

Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Geography D: Geography Today

Unit code: DP4K 35

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed to enable candidates to critically evaluate a recent geographical theory/article.

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

1. Critically evaluate a recent geographical theory/article.
2. Assess the contribution of a recent geographical theory/article to the development of geographical knowledge.

Credit points and level: 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.*

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: Candidates should possess good communication skills. Other knowledge, skills and experience relevant to the Unit would be beneficial.

In addition, candidates should have achieved HN Unit DP4G 34 Geography A: Introducing a Geographical Perspective and HN Unit DP4H 34 Geography B: Urban Geography.

Ultimately, entry is at the discretion of the centre.

Core skills: There will be opportunities to gather evidence towards core skills in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of core skills or core skills components. Further detail is provided in the Support Notes.

Context for delivery: This Unit can be delivered as a stand-alone Unit. 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. This Unit is included in the framework for HNC/D Social Sciences.

Assessment: This unit will be holistically assessed by a single instrument of assessment covering all Unit Outcomes. This will take the form of one open book essay/report of 2000 – 3000 words. The assessment topic should be handed out or negotiated at an appropriate point in the delivery of the unit and a submission date set. A feedback session with the candidate should ensure the authenticity of the candidate's work.

General information for centres (cont)

An exemplar instrument of assessment and marking guidelines have been produced to indicate the national standard of achievement required at SCQF level 8.

Higher National 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

Critically evaluate a recent geographical theory/article.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ An overview of a variety of recent geographical theory/articles
- ◆ An understanding of one recent geographical theory/article
- ◆ The ability to critically evaluate one recent geographical theory/article

Outcome 2

Assess the contribution of a recent geographical theory/article to the development of geographical knowledge.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ A body of relevant and appropriate geographical knowledge to set the theory/article in context
- ◆ An understanding of the contribution of the recent geographical theory/article to the development of geographical knowledge

Evidence requirements for the Unit

Each candidate will need to demonstrate evidence of all of the knowledge and/or skills items from Outcomes 1 and 2. This evidence will be presented in the form of one open book essay/report of 2000 - 3000 words. Each candidate's essay/report must provide evidence that s/he can:

- ◆ critically evaluate in depth, one geographical theory/article
- ◆ set the selected geographical theory/article in the context of his/her prior geographical studies, (i.e. the geographical theory/article must cover a geographical topic that the candidate has studied in previous Higher National Geography Units)
- ◆ critically evaluate the contribution of the selected geographical theory/article to geographical knowledge

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Geography D: Geography Today

The assessment does not need to be conducted under supervision.

Assessment guidelines for the Unit

This Unit will be assessed holistically by one instrument of assessment. The exercise should test critical and evaluative skills. The assessment does not need to be conducted under supervision. It is recommended that the sources are agreed in advance by the candidate and lecturer.

Lecturers should present candidates with a list of topics (of no less than six and no more than ten) from which to make their choice. Once a topic has been chosen, appropriate material (eg recent journal articles/papers/books, etc) will have to be selected to undertake the assessment. A feedback session with the candidate should ensure the authenticity of the candidate's work.

Administrative Information

Unit code:	DP4K 35
Unit title:	Geography D: Geography Today
Superclass category:	RF
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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

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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 designed to ensure that candidates have an appreciation of the dynamic nature of geography and an understanding of the contribution of a recent geographical publication.

Candidates will require access to a number of recent geographical publications.

These could either be in the same topic area or cover a variety of topics but should relate to an area of geography studied in one of the previous HN Geography Units. Appropriate material could be identified in consultation with colleagues in the FE/HE sector.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

While this is an intellectually challenging and stimulating Unit it is, however, also one that presents candidates with the opportunity to expand and develop critical geographical skills appropriate for higher level study.

Given that the purpose of the Unit is to critically evaluate and assess a recent geographical theory/article it would be appropriate for delivering lecturers to draw up a short list of suitable topics for investigation from which candidates would make a choice. Candidates should make their choice in discussion with their lecturer. This will allow for both candidate 'freedom' to choose a particular area of interest, and lecturer input, guidance and support to be achieved. Given the higher order nature of this task there will need to be a degree of 'structured guidance' from tutors.

Given that access to and selection of appropriate material are crucial to successful completion of the assignment it may be appropriate for FE centres to liaise and consult with colleagues in Higher Education centres. Moreover, it would also be most helpful for FE centres to liaise and consult with each other on this matter given the limited resources at their disposal.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

This Unit provides a range of opportunities for developing the 5 Core Skills. The extent of development will depend on the learning opportunities chosen by the candidate or the delivery and assessment methods selected by the tutor.

Communication - The delivery and assessment of this Unit may contribute towards the component *Written Communication* at Higher if the assessment is an essay. The general skill for this component is 'Produce well-structured written communication on complex topics'. This skill can be developed through candidates responding to complex written communication in terms of identifying significant information, ideas and supporting details. Opportunity also exists for the development of the oral component 'Produce and respond to oral communication on a complex topic' through class/group debates.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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In both formative and summative assessment the candidate should be encouraged to present all essential ideas/information and supporting detail in a logical and effective order; use a structure that takes account of purpose and audience and links major and minor points in ways which assist the clarity and impact of the writing; use conventions which are effective in achieving the purpose and adapted as necessary for the target audience and use spelling, punctuation and sentence structures which are consistently accurate.

These skills can be developed through formative activities, such as short essays, without being formally assessed for Core Skill certification.

Working with Others – A tutor may actively choose to develop the general skill of ‘Work with others in a group to analyse, plan and complete an activity’ at Intermediate 2 level by setting tasks for group activity and arranging joint information feedback sessions. Candidates who may be working on the same publication or in the same geographical context could be encouraged to collaborate in the early stages.

Information Technology - Opportunities to develop this skill can easily be incorporated into the delivery of the unit by supporting the candidate to carry out information searches using efficient and effective search strategies. This will contribute towards the component *Using an IT system effectively and responsibly to process a range of information*, specifically the skill ‘carry out two searches to extract and present relevant information from electronic data sources’ at Intermediate 2 level. This Core Skill could be developed without formal certification.

Problem Solving - This core skill will be developed at Higher level throughout this unit, particularly the identification and locating of relevant geographical publications for the initial investigation phase. Tutors are encouraged to support the development of problem solving skills at this stage by taking time to identify and discuss appropriate actions and strategies. This will contribute towards the component *Critical Thinking* where the general skill of ‘analysing a complex situation or issue will be developed’, the component *Planning and Organising* where the general skill of ‘planning, organising and completing a complex task’ will be developed and the component *Reviewing and Evaluating* where the general skill of ‘reviewing and evaluating a complex problem solving activity’ will be developed. This Core Skill could be developed without formal certification.

Numeracy -The component *Using Graphical Information* from Numeracy at Intermediate 2 could also be developed. The specific skills of: ‘interpreting information from tables, graphs, charts or diagrams and selecting an appropriate form of tables, graphs, or diagrams and communicating information in that form can be developed within the teaching and learning of this Unit. This will depend on the complexity of the interpretation, extraction and processing of information from tables, graphs, charts and diagrams. Tutors could maximise opportunities for numeracy development by encouraging candidates to evaluate the graphical and diagrammatic information sources contained in their selected publication.

Open learning

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

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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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 Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs*, which is available on the SQA website www.sqa.org.uk

General information for candidates

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In this Unit you will have the opportunity to investigate a range of recent geographical articles/publications. You will then analyse, in depth, one of these publications/articles. You will assess the contribution of this publication to the development of knowledge and understanding in a specific geographical topic area. You will be required to produce an essay/report of 2000-3000 words, assessing and analysing the contribution of the publication to the development of geographical knowledge. Your tutor will work closely with you to identify appropriate material and to provide on-going support. The essay/report will be written in your own time. A feedback session with your tutor/lecturer will ensure the authenticity of your work.