



Higher National Graded Unit specification

General information for centres

This Graded Unit has been validated as part of the HND International Business and Trade. 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: International Business and Trade: Graded Unit 2

Graded Unit code: F4AM 35

Type of Graded Unit: Project

Assessment Instrument: Investigation

Credit value: 2 HN credits at SCQF level 8: (16 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 International Business: and Trade:

- ◆ to allow candidates to develop a range of transferable skills, for example in oral and written communication, information technology and problem solving with specific reference to international aspects of socio-economic issues, logistics, marketing, business management, organisational structures and finance
- ◆ to enable candidates to build on previously acquired transferable skills for their personal and vocational development
- ◆ to develop study, research and analytical skills
- ◆ to provide candidates with the opportunities to obtain skills to enable them to pursue a range of specialist executive and managerial positions available in the career structures of a wide range private and public sector organisations
- ◆ to enable candidates to develop their skills so that they will be able to progress to business, academic and professional qualifications at a higher level through an advanced entry route usually at year 3 entry point

General information for centres (cont)

- ◆ Preparation of HND candidates for progression in a wide range of private and public sector organisations' graduate entry schemes and professional post-graduate vocational qualifications such as CIM or CIPS
- ◆ Ensuring candidates have the options to permit an element of vocational specialisation and progression to Higher Education

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:

- ◆ *Global Business Organisations* F27C 35
- ◆ *International Institutions* D4XC 35
- ◆ *International Purchasing and Supply Management* F27B 35
- ◆ *International Marketing* DG6N 35 or *International Marketing* DV8K 35
- ◆ *Preparing Financial Forecasts* DE3J 35

Core Skills: There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or a Core Skill component as part of this Graded Unit. However, there may be opportunities to develop the Core Skills of *Communication* and *Problem Solving* at level 6 and *IT* and *Working with Others* at level 5 and numeracy at level 4.

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 Graded Unit that it covers.

Administrative Information

Graded Unit code: F4AM 35

Graded Unit title: International Business and Trade: Graded Unit 2

Original date of publication: August 2008

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History of changes:

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

Source: SQA

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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: International Business and Trade: 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)

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 international business or trade issue and the assessment of its implications for a business or a number of businesses. The candidate can choose the issue to be investigated but it should be one which can be directly related to topics, concepts or models studied as part of the HND International Business and Trade.

The term 'business' refers to any organisation operating in the private, public or voluntary sector of the economy. 'Customers' refers to any internal or external customer of the organisation or to a number of such customers.

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

It is expected that most candidates will carry out the investigation individually. However, at the discretion of the centre, candidates may carry out a group investigation. In these cases, the objectives of the investigation, and the way it is planned and conducted, should reflect the opportunities for collaborative effort. 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. Where candidates do work in a group, centres may wish to supplement the written evidence with oral evidence obtained from each candidate.

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"> ◆ contains sufficient evidence for the three essential stages of the investigation and is produced to a high standard and is clearly inter-related ◆ 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 ◆ demonstrates knowledge and understanding of concepts and topics from the HND International Business and Trade accurately and relevantly to support points made ◆ offers conclusions and recommendations which are coherently related to the objectives of the investigation ◆ is well-structured and uses language of a high standard in terms of accuracy and technical content 	<p>Is a co-ordinated piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ contains sufficient evidence of the three essential stages of the practical assignment and is produced to an adequate standard ◆ meets the objectives of the investigation but not in a consistent or fully comprehensive manner ◆ uses information from a limited range of sources and in a manner which does not always support reasons given ◆ makes limited reference to concepts and topics from HND International Business and Trade which may not always be used accurately nor always be fully relevant to the points made ◆ offers conclusions and recommendations, related to the objectives of the investigation, which are limited, weak or lack coherence ◆ is satisfactorily structured and uses language which is adequate in terms of accuracy and technical content

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

Grade A	Grade C
◆ includes a careful and considered reflection on the investigation which informs realistic recommendations	◆ has some limited reflection but it is not comprehensive and does not form the basis for a set of realistic recommendations for the future

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 Group Award Graded Unit.

Project Stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements
Stage 1 — Planning 20% of total marks	<p>An action plan outlining the proposed investigation of an issue relating to international business and trade, in either the public, private or voluntary sector. This issue must be directly related to a topic or topics covered as part of the Group Award.</p> <p>The action plan must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the title of the investigation report ◆ the objectives of the investigation ◆ the rationale for choosing this issue for investigation (if choice has been allowed), with the anticipated benefits which will result to the organisation and/or its stakeholders ◆ identification of the sources of information which will be used for the investigation with an explanation of why each has been selected ◆ explanation of how the investigation will be conducted with reasons for the choice of methods adopted ◆ statement of the criteria which will be used to assess the implications of the issue and a justification of why each criterion has been selected. ◆ timescale for conducting the investigation, including final and interim completion dates ◆ identification of resources required to carry out investigation <p>The action plan is worth 20 marks and candidates must achieve a minimum of 10 marks to pass.</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
<p>Stage 2 — Developing 60% of total marks</p>	<p>An investigation report, which clearly demonstrates a solution to a problem, or suggests a new approach in response to the changing needs of international business or trade issues within an organisation for the benefit of that organisation/or its stakeholders. It should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ contents ◆ description of the organisation upon which the investigation is to be based ◆ detailed explanation of the problem or area where a new approach is required in response to the changing business or trade needs of the organisation and/or its stakeholders ◆ the objective(s) to be achieved ◆ relevant underpinning mandatory knowledge and skills — directly relating to the topic chosen for the investigation ◆ summary of research findings ◆ conclusions drawn from the investigation ◆ specific recommendations ◆ a list of acknowledgements of sources and references ◆ an appendix containing any additional relevant material <p>The report will also include evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ collection and collation of relevant material ◆ interpretation/analysis of research data ◆ effective use of research material <p>The report should be 2,500–3,500 words or equivalent and be presented in a format suitable for a business report, which includes an introduction, findings, conclusions and recommendations. 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> <p>This stage is worth 60 marks and candidates must achieve a minimum of 30 marks to pass.</p> <p><i>The candidate must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Developing stage.</i></p>

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

Project stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements
Stage 3 — Evaluating 20% of total marks	<p>An evaluation relating to the effectiveness of all parts of the investigation. It should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ a brief outline of the investigation. ◆ assessment of the extent to which the original objectives were achieved. This should include details of any modifications made or considered, with sound reasons for the action taken. ◆ evaluation of the effectiveness of the planning stage, highlighting any problems which arose, how they were dealt with and any modifications made to the original plan. ◆ commentary on the investigation activity and the effectiveness of research methods adopted, highlighting any difficulties experienced in gathering data and how these difficulties were resolved and suggesting any alternative strategies which could have been adopted to achieve the objectives. ◆ the strengths and weaknesses of the investigation. ◆ description of any new knowledge or skills which have been learned and any areas of personal strength or weakness which have been identified during the investigation. ◆ reflection on the success of the investigation undertaken with recommendations for improvements on future occasions for each of the three stages. These recommendations should be substantiated by credible reasons. <p>This evaluation stage could be assessed by either a report or an oral presentation.</p> <p>This stage is worth 20 marks and candidates must achieve a minimum of 10 marks to pass.</p> <p><i>The candidate must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Evaluating stage.</i></p>

Equality and inclusion

This graded unit specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence. Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.