



Higher National Graded Unit Specification

General Information for centres

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

Graded Unit Code: F3R4 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 Access 1 to Doctorates.*

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

- ◆ to provide vocational skills and knowledge required for employment at supervisory/junior managerial level within the agricultural industry and for self-employment in farming or other land-based sectors
- ◆ to ensure that candidates gain the skills, knowledge and understanding of animal and crop production technology, farm mechanisation, business management and managing people which are necessary for a position as a trainee/assistant farm manager or equivalent
- ◆ to ensure that candidates have a sound appreciation of animal welfare, environmental and conservation issues and understand the concept of sustainability
- ◆ to facilitate progression to degree level education based on a sound foundation in applied science and technology, business management, Core Skills, and an understanding of the multifunctional nature of agriculture

General Information for centres (cont)

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:

Unit Code	Unit Title
F2E4 35	Agricultural Produce: Quality and Processing
F1Y5 35	Crop and Livestock Mechanisation
	Farm Buildings and Controlled Environments
F1Y7 35	Farm Manures, Wastes and the Environment
F2E7 35	Livestock Management Systems
F2EB 35	Livestock Nutrition
F1YB 35	Pasture Management
F26F 35	Planning, Budgeting and Control
F1JH 35	Plant Protection: Integrated Approaches

Core Skills: There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of *Communication, Numeracy, Problem Solving* all at 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 the HND Agriculture.

Administrative Information

Graded Unit code: F3R4 35
Graded Unit title: Agriculture: Graded Unit 2
Original date of publication: August 2008
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History of changes:

Version	Description of change	Date

Source: SQA

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

Graded Unit Title: Agriculture: 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. The assessment task should be marked as soon as possible after the completion date. The final grading given should reflect the quality of the candidate's evidence at the time of the completion date.

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. Thus any re-assessment of stages must be undertaken before proceeding to the next stage.

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, assignment, case study, etc. In this case, a candidate's grade will be based on the achievement in the re-assessment, if this results in a higher grade.

At this level, candidates should work independently. It is the responsibility of the Centre to 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.

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

The project must involve the Investigation of an agricultural business issue and the assessment of its implications for a business or a number of businesses. The tutor will select the issue to be investigated, which can be directly related to topics, concepts or models studied as part of the HND Agriculture and contain an audit of the business issue in terms of environmental and sustainability.

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

The term ‘business,’ refers to any organisation operating in the agricultural sector of the economy.

Candidates will carry out the Investigation and present their own evidence. However, at the discretion of the centre, candidates may carry out a group Investigation where access for individuals to a live site may prove too disruptive to the business. In these cases, the objectives of the Investigation, and the way it is planned and conducted, should reflect the opportunities for collaborative effort in terms of collecting a pool of shared information. Candidates may not, however, produce joint evidence. Each candidate must provide her or his individual responses to each of the three stages of the Investigation and assessors must be satisfied that the work has been completed by the individual candidate. The maximum size of any group is unlikely to exceed four. Centres may find that it is less easy to identify individual contributions among groups which are larger than this. The final submission will be appropriately structured and presented in a standard, referenced format.

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.

Grade A	Grade C
<p>Is a seamless, coherent piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ demonstrates clear, explicit links between the three stages of the Investigation ◆ is highly focused throughout on the objectives of the Investigation ◆ carefully selects information from a variety of sources to provide strong and valid reasons to support points made ◆ uses concepts and topics from the HND Agriculture accurately and relevantly to support points made ◆ is well-structured and uses language of a high standard in terms of accuracy and technical content ◆ includes a careful and considered reflection on the Investigation which informs realistic recommendations ◆ is based on a well-chosen, suitable methodology and may use innovative methods of gathering information ◆ provides well thought-out and logical justification of points made ◆ criteria for the evaluation are coherently related to the objectives of the Investigation and provide a strong basis for judging its success 	<p>Is a co-ordinated piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ contains sufficient evidence to meet the minimum requirements of each of the three stages of the Investigation ◆ meets the objectives of the ◆ uses information from a limited range of sources and with limited support reasons given ◆ makes reference to concepts and topics from HND Agriculture and lacks accuracy or full relevance to the points made ◆ is satisfactorily structured uses language which reflects terms and technical content ◆ has some limited reflection which is adequate in comprehensiveness and with limited practicality for recommendations for the future ◆ use an adequate methodology and conventional methods of gathering data and adequately considers the relationship between them ◆ provides some justification of points made but reasons given may be limited, weak or lack coherence ◆ criteria for the evaluation may be limited, lack support from concepts and topics on the HND Agriculture and be difficult to use or interpret

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

The project will be marked out of 100. Assessors will mark each stage of the project, taking into account of the criteria outlined on the following pages. 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 comprises 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.

The Investigation comprises three stages: planning; developing; and evaluating. The following percentage marks are allocated to each stage of the project: 15% to the planning stage, 75% to the developing stage and 10% to the evaluation stage.

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

Project Stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements
Stage 1 — Planning (15%)	<p>Candidates will be provided with an outline brief to investigate an agricultural business issue and assess its implications. The issue to be investigated must involve meeting the needs of the business. Candidates will produce a brief in their own words which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ title of the Investigation. ◆ statement of the issue to be investigated. This should cover how it involves meeting the needs of the business. ◆ objectives of the Investigation. ◆ background to the choice of issue which must be directly related to the HND Agriculture. ◆ explanation of the sources of information which will be used for the Investigation and why each has been selected. ◆ explanation of how the Investigation will be conducted with reasons for the choice of methods used. ◆ devising a plan to carry out the Investigation. The plan must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — timescales/milestones for conducting the Investigation, which should be related to the objectives of the Investigation. — identification of the resources (including time) required to carry out the Investigation. ◆ evidence of the above should be presented. It may be supplemented by evidence provided orally by the candidate in a discussion with the assessor. If this is done, a record of the main points of the discussion should be provided. <p><i>The brief is worth 10% of the marks for the Investigation while the plan is worth 5% of the marks.</i></p> <p><i>The candidate must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Planning stage.</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 (75%)	<p>Preparation of a submission of the Investigation of An agricultural business issue and its implications for a business or businesses. It must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ detailed explanation of the business and how the issue affects the business. The explanation should be justified by explicit reference to the data collected and to concepts covered in the Group Award. ◆ detailed explanation of two potential options for the business and justification of the preferred option ◆ assessment of the implications for the business of the adoption of the preferred option <p>The submission should be presented in a format suitable for a business report, including an executive summary, a contents page, summary and conclusions, and references. It may be supplemented by evidence provided orally by the candidate in a discussion with the assessor. If this is done, a written record of the main points of the discussion should be provided.</p> <p><i>The report is worth 75% of the marks for the Investigation.</i></p> <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 (10%)	<p>Providing an evaluation of the effectiveness of all parts of the Investigation. The evaluation submission should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ assessment of the extent to which each of the original objectives of the Investigation have been met. This should include reference to any modifications made during the course of the Investigation and to any alternative courses of action considered but rejected. ◆ commentary on aspects of the planning and developing stages which worked effectively and why and/or aspects of the planning and development stages which did not work as effectively as expected. Three separate aspects should be covered — one for the brief, one for the plan and one for the report. ◆ assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the report of the Investigation. This should be supported by credible reasons and cover at least one strength and at least one weakness. ◆ recommendations for future Investigations. These should be based on the items above and could relate to the personal development of the candidate (eg in terms of the further development of skills used in this Investigation) or aspects of the process or product of the Investigation (eg with respect to setting timescales, gathering information or possible future Investigations). It should be clear from the recommendations that the candidate has reflected on what happened and has drawn conclusions from this reflection. <p><i>The evaluation is worth 10% of the marks for the Investigation.</i></p> <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)

Support notes

The case study is divided into three distinct stages, and these could form the basis of an Action Plan, a Case Study Report with detailed findings and recommendations and an Evaluation Report which is a self-assessment indicating strengths and weaknesses of the Action Plan and Case Study Report. It is suggested that this case study investigation is run towards the end of the academic year, to give the candidates the opportunity to integrate their studies of the Units in Recommended Prior Knowledge and Skills. It is suggested that in order to carry this project, candidates visit an agricultural or rural business at the start of the study period for this Unit. The business could be selected by the Unit Tutor or the management team for the HND Agriculture. Candidates should be given a full brief on the assessment before the visit. During the visit, candidates should be given the opportunity to see all relevant aspects of the business. Candidates will be expected to take full notes and gather information about the business during the visit. Candidates could be informed that it may not be possible to revisit the business. Information about the business should be collected by the Tutor to provide this to candidates who miss the visit for valid reasons, or arrangements should be made for a further visit.

Candidates would be expected to provide two distinctly different options, for example relating to different enterprises.

Examples of case studies relevant to the HND in Agriculture include:

- ◆ appraising the option to add an agricultural enterprise to a farm business, to broaden the enterprise mix, such as add a beef finishing Unit to a suckler cow enterprise
- ◆ converting an old farm steading, no longer fit for purpose, to domestic dwellings and consequently building a new, modern steading
- ◆ expand the farm business by renting or buying additional land

Candidates could be given the opportunity to discuss their ideas and proposals with the Tutor, through structured classes or programmed tutorials.

As a guide, the submission may be 2,500–3,500 words or equivalent. It is to be presented in a format suitable for a business report, including an executive summary, a contents page, summary and conclusions, and references. It may be supplemented by evidence provided orally by the candidate in a discussion with the assessor. If this is done, a written record of the main points of the discussion should be provided.

The Evaluation Report may be undertaken as an oral interview.

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 assessment arrangements. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs*, which is available on SQA's website: www.sqa.org.uk.

General information for candidates

This Unit is 1 HN credit at SCQF level 8: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8). It may be offered in the final period of the HND Agriculture to allow you to integrate the case study with the knowledge and skills gained from the Units specified in 'Recommended prior skills and knowledge'.

You will visit a selected agricultural business where a specific potential or real business scenario must be addressed. You will be given advance notification of the brief for the case study. You will learn to prepare an action plan which can be used to develop and produce the case study report. You will collect information about the business during the visit and have the opportunity to ask questions that were devised as part of the Action Plan.

Your Action Plan will indicate the information that you need to gather in order to devise a suitable Case Study Plan including setting milestones against a timescale.

You will produce a word-processed Case Study Report, with a recommendation of between 2,500 and 3,000 words. There will be opportunities to further develop the Core Skills of *Problem Solving*, *Communication*, and *Numeracy* (numbers and graphical) at SCQF level 6. You may be required to make an oral presentation of your work.

The project will be marked out of 100 and graded, based on the following grade boundaries.

A = 70% — 100%

B = 60% — 69%

C = 50% — 59%

If you fail the project overall or wish to upgrade, then this must be done using a *substantially different* project, ie all stages are undertaken using a new case study. In this case, your grade will be based on your achievement in the *reassessment*.

It is suggested that this Investigation is run towards the end of the academic year, to give the candidates the opportunity to their studies of the Units in Recommended Prior Knowledge and Skills. It is suggested that in order to carry this project, candidates visit an agricultural or rural business at the start of the study period for this Unit. The business could be selected by the Unit Tutor or the management team for the HND Agriculture. Candidates should be given a full brief on the assessment before the visit. During the visit, candidates should be given the opportunity to see all relevant aspects of the business. Candidates will be expected to take full notes and gather information about the business during the visit. Candidates could be informed that it may not be possible to revisit the business. Information about the business should be collected by the Tutor to provide this to candidates who miss the visit for valid reasons, or arrangements should be made for a further visit.

Candidates could be given the opportunity to discuss their ideas and proposals with the Tutor, through structured classes or programmed tutorials.

The Investigation is divided into three distinct stages, and these could form the basis of an Action planning stage, a developing stage which details findings and recommendations and an evaluation stage which is a self-assessment indicating strengths and weaknesses of the Action Plan and overall Investigation.

The submission should be appropriately structured, presented and referenced.