



Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Specification

General Information

This Graded Unit has been validated as part of the HND Rural Resource Management. Centres are required to develop a project-based assessment in accordance with this validated specification.

Graded Unit title: Rural Resource Management: Graded Unit 2

Graded Unit code: F6JG 35

Type of Project: Investigation

Publication date: June 2013

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Version: 01

Graded Unit purpose

This Graded Unit is designed to provide evidence that the learner has achieved the following principal aims of the HND Rural Resource Management:

- ◆ enable learners to develop integrated solutions through a rigorous and critical evaluation of problems associated with resource management
- ◆ encourage a participatory approach to the development of sustainable rural communities
- ◆ ensure that learners have a sound appreciation of current environmental issues and how they may relate to business development and management
- ◆ provide the opportunity for learners to develop a range of practical abilities in rural resource management in a variety of 'real life' and simulated situations
- ◆ produce rural resource managers with a sound understanding of relevant scientific, technical, socio-economic and business principles
- ◆ facilitate progression to degree level education based on a firm foundation of understanding, technical expertise, Core Skills, and an understanding of the multidisciplinary nature of appropriate resource management

Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit credit at SCQF level 8: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8)

Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Specification: General Information (cont)

Recommended entry to the Graded Unit

It is recommended that the learner should have completed or be in the process of completing the following Units relating to the above principal aims prior to undertaking this Graded Unit:

- ◆ *Resource Economics* (F6CY 35)
- ◆ *Environmental Science: An Introduction* (F5T5 35)
- ◆ *Environmental Management Systems* (F6D0 35)
- ◆ *Data Collection and Handling Methods* (F3X3 35)
- ◆ *Waste Management and Pollution Control* (F55S 35)
- ◆ *Tourism: Sustainability and Rural Communities* (F566 35)
- ◆ *Rural Socio-Economic Development* (F6BK 35)
- ◆ *Rural Business Diversification* (F2EF 35)

Core Skills

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

Assessment Support Pack

The Assessment Support Pack for this Unit provides assessment and marking guidelines that exemplify the national standard for achievement. It is a valid, reliable and practicable Instrument of Assessment. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the Assessment Support Pack to ensure a comparable standard. Assessment Support Packs are available on SQA's secure website.

Equality and inclusion

This Graded Unit 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 SQA's website:
www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements

Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Specification: Designing the project and assessing learners

Graded Unit title: Rural Resource Management: Graded Unit 2

Assessment

This Graded Unit will be assessed by the use of a project-based investigation developed by centres. The project should provide the learner with the opportunity to produce evidence that demonstrates she/he has met the aims of this Graded Unit.

The project undertaken by the learner must be a complex task which involves:

- ◆ variables which are complex or unfamiliar
- ◆ relationships which need to be clarified
- ◆ a context which may be unfamiliar to the learner

The project must require the learner 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 investigation should involve study of a business enterprise in relation to relevant environmental impacts, with possible examples being production-orientated farm business (eg conventional or organic farming, farm shops), tourism business (such as accommodation, wildlife tourism), or any other appropriate example. The learner may need to determine the aims and objectives of the business, the financial context of the business, the opportunities for development, and importantly focus on the actual and/or potential impacts of that business on the environment. This would involve the learner in firstly finding existing data on appropriate businesses, and then visiting the businesses concerned to collect data appropriate to the aims of the study, and using an appropriate data collection strategy. Using the data acquired, and taking account of health and safety and general good practice the learner would be required to draw up realistic plans and recommendations for future business development in terms of environmental impacts.

Conditions of assessment

The learner should be given a date for completion of the project. However, the instructions for the project should be distributed to allow the learner sufficient time to assimilate the details and carry out the project. During the time between the distribution of the project instructions and the completion date, assessors may answer questions, provide clarification, guidance and reasonable assistance. The project should be marked as soon as possible after the completion date. The final grading given should reflect the quality of the learner'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 learner 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 learner's grade will be based on the achievement in the re-assessment, if this results in a higher grade.

Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Specification: Designing the project and assessing learners (cont)

Graded Unit title: Rural Resource Management: Graded Unit 2

Evidence Requirements for this Graded Unit

The project undertaken by learners will consist of three stages: planning; developing; and evaluating. The following table specifies the minimum evidence required to pass each stage.

Note: The learner 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	% Mark Allocation
Stage 1 — Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the rationale for the investigation ◆ a set of aims and objectives for the investigation ◆ identification of the main issues for research and the techniques and sources to be used ◆ identification of sources and techniques required and how they will be utilised ◆ identification of the stages (milestones) involved in the project work and the timescales for completion of each stage (project plan) will be achieved ◆ identification of appropriate health and safety procedures 	20%
	<i>The learner must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Planning stage.</i>	
Project stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements	% Mark Allocation
Stage 2 — Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ a contents page ◆ review of current up to date literature relevant to the investigation ◆ use of equipment for the practical tasks involved in the investigation ◆ identification, collection and collation of significant data ◆ manipulation and analysis of significant data ◆ presentation of appropriate data ◆ discussion of data and the findings ◆ conclusions drawn from critical analysis of data ◆ reference listing of sources used in literature review 	60%
	<i>The learner must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Developing stage.</i>	

Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Specification: Designing the project and assessing learners (cont)

Graded Unit title: Rural Resource Management: Graded Unit 2

Project stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements	% Mark Allocation
Stage 3 — Evaluating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ contain an abstract ◆ summarise any unforeseen events and how they were handled ◆ identify knowledge and/or skills which have been gained or developed ◆ assess the strengths and weaknesses of the output of the investigation ◆ determine to what extent the investigation met the original brief ◆ suggest potential development themes for the investigation 	20%
	<i>The learner must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Evaluating stage.</i>	

Assessing and grading learners

The overall project will be marked out of **100**. Only whole marks should be used.

The percentage of marks allocated to each stage of the project is outlined in the **Evidence Requirements**.

It is a requirement that learners must meet the minimum *Evidence Requirements* for the *Planning* stage *before progressing to the Developing stage before progressing to the Evaluating stage*. Learners may produce evidence over and above that specified in the minimum *Evidence Requirements* and deserve more than half the available marks for that stage. Assessors should use the Grade Related Criteria outlined below to judge learner performance.

Learners are required to work independently to meet the *Evidence Requirements* of the Graded Unit. At the same time, learners need appropriate support. SQA uses the term reasonable assistance to describe the balance between supporting learners in their project and not providing too much assistance.

At the end of *each* stage there should be opportunities for remediation and re-assessment of learners for that particular stage. This includes the final *Evaluation* stage. Any re-assessment should be carried out in line with the centre's own assessment policy.

Learners 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 learner performance for this Graded Unit is specified in the following table.

Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Specification: Designing the project and assessing learners (cont)

Graded Unit title: Rural Resource Management: Graded Unit 2

Grade Related Criteria	
Grade A	Grade C
<p>Is a seamless, coherent piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ has comprehensive evidence for each of the three phases of the project and that has coherent themes throughout ◆ demonstrates high standards through presentation style, language, accuracy and technical content ◆ demonstrates an accurate and insightful analysis and interpretation of the investigative brief which relate to site issues ◆ demonstrates a systematic approach and a logical progression to the collection and analysis of data ◆ has sought and made good use of a wide range of supporting evidence ◆ has provided evidence of innovation or dynamism in approach ◆ embodies highly effective integration of knowledge and skills ◆ recognises conflicts and potential drawbacks of ideas ◆ demonstrates independence of thought by successfully completing the stages of the project with infrequent and minimal tutor support 	<p>Is a co-ordinated piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ provides evidence for each of the three phases of the project ◆ is clear in terms of presentation style, language, accuracy and technical content ◆ contains analytical responses to the project brief which relate to countryside site issues ◆ contains data collection and analysis in relation to site ◆ contains supporting evidence ◆ contains standard approaches to issue ◆ presents evidence of integration of skills and knowledge ◆ tends to consider ideas and proposals in isolation ◆ requires tutor intervention to keep the investigation on track

The marks allocated to each stage will then be aggregated to arrive at an overall mark for the project. Assessors will then assign an overall grade to the learner for this Graded Unit based on the following grade boundaries.

- A = 70%–100%
- B = 60%–69%
- C = 50%–59%

These grade boundaries are fixed and should **not** be amended.

If a learner does not achieve a pass or wishes to upgrade, then this must be done using a substantially different project, ie all stages are undertaken using a new project (case study, investigation or practical assignment). In these circumstances, the highest grade achieved should be awarded.

More information on reasonable assistance, remediation and re-assessment may be found in the SQA publication *Guidance for the Implementation of Graded Units in Higher National Certificates and Diplomas* (SQA, 2008, Publication code: CA4405).



Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Support Notes

Graded Unit title: Rural Resource Management: Graded Unit 2

Guidance on approaches to delivery and assessment of this Graded Unit

The investigation should involve the application of knowledge of environmental management issues, sustainable development and resource use, business principles, and land use issues that have been developed during the Units listed in this specification.

The investigation should focus on a suitable business. Such a business should be selected to include the potential for future improvement in terms of actual or possible impacts on the environment arising from such development. The business selected should preferably be rural, but any business that offers the ability to examine environmental principles and performance within a business context would be suitable. The learner may need, with guidance, to determine the aims and objectives for their investigation, as this may vary from business to business. Once objectives have been set, the learner would then have to gather relevant information, including activities on the site and impacts on the environment. This would involve the learner in firstly finding any existing data on the selected business or impact focused on, and then visiting the business concerned to collect data appropriate to the aims of the investigation, using an appropriate data collection strategy. Using the data acquired, and taking account of health and safety and general good practice, the learner would then be required to draw up realistic priorities for future action, focusing on applying Environmental Management Systems principles to reduce environmental impacts and therefore also reducing business costs.

It is recommended that at the start of the year tutorials are held to introduce the project to the learners and provide initial direction. Thereafter it is suggested that regular scheduled meetings between the tutor and individual learners are held to review progress and to provide appropriate guidance. The guidance must not be such that it influences the final grading, but, for example, pointing out to the learner the consequences of significant deviation from their plan during the development phase, would be legitimate.

It is desirable for notes of the meetings to be made for the purposes of clarity and to further simulate the working environment. The notes should be agreed upon by both parties. Learners should be encouraged to keep a notebook incorporating a diary of the progress and tasks completed. This would facilitate the reflective component and help to ensure that milestones are completed in a businesslike manner.

Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Support Notes (cont)

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It is desirable that most learners carry out individual investigations, however it is possible that more than one learner could use the same business as the case study or basis for their investigation. This may be necessary because of availability of appropriate case study business. However, in such a situation each learner would ideally be addressing different aspects of the business environment relationship, and in any case must produce their own evidence for all three stages of assessment of this Unit.

Tutor questions may be used to ascertain the learner's understanding of the issues contained in the case study report and to probe the validity of the conclusions.

History of changes to Graded Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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General information for learners

Graded Unit title: Rural Resource Management: Graded Unit 2

This is a single credit Graded Unit at SCQF level 8: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8).

This Graded Unit is a project (investigation), to be completed towards the end of your Course. It is designed to assess your ability to integrate and apply knowledge and understanding from the following defined Units in order to meet the principal aims of the HND Rural Resource Management Award.

- ◆ *Resource Economics* (F6CY 35)
- ◆ *Environmental Science: An Introduction* (F5T5 35)
- ◆ *Environmental Management Systems* (F6D0 35)
- ◆ *Data Collection and Handling Methods* (F3X3 35)
- ◆ *Waste Management and Pollution Control* (F55S 35)
- ◆ *Tourism: Sustainability and Rural Communities* (F566 35)
- ◆ *Rural Socio-Economic Development* (F6BK 35)
- ◆ *Rural Business Diversification* (F2EF 35)

You will be asked to carry out an investigation to generate data that will be used to construct a report of that investigation. The details of your investigation will be discussed with your tutor, and may involve the gathering (from archival sources and from original surveys) and analysis of data on a given business or site. The investigation will require you to plan, develop and evaluate. You will be asked to provide an action planning document, an investigation report and a report to evaluate your management and effectiveness in conducting the investigation. You will be given a high degree of autonomy during all stages of the investigation, however your tutor is available for guidance and support as and when required. After the submission of your report, your tutor may interview you to probe your understanding of the issues contained in your report and the validity of your conclusions.

The project (investigation) will be assessed in three stages:

- | | | |
|---|------------|--------------|
| 1 | Planning | 20% of marks |
| 2 | Developing | 60% of marks |
| 3 | Evaluating | 20% of marks |

You will need to pass all three stages of your investigation by achieving at least 50% of the marks available at each stage. You must pass each separate stage before progressing to the next stage.

The project will be marked out of 100%. Assessors will mark each stage of the investigation, taking into account the criteria outlined. The marks will then be aggregated to arrive at an overall mark for the project and an overall grade will be assigned to the learner for this Graded Unit based on the following grade boundaries.

- | | | |
|---|---|----------|
| A | = | 70%–100% |
| B | = | 60%–69% |
| C | = | 50%–59% |