

Higher National Unit specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Designing Plant Collections

Unit code: F1J6 35

Unit purpose: To maximise the effectiveness, utility and value of plant collections, knowledge and skill in their design and interpretation is of fundamental importance. This Unit provides primary information and expertise in the most important areas of the subject including: effects of climate on gardening, basic principles of design including drawing skills, land surveying and preparation of planting plans, the principles of effective plant collection interpretation and the effective use and procurement of plants. The concept of the plant collection is understood to include preserved plant collections such as spirit and herbarium collections and also collections of images and virtual herbaria. This Unit is intended for students who plan to enter the amenity/ botanic garden sector of the horticultural industry.

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

- 1 Design a plant collection layout.
- 2 Arrange plant material in an aesthetically pleasing manner.
- 3 Evaluate a plant collection display.

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: It would be beneficial for candidates to have a basic plant knowledge to help in plant choice; this knowledge could be provided from completion of the Unit Plant Recognition.

Core Skills: There are opportunities to develop Core Skill of Problem Solving at SCQF level 6 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.

Assessment: Outcomes 1 and 2 could be assessed using a case study where students work to a client brief to produce a design and scale plan for an area of planting.

Outcome 3 could be assessed by a practical and written exercise whereby the students evaluate an existing plant collection in terms of its current interpretation. A written report and formal presentation would produce the evidence required.

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

Design a plant collection layout

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Design principles
- ◆ Site appraisal
- ◆ Planting plans

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ understand, select and apply appropriate design principles and materials to design an area for planting in accordance with the requirements of a client brief
- ◆ carry out a site appraisal and systematically record important features of the site
- ◆ produce a planting plan for the site using appropriate plants

Assessment Guidelines

Outcome 1 (and 2) could be assessed using a case study where students work to a client brief to produce a design and scale plan for an area of planting.

Outcome 2

Arrange plant material in an aesthetically pleasing manner

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Choice and association of plant material
- ◆ Design principles

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Designing Plant Collections

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ select appropriate plants for a given site named in a client brief
- ◆ arrange plants appropriately in accordance with design principles such as colour, texture, theme, scale, form, density

Assessment Guidelines

Outcome 2 (and 1) could be assessed using a case study where students work to a client brief to produce a design and scale plan for an area of planting.

Outcome 3

Evaluate a plant collection display

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Identification of criteria for successful interpretation of plant collections
- ◆ Description of methods relating to plant collection display
- ◆ Appraisal of methods of interpretation to display plant collections

Evidence Requirements

Evidence for the Knowledge and/or Skills in this Outcome will be provided on a sample basis and should be generated through a practical exercise using an observation checklist. Candidates will need evidence to show that they can:

- ◆ identify criteria for effective interpretation of plant collections
- ◆ describe methods to display plant collections
- ◆ effectively appraise methods of interpretation to display plant collections

Where the Knowledge and/or Skills are sampled, candidates should not be able to foresee which method will be assessed, allowing the inference that s/he has achieved all requirements for the Outcome.

Assessment Guidelines

Outcome 3 could be assessed by a practical and written exercise whereby the students evaluate an existing plant collection in terms of its current interpretation. A written report or a presentation would produce the evidence required.

Administrative Information

Unit code: F1J6 35
Unit title: Designing Plant Collections
Superclass category: SA
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History of changes:

Version	Description of change	Date

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Designing Plant Collections

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

This Unit provides the knowledge and skills needed for the effective design and interpretation of plant collections. Students will learn the main principles of design including site survey methods, basic drawing skills, production of scaled plans, and planting principles. They will also learn the principles of effective plant collection interpretation through practical critiques of existing interpretation and the various approaches and methods that can be used to produce and interpret collections competently. The Unit also provides knowledge required by candidates intending to seek more advanced studies in garden design.

Outcome 1 and Outcome 2 should begin considering how climate and microclimate affects gardening and choice of plants. This should then be followed by considering the basic techniques of measuring and surveying a site. This should be succeeded by practice in drawing scaled plans. Functional considerations such as division of space, entrances, boundaries, paths should be considered as well as focal points and vistas. Principles of design should be followed by studying aspects of effective planting and should consider the use of colour, size, form, texture and scent as well as plant combinations. Practice in producing planting plans should also be covered.

Outcome 3 should begin by describing the various approaches and techniques for interpretation (including oral, graphic and interactive) for a range of plant collection users. Techniques should be clearly described and demonstrated where possible. This should be followed by a study of the criteria for successful interpretation.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

This Unit is likely to form part of a Group Award, which is primarily designed to provide candidates with technical or professional knowledge and skills related to occupations in amenity horticulture or botanic and heritage garden management.

Delivery should place emphasis on the practical aspects of design and interpretation of plant collections. It is important that practical skills are clearly demonstrated and that students practice drawing techniques to produce garden plans and planting plans. Likewise, for interpretation, students should carry out the process of a critique of existing interpretation.

Teaching approaches should include formal lectures supported by practicals and demonstrations. Much of the design work can be carried out in a student-centred studio environment with frequent feedback being given on design work produced. Easy access to garden facilities and interpreted plant collections are important for practical teaching and for carrying out assessment work.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Designing Plant Collections

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There are opportunities to develop Core Skill of Problem Solving at SCQF level 6 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

Open learning

Elements of this Unit could be delivered by distance learning depending on the workplace of the candidate and the standard of training of the staff. It is highly likely that the student would need to attend the centre for the range of facilities and plant collections to meet the requirements of the Unit. For further guidance on open learning, please refer to the SQA document, *Assessment and Quality Assurance for Open and Distance Learning (SQA,2000)*.

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 alternative Outcomes for Units. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs (www.sqa.org.uk)*.

General information for candidates

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This Unit is designed to provide you with knowledge and practical skills to produce simple garden designs and appropriate planting plans in the light of accepted design principles and considerations of the constraints and limitations of individual sites and the needs of clients. You will also learn issues and procedures relating to effective plant collection interpretation for a range of different audiences.

The Unit will begin by learning how to survey and measure garden areas and draw-up plans from your measurements. This will be followed by a consideration of the many aspects of design such as effective division of space, focal points and vistas. The varied use of plants will also be studied to include consideration of contrast and harmonies of colour, form, and texture as well as the choice of plants for specific situations. The design aspect of the Unit will then be followed with the study of interpretation of plant collections for a range of users. You will be introduced to the range of approaches, methods, and tools for interpretation and you will be able to carry out a practical exercise to assess existing interpretation.

In order to complete this Unit successfully, you will be required to achieve a satisfactory level of performance in two pieces of assessed work, an assignment involving the production of a garden design and planting plan, and an interpretation assignment involving a presentation or a written report.