award Graded Unit Specification: Instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates

Group award Graded Unit Title: Business: Group Award Graded Unit 2

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. Reassessment of this group award Graded Unit should be based on a significantly different assessment task.

At this level, candidates should work independently. It is the responsibility of the Centre to take reasonable steps to ensure that the project is the work of the candidate. 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 the supervision of others that the candidate does not receive undue assistance.

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 group award Graded Unit has been designed to cover

The project must involve the investigation of a business issue and the assessment of its implications for a business or a number of businesses. The candidate can choose the issue to be investigated but it should be one which can be directly related to topics, concepts or models studied as part of the HND Business. However, the issue investigated must relate to the way in which the business or businesses meets the needs of its customers.

The term 'business' refers to any organisation operating in the private, public or voluntary sector of the economy. 'Customers' refers to any internal or external customer of the organisation or to a number of such customers.

Higher National group award Graded Unit Specification: Instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates (cont)

It is expected that most candidates will carry out the investigation individually. However, at the discretion of the centre, candidates may carry out a group investigation. In these cases, the objectives of the investigation, and the way it is planned and conducted, should reflect the opportunities for collaborative effort. Candidates may not, however, produce joint evidence. Each candidate must provide her or his individual responses to each of the three stages of the investigation and assessors must be satisfied that the work has been completed by the individual candidate. Where candidates do work in a group, centres may wish to supplement the written evidence with oral evidence obtained from each candidate. The maximum size of any group is unlikely to exceed four. Centres may find that it less easy to identify individual contributions among groups which are larger than this. It is possible also that the results of the investigation may be prejudiced by differences of opinion and variations in effort and commitment between group members.

Higher National group award Graded Unit specification: Instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates (cont)

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. The grade related criteria to be used to judge candidate performance for this Graded Unit is specified in the following table.

Grade A	Grade C
<p>Is a seamless, coherent piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrates clear, explicit links between the three stages of the investigation • is highly focused throughout on the objectives of the investigation • carefully selects information from a variety of sources to provide strong and valid reasons to support points made • uses concepts and topics from the HND Business accurately and relevantly to support points made • is well-structured and uses language of a high standard in terms of accuracy and technical content • includes a careful and considered reflection on the investigation which informs realistic recommendations • is based on a well-chosen, apposite methodology and innovative methods of gathering information which are congruent with each other • provides well thought-out and logical justification of points made • criteria for the evaluation are coherently related to the objectives of the investigation and provide a strong basis for judging its success 	<p>Is a co-ordinated piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contains sufficient evidence to meet the minimum requirements of each of the three stages of the investigation • meets the objectives of the investigation but not in a consistent or fully comprehensive manner • uses information from a limited range of sources and in a manner which does not always support reasons given • makes limited reference to concepts and topics from HND Business which may not always be used accurately nor always be fully relevant to the points made • is satisfactorily structured and uses language which is adequate in terms of accuracy and technical content • has some limited reflection but it is not comprehensive and does not form the basis for a set of realistic recommendations for the future • use a suitable methodology and conventional methods of gathering data but does not consider carefully the relationship between them • provides some justification of points made but reasons given may be limited, weak or lack coherence • criteria for the evaluation may be limited, lack support from concepts and topics on the HND Business and be difficult to use or interpret

Higher National group award Graded Unit specification: Instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates (cont)

The project will be marked out of 100. Assessors will mark each stage of the project, taking into account of the criteria outlined on page 7. The marks will then be aggregated to arrive at an overall mark for the project. Assessors will then assign an overall grade to the candidate for this graded unit based on the following grade boundaries.

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

Note: the candidate must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified below for each stage of the project in order to achieve the graded unit.

Higher National group award Graded Unit specification: Instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates (cont)

Evidence requirements

The project consists of three stages: planning; developing; and evaluating. The following table specifies the minimum evidence required to pass each stage.

Note: The candidate must achieve **all of the minimum evidence** specified below for each stage of the project in order to pass the group award Graded Unit.

Project Stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements
Stage 1 — Planning	<p>Developing a brief to investigate a business issue and assess its implications for a business or a number of businesses. The issue must involve meeting the needs of customers. The brief must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • title of the project • statement of the issue to be investigated. This should cover how it involves meeting the needs of customers and who the relevant customers are • objectives of the project • reasons for the choice of issue which must be directly related to a topic or topics covered as part of the group award. • justification for the choice of business or businesses involved • explanation of the sources of information which will be used for the investigation and why each has been selected • explanation of the how the investigation will be conducted with reasons for the choice of methods used • 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 <p>Devising a plan to carry out the investigation. The plan must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • timescales for conducting the investigation, which should be related to the objectives of the investigation and should include both final and intermediate completion dates • identification of the resources (including time) required to carry out the investigation <p>Written evidence of both of the above should be presented. It may be supplemented by evidence provided orally by the candidate 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 brief is worth 15% of the marks for the investigation while the plan is worth 5% of the marks. The candidate must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Planning stage.</i></p>

<p>Stage 2 — Developing</p>	<p>Preparation of a written report of the investigation of a business issue and its implications for a business or businesses. It must include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. detailed explanation of how the issue affects the business or businesses chosen. The explanation should be justified by explicit reference to the data collected and to concepts covered as part of the group award. 2. assessment of the implications of these effects for the chosen business or businesses in terms of the criteria selected during the planning process. 3. statement of the conclusions drawn from the assessment. These should be explicitly related to the assessment and the needs of customers. There is no requirement to make specific recommendations on future action or actions on the part of the business or businesses involved. <p>The report should consist of 2500 – 3500 words and be presented in a format suitable for a business report, including a contents page, summary and references. It may be supplemented by evidence provided orally by the candidate 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 report is worth 60% of the marks for the investigation. The candidate must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Developing stage</i></p>
<p>Stage 3 — Evaluating</p>	<p>Providing an evaluation of the effectiveness of all parts of the investigation. The evaluation should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. assessment of the extent to which each of the original objectives of the investigation have been met. This should include reference to any modifications made during the course of the investigation and to any alternative courses of action considered but rejected. Throughout the assessment should be supported with credible reasons. 2. commentary on aspects of the planning and developing stages which worked effectively and why and/or aspects of the planning and development stages which did not work as effectively as expected. Three separate aspects should be covered - one for the brief, one for the plan and one for the report. 3. assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the report of the investigation. This should be supported by credible reasons and cover at least one strength and at least one weakness. 4. recommendations for future investigations. These should be based on items 1-3 above and could relate to the personal development of the candidate (e.g. in terms of the further development of skills used in this investigation) or aspects of the process or product of the investigation (e.g. with respect to setting timescales, gathering information or possible future investigations). It should be clear from the recommendations that the candidate has reflected on what happened and has drawn conclusions from this reflection. <p><i>The evaluation is worth 20% of the marks for the investigation. The candidate must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Evaluating stage.</i></p>