



Higher National Graded Unit Specification

General Information for Centres

This Graded Unit has been validated as part of the SQA Advanced Certificate Quality. 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: Quality: Graded Unit 1

Graded Unit Code: DW9F 34

Type of Graded Unit: Project

Assessment Instrument: Investigation

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 National 1 to Doctorates.*

Purpose: This Graded Unit is designed to provide evidence that the candidate has achieved the following principal aims of the SQA Advanced Certificate Quality:

- ◆ to develop an understanding of the field of Total Quality
- ◆ to enable candidates to integrate knowledge, theory and practice effectively in a quality-orientated setting
- ◆ to develop an understanding of the holistic nature of quality and thus the scope for quality improvement
- ◆ to enable candidates to develop communication and analytical skills relating to the establishment, maintenance and improvement of quality solutions appropriate to complex problems
- ◆ to enable candidates to focus on customer and quality requirements
- ◆ to prepare candidates for employment or to develop them in employment in a quality-related setting
- ◆ to enable candidates to critically evaluate their own practices and to be reflective practitioners
- ◆ to facilitate progression to the IQA Diploma

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:

General Information for Centres (cont)

- ◆ Fundamentals of quality
- ◆ Management of quality
- ◆ Quality improvement
- ◆ Creating a culture of customer care
- ◆ Integrated quality, environmental and health and safety systems

Core Skills: This Unit may contribute to the generation of evidence for the Core Skill of Problem Solving, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or a Core Skill component as part of this Graded Unit.

Assessment: This Graded Unit will be assessed by the use of an investigative report. The “fleshed-out” 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.

Assessment is based on the **product** and the **process**.

Candidates must:

- ◆ plan the investigation
- ◆ identify issues for research
- ◆ generate and collect data
- ◆ select/devise and use research methods
- ◆ collate, interpret and analyse data
- ◆ present findings and conclusions
- ◆ evaluate the investigation

The project brief should draw from the listed of topics/issues in the table below, at least three topics/issues from three separate units.

Unit Title	Topics/Issues
Fundamentals of Quality	Principles of quality The role of quality in organisations
Management of Quality	Management skills Quality Management Systems Total Quality Management Quality costs Legal issues
Quality Improvement	Quality improvement tools and techniques
Creating a Culture of Customer Care	Customer relationships Customer care strategy Customer care culture
Production of an Integrated Quality, Environmental and Health and Safety Systems Policy Manual	Quality Management Systems Environmental Management Systems Health and Safety Management Systems Integrated Management Systems

Administrative Information

Graded Unit Code:	DW9F 34
Graded Unit Title:	Quality: Graded Unit 1
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SQA acknowledges the valuable contribution that Scotland's colleges have made to the development of Higher National qualifications.

FURTHER INFORMATION: Call SQA's Customer Contact Centre on 0345 279 1000.

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

Graded Unit Title: Quality: Graded Unit 1

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.

Reasonable assistance is the term used by SQA to describe the difference between providing candidates with some direction to generate the required evidence for assessment and providing too much support, which would compromise the integrity of the assessment. Reasonable assistance is part of all learning and teaching processes.

In relation to the assessment of Higher National Project-based Graded Units, assessors may provide advice, clarification, and guidance during the time between the distribution of the project instructions and the completion date, ie at each stage of the project.

Remediation allows an assessor to clarify candidate responses, either by requiring a written amendment or by oral questioning, where there is a minor shortfall or omission in evidence requirements. In either case, such instances must be formally noted by the assessor, either in writing or by recording, and be made available to the internal and external verifier.

In relation to Higher National Project-based Graded Units, candidates must be given the opportunity for remediation at each stage of the project.

The evidence for a Higher National Project-based Graded Unit is generated over time and involves three distinct stages, each of which has to be achieved before the next is undertaken. This means that any re-assessment of stages must be undertaken before proceeding to the next stage. The overall grade is derived from the total number of marks *across all* sections, and should reflect the ability of the candidate to work autonomously and the amount of support required. In relation to Higher National Project-based Graded Units, candidates who have failed any stage of the project and have been unable to provide the necessary evidence through remediation must be given the opportunity for re-assessment of that stage.

Any candidate who has failed their graded unit or wishes to upgrade their award must be given a re-assessment opportunity, or in exceptional circumstances, two re-assessment opportunities. In the case of project-based graded units, this must be done using a substantially different project.

The final grading given must reflect the quality of the candidate's evidence at the time of the completion of the graded unit. Candidates must be awarded the highest grade achieved — whether through first submission or through any re-assessment, remediation, and/or reasonable assistance provided.

At this level, candidates should work independently. Centres should 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.

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

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

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.

Equality and inclusion

This graded unit specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Equality and inclusion*, which is available on SQA's website: www.sqa.org.uk.

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

Grade A	Grade C
<p>Is a seamless, coherent piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ has sufficient evidence for the three essential phases of the project, is produced to a high standard, and is clearly inter-related. ◆ demonstrates an accurate and perceptive interpretation of the investigation's process and outcomes ◆ identifies both internal and external constraints and interdependent factors affecting the investigation ◆ demonstrates an original and dynamic approach to the investigation process ◆ uses a highly focussed planned and systematic approach with regards to critical analysis of the investigation process ◆ is clear and well structured throughout and language used is of a high standard in terms of level, accuracy and technical content ◆ effectively applies integrated and consolidated knowledge, understanding and skills to complex situations. ◆ is tightly structured, relevant to the content of the units and displays a high level of subject/occupational expertise. 	<p>Is a co-ordinated piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ has sufficient evidence of the three essential phases of the project, is produced to an adequate standard. ◆ demonstrates an acceptable interpretation of the investigation's process and outcomes ◆ identifies key constraints and their implications for the investigation ◆ demonstrates an acceptable approach to the investigation process ◆ uses a focussed planned approach to the analysis of the investigation process ◆ is satisfactorily structured and language used is adequate in terms of level, accuracy and technical content ◆ applies integrated and consolidated knowledge, understanding and skills with some inconsistency and lack of continuity ◆ is reasonably well structured and displays an adequate level of subject/occupational expertise

The project will be marked out of 100. Assessors will mark each stage of the project, taking into account the criteria outlined. 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 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 Graded Unit.

Project Stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements
Stage 1 — Planning 25% of marks	<p>Produce an Action Plan which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ rationale for selecting the topic to be researched ◆ identification of the objectives of the investigation ◆ identification of the main issues for research ◆ identification and justification of the sources of information to be used ◆ identification and justification of the research methods to be used ◆ timescales for achieving the aims of the investigation <p>The plan should be 1,000 — 1,250 words long or equivalent. It may include charts or diagrams.</p> <p>Additional guidance on grading</p> <p>This section of the investigation will be assessed by the submission of written documentation and by an individual interview with the tutor during which the candidate will be expected to explain the written material s/he has submitted.</p> <p>This section is worth 25 marks which should be allocated as set out below. Throughout credit should be given to candidates who make valid and relevant references to concepts used in other Units in the SQA Advanced Certificate Quality.</p> <p>Up to 3 marks for an outline of the activity and reasons why it has been chosen. Marks should be awarded on the basis of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the clarity and comprehensibility of the outline [maximum of 1 mark] ◆ the extent to which the reasons are convincing and related to the candidate's situation ◆ the degree of initiative shown by the candidate in making arrangements for the activity and in the selection of the activity itself

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

Project Stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements
	<p>Up to 4 marks for the specific aims for the achievement of the activity marks should be awarded on the basis of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the clarity of the objectives ◆ the extent to which the objectives are SMART ◆ the extent to which the objectives are consistent with the candidate’s current levels of effectiveness and personal competence in the field of Quality ◆ the extent to which the objectives fit in with organisational and other relevant targets <p>Up to 5 marks for the main issues for the assignment. Marks should be awarded on the basis of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights into issues that are at the forefront of the field of Quality. <p>Up to 4 marks for the identification and justification of sources of information to be used. Marks should be awarded on the basis of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the breadth and depth of sources to be used ◆ the balance of internal and external sources ◆ the reliability of the sources ◆ the validity of the sources ◆ <p>Up to 5 marks for the identification and justification of research methods to be used. Marks should be awarded on the basis of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the variety of methods to be used ◆ the justification offered for the selection of the research methods ◆ the extent to which the research methods selected are appropriate to the investigation <p>Up to 4 marks for a timescale for the completion of the activity. Marks should be awarded on the basis of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the inclusion of a final completion date and significant milestones to reaching this date ◆ the incorporation of likely contingencies and the validity of the justification for them ◆ how realistic the timetable is with respect to organisational and other targets which the candidate must meet ◆ the extent to which the timetable is consistent with the objectives for the activity <p><i>The candidate must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Planning stage. This can be demonstrated by submitting evidence relating to all six aspects of the Planning Stage and achieving a mark of at least 12.5/25</i></p>

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

Project Stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements
Stage 2 — Developing 50% of marks	<p>Produce a written Investigation Report and Portfolio which includes evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ clear and logical presentation ◆ collection of sufficient relevant data using appropriate data collection techniques ◆ presentation of collated data ◆ analysis of data using appropriate analysis techniques ◆ objective interpretation ◆ correct and logical conclusions drawn. ◆ recommendations for future action <p>The report should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ a contents page ◆ a list of acknowledgements of sources and references. ◆ terms of reference ◆ introduction ◆ main findings ◆ conclusion ◆ recommendations ◆ bibliography ◆ references <p>The written report of the investigation should be 1,000 — 1,500 words long or equivalent. It may include charts and diagrams.</p> <p>Additional guidance on grading</p> <p>This section of the investigation will be assessed by the submission of written documentation, a portfolio of collected and collated data and by an individual interview with the tutor during which the candidate will be expected to explain the written material s/he has submitted.</p> <p>This section is worth 50 marks which should be allocated as set out below. Throughout credit should be given to candidates who make valid and relevant references to concepts used in other Units in the SQA Advanced Certificate Quality.</p> <p>Up to 5 marks for the clear and logical presentation of the report. Marks should be awarded on the basis of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the correct use of language, ie grammatically correct, spelling correct ◆ the avoidance of jargon and explanation of unfamiliar terms ◆ the logical presentation of arguments ◆ the appropriate use of graphics

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

Project Stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements
	<p>Up to 10 marks for the collection of sufficient quantity of relevant data. Marks should be awarded on the basis of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the quantity of relevant data with respect to the scope of the investigation ◆ the quality of the data ◆ the absence of irrelevant data ◆ the reliability of the data ◆ the validity of the data ◆ the range of data collection techniques used ◆ the extent to which the data collection techniques used are appropriate <p>Up to 10 marks for the presentation of collated data. Marks should be awarded on the basis of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the clarity of the collated data ◆ the extent to which the data is indexed and ordered. ◆ the extent of the completeness of the collated data <p>Up to 10 marks for the correct use of appropriate techniques for analysis of the data. Marks should be awarded on the basis of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the variety of techniques used ◆ the extent to which the use of the techniques is appropriate to the investigation ◆ the appropriate use of graphics for illustration ◆ the extent to which the analysis is accurate <p>Up to 5 marks for the objective interpretation of the data. Marks should be awarded on the basis of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the lack of bias in the interpretation ◆ the extent of originality in the interpretation of the evidence ◆ the ability to understand and deal with complex issues <p>Up to 5 marks for drawing correct and logical conclusions. Marks should be awarded on the basis of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the extent to which the conclusion logically follows the main text of the report ◆ the ability to make an informed judgement ◆ the extent to which the conclusions summarises the report

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

Project Stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements
	<p>Up to 5 marks for recommending future action. Marks should be awarded on the basis of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the extent to which the proposed action/actions is/are detailed ◆ the extent to which the proposed action/actions is/are practical and effective ◆ the extent to which the proposed action will bring about improvement <p><i>The candidate must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Developing stage. This can be demonstrated by submitting evidence relating to all seven aspects of the Developing stage and achieving a mark of at least 25/50.</i></p>
<p>Stage 3 — Evaluating</p> <p>25% of marks</p>	<p>Produce a written evaluation Report which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ briefly outlines the investigation ◆ reviews and updates the action plan in light of experience ◆ assesses the effectiveness of the research methods used ◆ assesses the main strengths and weaknesses of the investigation report ◆ identifies any knowledge and skills which have been gained/developed ◆ recommendations for action to enhance personal competences which will contribute to improved effectiveness as a quality practitioner <p>The evaluation should be 1,000 — 1,500 words long or equivalent. It may include charts and diagrams.</p> <p>Additional guidance on grading</p> <p>This section of the practical assignment will be assessed by the submission of written documentation and by an individual interview with the tutor during which the candidate will be expected to explain the written material s/he has submitted.</p> <p>This section is worth 25 marks which should be allocated as set out below. Throughout credit should be given to candidates who make valid and relevant references to concepts used in other Units in the SQA Advanced Certificate Quality.</p> <p>Up to 3 marks for an outline of the investigation. Marks should be awarded on the basis of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the clarity of the outline without excessive detail

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

Project Stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements
	<p>Up to 3 marks for the review and update of the action plan in the light of experience. Marks should be awarded on the basis of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the extent to which contingency plans were made ◆ the effectiveness of the contingency plans <p>Up to 4 marks for the assessment of the effectiveness of the research methods used. Marks should be awarded on the basis of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the degree to which the objectives of the investigation were met ◆ the extent of the critique of the research methods used <p>Up to 5 marks for the assessment of the main strengths and weaknesses of the investigation report. Marks should be awarded on the basis of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the identification of the constraints and limitations of the investigation ◆ the explanation of what went well ◆ the explanation of what went badly <p>Up to 5 marks for the identification of any knowledge and skills which have been gained/developed. Marks should be awarded on the basis of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ before and after personal SWOT analysis <p>Up to 5 marks for the recommendations for action to enhance personal effectiveness. Marks should be awarded on the basis of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ identification of education or training needs of self <p><i>The candidate must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Evaluating stage. This can be demonstrated by submitting evidence relating to all six aspects of the Evaluating stage and achieving a mark of at least 12.5/25.</i></p>