

Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Visual Merchandising Techniques

Unit code: DL2R 34

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed to enable candidates to recognise the main components and techniques of visual merchandising and understand how this function aids a retailer to reach its objectives in attracting customers, contributing towards an enjoyable shopping experience and optimising sales.

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

1. Explain how various design, colour, light and typography formats can affect customers' perception of retail images.
2. Evaluate the importance of effective display arrangements to the retailer.
3. Devise an appropriate visual merchandising plan suitable for the retail environment.

Credit points and level: 1 HN 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 Access 1 to Doctorates.*

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: Access to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. No prior knowledge is necessary, however, it would be beneficial if candidates have some knowledge or work experience of visual merchandising. This may be evidenced by possession of the NQ Units DOSV11 Merchandising, NQ Unit DOSN 10 Introduction to Display, NQ Unit DOSM 11 Display Practice.

Core skills: There may be opportunities to gather evidence towards core skills 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.

General information for centres (cont)

An exemplar instrument of assessment and marking guidelines has been produced to indicate the national standard of achievement required at SCQF level 7.

Outcomes 1 and 2 could be assessed using a single instrument of assessment. For example, candidates could be set an assignment that requires them to carry out research and present their findings.

For Outcome 3 candidates could produce a visual merchandising plan under open-book conditions.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Visual Merchandising Techniques

Unit code: DL2R 34

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

Explain how various design, colour, light and typography formats can affect customers' perception of retail images

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Composition and layout of displays
- ◆ Colour theory
- ◆ Types and effects of lighting
- ◆ Graphics, lettering styles and application

Evidence requirements

A candidate will be required to provide evidence that s/he can explain how the use of various design, colour, light and typography formats can enhance the images of at least two retailers from different sectors of the industry. This can be in the form of written or oral evidence. The evidence should accurately:

- ◆ identify design elements including composition and layouts used in displays
- ◆ indicate different colour schemes used by the two retailers and discuss the psychological effects their application may have on customers
- ◆ describe the main types of lighting systems used by the two retailers to create two specific impressions
- ◆ explain how graphics and specific styles of lettering can be used to communicate different meanings about a retail organisation and its products/service

Assessment guidelines

Please refer to the assessment guidelines in Outcome 2.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Visual Merchandising Techniques

Outcome 2

Evaluate the importance of effective display arrangements to the retailer

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Preparation of the display area
- ◆ Display locations within the store
- ◆ Display techniques and objectives
- ◆ Handling of display merchandise
- ◆ Selection and positioning of graphics, signs, tickets
- ◆ Appropriate display fixtures and fittings

Evidence requirements

A candidate will be required to provide evidence that s/he can discuss the importance of effective display arrangements applied by at least two retailers from different sectors of the industry. This can be in the form of written or oral evidence. The evidence should accurately:

- ◆ outline the steps involved in the preparation of an area for the installation of a display arrangement
- ◆ identify the areas within a store that are suitable for locating displays
- ◆ describe the various display techniques used for product presentation
- ◆ explain the various methods of handling merchandise for display purposes
- ◆ justify the choice and positioning of graphics, signs and tickets
- ◆ comment on the types and appropriateness of display fixtures and fittings

Assessment guidelines

Outcomes 1 and 2 could be assessed using a single instrument of assessment. For example, towards the end of Outcome 2, candidates could be set an assignment that requires them to research at least two retailers from different sectors and produce a report/presentation on the following:

- a) how the various design, colour, light and typography formats used by the retailers can affect customers' perceptions
- b) The importance of effective display arrangements to retailers

Reports/presentations should cover all of the Evidence Requirements for both Outcomes 1 and 2 and be supplemented with drawings/photographs.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Visual Merchandising Techniques

Outcome 3

Devise an appropriate visual merchandising plan suitable for the retail environment

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Display themes
- ◆ Selection of appropriate fixtures and fittings
- ◆ Plan of display
- ◆ Timing of installation
- ◆ Measures of display effectiveness

Evidence requirements

A candidate will be required to provide evidence to demonstrate that s/he is able to devise a visual merchandising plan appropriate for a selected retailer. The evidence should accurately:

- ◆ identify the visual merchandising objectives
- ◆ describe the display theme(s)
- ◆ select appropriate fixtures and fittings
- ◆ provide a plan of the display area
- ◆ calculate the timing of the display installation
- ◆ identify the method(s) used to measure the effectiveness of the display(s)

Evidence should be generated through open-book assessment where candidates can refer to textbooks, handouts, the internet and any other materials.

Assessment guidelines

The assessment for this Outcome could take the form of an assignment where the candidate demonstrates his/her ability to construct a visual merchandising schedule and associated plans for a selected retailer. For Outcome 3 assessment, candidates will undertake an assignment that does not require being in a controlled environment. The candidate will select a retailer and devise an appropriate visual merchandising schedule that covers no less than a three month period, together with associated perspective drawing and floor plan.

Administrative Information

Unit code: DL2R 34

Unit title: Visual Merchandising Techniques

Superclass category: BA

Date of publication: August 2004

Version: 02 (October 2013)

History of Changes:

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Controlled conditions removed from Outcomes 1 and 2.	21/10/13

Source: SQA

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2004, 2013

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.

SQA acknowledges the valuable contribution that Scotland's colleges have made to the development of Higher National qualifications.

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

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Visual Merchandising Techniques

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 Unit is intended for candidates who wish to pursue a career in the retail industry and who are taking a qualification in HNC/D Retail Management, either on a full time or part time basis, in which Visual Merchandising Techniques is an optional subject for both HNC and HND. It may also be undertaken by candidates in employment wishing to develop their visual merchandising skills.

The following notes give additional information on each outcome:

Outcome 1

Types of window display and interior displays including prestige, mass, open, technical, used to illustrate application of **composition and layout** including symmetric/asymmetric balance, lines of sight, focal points, repetition, alternation, radiation; **types of lights** eg fluorescent and spotlights used to create different moods.

Highlight how visual merchandising helps to promote a retailer through not just window /interior displays but also through packaging/wrapping, carrier bags, labels etc.

Outcome 2

Display locations — windows, aisles, fixtures (types and positioning); security

Display techniques and objectives — open, themed, lifestyle, co-ordinated, category dominant, power aisles;

Methods of handling merchandise — carding, layering, draping, grouping, blocking, suspending; accessorising;

Display tools: staple gun, pin hammer, screwdriver, scissors etc

Display fixtures — different types including mannequins, props, shelves, tables

Legal requirements in relation to health and safety, sale of goods and trade descriptions

Outcome 3

Visual merchandising objectives — enhance store image, attract customers, increase customer spend, stimulate impulse purchases, provide information about new products etc.

Resources — budget, staff, materials, fixtures and fittings — gondolas, dump bins, wall slats, mannequins, props

Display themes — calendar of events

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Visual Merchandising Techniques

Display plans — display schedule, perspective drawing, and floor plan

Timing of installation — installation date matched to event, length of time from installation to change-over of display

Measurement of display effectiveness – observation of customers, monitoring of sales trends, surveys of staff and customers

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

This Unit is an Optional Unit offered as part of the group award HNC/D Retail Management. If delivered along with the HNC Core Unit, Stock Presentation, the overlap between the two Units allows for integration of assessments and therefore flexibility in time allocation.

This Unit can be offered as a freestanding Unit as it is not dependent on any previous or wider retail knowledge.

It is recommended that a single instrument of assessment be adopted for Outcomes 1 and 2 of this Unit. The candidate should explain how various design, colour, light and typography formats have enhanced at least two retailers' images while also highlighting the importance of effective display arrangements applied by those retailers, who should be from different sectors of the industry. For example, towards the end of Outcome 2, candidates could be set an assignment that requires them to carry out research and produce a report/presentation on their findings. Reports/presentations should be supplemented with drawings/photographs.

For Outcome 3 assessment, candidates will undertake an assignment that does not require being in a controlled environment. The candidate will select a retailer and devise an appropriate visual merchandising schedule that covers no less than a three-month period, together with associated perspective drawing and floor plan.

Open learning

This Unit could be delivered by distance learning. However, it would require planning by the centre to ensure sufficiency and authenticity of candidate evidence.

Candidates with additional support needs

This Unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Additional Support Needs* (BA 2399, SQA, due 2004).

General information for candidates

Unit title: Visual Merchandising Techniques

This Unit is designed to give you an understanding of the main techniques that are used in visual merchandising in the retail environment. It explores the main visual merchandising techniques adopted by various types of retailer from different sectors of the industry. It also covers the main considerations in planning a display. You should visit a variety of retailers, noting the various approaches used to display merchandise and/or a service.

Overall, you will be expected to use the knowledge and skills from this Unit to enable you to evaluate how a variety of retailers apply the techniques of visual merchandising and plan an actual display for a selected retailer of your choice.

In order to complete the Unit successfully, you will be required to achieve a satisfactory level of performance on two pieces of assessed work. Towards the end of Outcome 2, you will be allocated time to carry out research relating to two different retail approaches to visual merchandising. You will then be required to produce a report or a presentation on your findings. Your report/presentation should be supplemented with drawings/photographs. Your lecturer will give you a timescale for completion.

For Outcome 3 assessment, you will undertake an assignment that does not require being in a controlled environment. This assessment will take the form of the production of a visual merchandising schedule, covering a minimum of a three-month period, and associated plans for a specified retailer.