



Higher National Graded Unit specification

General information for centres

This Graded Unit has been validated as part of the HND in Horticulture. 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 Horticulture: Graded Unit 2

Graded Unit code: F2CX 35

Type of Graded Unit: Project

Assessment Instrument: Investigation

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 National 1 to Doctorates.*

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

- ◆ is able to solve problems, undertake analysis, synthesis and evaluation within the confines of existing understandings of the sector
- ◆ is able to operate in these ways to develop solutions, some of which will be innovative, to a variety of unpredictable problems within the confines of existing basic understandings of the sector
- ◆ has developed skills and knowledge in the production and maintenance of plants
- ◆ has explored areas of specialisms and the processes of research

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: Recommended prior knowledge will depend on the nature of the investigation. However, it would normally be expected that the candidate should have completed or be in the process of completing all of the Units in the Group Award prior to undertaking this Graded Unit.

Core Skills: There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of *Problem Solving*, *Numeracy* and *Communication* at Higher level (SCQF level 6) in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

Assessment: This Graded Unit will be assessed by the use of an investigation. The developed investigation should provide the candidate with the opportunity to produce evidence that demonstrates she/he has met the aims of this Graded Unit.

Administrative Information

Graded Unit Code: F2CX 35
Graded Unit Title: Horticulture: Graded Unit 2
Original date of publication: August 2007
Version: 02

History of Changes:

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Update of Conditions of Assessment	Jul 2018

Source: SQA

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Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates

Graded Unit title: Horticulture: 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.

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.

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

Graded Unit title: Horticulture: Graded Unit 2

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.

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

Graded Unit title: Horticulture: Graded Unit 2

Grade A	Grade C
Is a seamless, coherent piece of work which:	Is a co-ordinated piece of work which:
◆ Interprets and understands the project brief in a way that demonstrates insight and clear understanding of the issues	◆ Interprets and understands the project brief in a way that enables the candidate to meet the basic criteria required for topic and level of demand
◆ Has sufficient evidence for the three essential phases of the project, is produced to a high standard, and is quite clearly inter-related	◆ Has sufficient evidence of the three essential phases of the project, is produced to an adequate standard
◆ Is highly focussed and relevant to the tasks associated with the project brief	◆ Is focussed and relevant to the tasks associated with the project brief
◆ Has evidence of independent planning, implementation and development of a substantial knowledge base to support the demands of the project	◆ Has evidence of independent planning, implementation and development of an adequate knowledge base although candidate required support
◆ Has evidence that all practical activities were conducted with regard to health and safety	◆ Has evidence that all practical activities were conducted with regard to health and safety
◆ Demonstrates a comprehensive analysis of relevant information, by using underlying principles	◆ Identifies strengths and weaknesses and advantages and disadvantages in any analysis
◆ Draws logical conclusions firmly based on evidence	◆ Draws conclusions but these may be only partly supported by evidence
◆ Is logically structured and coherently expressed throughout and language used is of a high standard in terms of level, accuracy and technical content	◆ Is satisfactorily structured and language used is adequate in terms of level, accuracy and technical content, although use is not always consistent
◆ Effectively consolidates and integrates required knowledge and skills	◆ Consolidates and integrates knowledge and skills but this may lack some continuity and consistency

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

Graded Unit title: Horticulture: Graded Unit 2

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.

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.

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

Graded Unit title: Horticulture: Graded Unit 2

Project stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements
Stage 1 — Planning 20% of total marks	<p>An Action Plan which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the aims of the assessment task including research, development and evaluation ◆ timescales for achieving these aims ◆ the rationale for selecting the topic to be researched if choice has been allowed ◆ identification of the main issues for research ◆ identification of the methods of research and sources to be used <p><i>The candidate must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Planning stage.</i></p>
Stage 2 — Developing 60% of total marks	<p>An Investigation Report including evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ collection and collation of data ◆ interpretation and analysis of data ◆ summary of the findings and conclusions drawn <p>The report should also include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ a contents page ◆ a list of acknowledgements of sources and references <p><i>The candidate must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Developing stage.</i></p>
Stage 3 — Evaluating 20% of total marks	<p>An Evaluation Report which should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ briefly outline the investigation ◆ review and update the action plan in light of experience ◆ summarise any unforeseen events and how they were handled ◆ identify any knowledge and skills which have been gained and / or developed ◆ assess the effectiveness of the research methods used ◆ assess the strengths and weaknesses of the main body of the investigation report ◆ determine to what extent the investigation covers the topic <p><i>The candidate must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Evaluating stage.</i></p>

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

Graded Unit title: Horticulture: Graded Unit 2

Support notes

This project involves the candidate working largely independently to investigate a particular topic of relevance to horticulture.

The candidate will be required to demonstrate the skills required to plan an investigation, demonstrate the ability to use both existing knowledge and draw on specialist knowledge relating to the investigation, and present findings and conclusions effectively.

The investigation could take various forms depending on the candidate's interests and career aspirations and may involve desk study, experimentation, or survey work. Evidence will depend on the nature of the investigation, but should include collection and analysis of data. This may take the form of manipulating data from statistical databases, summarising results from experimental work or surveys, or developing costings for an economic appraisal. The investigation should be problem oriented and involve the candidate drawing conclusions and making recommendations. It should not simply be reviewing and summarising information. The investigation should be supported by a bibliographic survey / literature review involving the extraction, summary and synthesis of information from a range of sources.

The findings of the investigation should be a formal well structured written report. The report should normally be 3,000 to 5,000 words depending on the type of investigation undertaken. The candidate is also obliged to submit evidence of collection and collation of data and interpretation and analysis of data. This evidence could include rough work, logbook, etc. to demonstrate the progression of ideas and ownership of the project.

At this level, candidates should work independently ie without undue assistance from the assessor. Centres may wish to question candidates informally at various stages on their knowledge and understanding of the project and/or expect candidates to give a presentation of their work at a mid-point or at the end of the project. Centres should ensure that where research is carried out in other establishments or under the supervision of others that the candidate does not receive undue assistance.

Open learning

As the output for this Unit is the result of independent investigation, it may be possible to complete the project externally if the resources required are available. It is recommended that on or after submission of the Investigation Report, the candidate attend the centre or another suitable off-centre location to present the work orally and to answer questions about their investigation.

As a normal requirement of the Unit, the candidate is obliged to submit evidence of collection and collation of data and interpretation and analysis of data. This evidence could include rough work, logbook, etc. to demonstrate the progression of ideas and ownership of the project.

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

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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.

General Information for candidates

Graded Unit title: Horticulture: Graded Unit 2

This Unit is designed to demonstrate that you can integrate, evaluate and apply knowledge from a range of Units for the award of HND Horticulture. The Unit should allow you to demonstrate that you are able to solve problems, undertake analysis and engage in the processes of research in a project relating to horticulture.

Recommended prior knowledge will depend on the nature of the investigation. However, it would normally be expected that you should have completed or be in the process of completing all of the Units in the Group Award prior to undertaking this Graded Unit.

The project will be in the form of an Investigation and you will be encouraged to choose a topic (subject to approval by your tutor) to align with your interests and future career aspirations.

You will formulate an Action Plan (20%) which includes the aims and rationale for the investigation, timescales for achieving these aims, and identification of the methods of research and sources to be used. You will then collect and interpret data, draw conclusions and submit an Investigation Report (60%). Finally, you will review the investigation in terms of its strengths and weaknesses and the effectiveness of the research methods used (20%).

The output for your project will be in the form of a report or reports. Additionally, you may be expected to give a presentation of your project.

The Graded Unit is a compulsory element of the Group Award and will be awarded at the following grades:

Grade A = 70%–100%

Grade B = 60%–69%

Grade C = 50%–59%

The evidence for the project is generated over time and involves three distinct stages, where each stage has to be achieved before the next is undertaken. If a candidate fails the project overall or wishes to upgrade, then this must be done using a *substantially different* project, ie all stages are undertaken using a new project. This may not be possible in the same academic year as the first attempt.