



## Higher National Unit specification: general information

**Unit title:** Fashion Merchandising

**Unit code:** FH2R 34

**Superclass:** BA

**Publication date:** August 2010

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 01

### Unit purpose

The Unit is designed to provide candidates with an understanding of the ways in which fashion retailers have responded to new competitive challenges by adopting various merchandising techniques.

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

- 1 Explain how the dynamic external environment affects fashion retailers.
- 2 Forecast fashion trends.
- 3 Explain the importance of fashion merchandise planning and management.
- 4 Plan a merchandise presentation appropriate for a fashion retailer's customers.

### Recommended prior knowledge and skills

Access to this Unit is at the discretion of the Centre. No prior knowledge or experience is necessary, although it would be beneficial if candidates had fashion experience and/or NQ Units, such as D0JA 11: Introduction to Fashion, D0JB 11; Fashion Merchandising or D0YM 12: Media Studies: Fashion.

### Credit points and level

2 Higher National Unit credits at SCQF level 7: (16 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7\*)

*\*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.*

## **General information (cont)**

### **Core Skills**

There may be opportunities to gather evidence towards Core Skills in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components in this Unit.

### **Context for delivery**

This Unit is an Optional Unit included in the framework of the HNC/D Retail Management.

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**

In order to pass this Unit, candidates must provide sufficient evidence that they have satisfied the minimum Evidence Requirements for each Outcome.

In order to pass this Unit candidates must provide sufficient evidence that they have satisfied the Evidence Requirement for each Outcome. The following methods of assessment could be used:

Outcome 1: 10 restricted response questions.

Outcome 2: An assignment of approximately 1,000 words.

Outcome 3: A case study based on a fashion retailer.

Outcome 4: An assignment of approximately 1,000 words.

Research and preparation time should be allocated to allow candidates the opportunity to gather sufficient information and materials to complete Outcomes 2 and 4.

## Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

**Unit title:** Fashion Merchandising

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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

Explain how the dynamic external environment affects fashion retailers

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ The role of fashion merchandising
- ◆ Major drivers of fashion change
- ◆ Structure of clothing retailing in the UK
- ◆ Merchandising trends

#### Evidence Requirements

The candidate will provide evidence that s/he can explain the environmental changes that have taken place and how these have had an influence on current and future fashion merchandising activities within the retail industry. This can be in the form of written or oral evidence and should accurately:

- ◆ identify the drivers of change that have influenced fashion retailers
- ◆ explain how these environmental changes have affected the structure of clothing retailing
- ◆ identify the role of fashion merchandising together with current and future trends

Evidence should be generated through assessment undertaken in controlled conditions. Candidates may bring two sides of A4 notes to the assessment. No other material may be brought to the assessment.

#### Assessment Guidelines

The assessment for this Outcome could be 10 restricted response questions which satisfy all the Evidence Requirements. An alternative paper should be available for a second opportunity if required.

## Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

**Unit title:** Fashion Merchandising

### Outcome 2

Forecast fashion trends

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Traditional and contemporary seasons of trading
- ◆ Sources of fashion information
- ◆ New fashion trends

#### Evidence Requirements

The candidate is required to provide evidence that s/he can identify the key seasonal segments of trading in the fashion year and the sources of primary and secondary fashion information that will enable a forecast to be made of the new fashion trends. The candidate should select an appropriate retailer, identify their target customers and an appropriate season upon which to base the assessment. The new fashion trends appropriate to the fashion retailer, their customers and the season should be identified. This can be in the form of written or oral evidence and should accurately:

- ◆ identify the key seasons highlighting those relevant to the selected retailer
- ◆ describe the primary and secondary sources of fashion information used to determine the new fashion trends
- ◆ evaluate the appropriate fashion information, emphasising new 'fashion look(s)' appropriate for the selected retailer, their customers and season(s).

Evidence should be generated by restricted open-book assessment undertaken in controlled conditions. Where an assignment is used, candidates may be given the assessment in advance of the assessment taking place. Candidates may bring to the assessment a copy of the assignment and notes, consisting of no more than 100 words, which they have made personally and any additional materials, eg photographs, that they may wish to attach as appendices. They may not bring textbooks, handouts or other material not prepared by them. All notes should be submitted with the assessment.

#### Assessment Guidelines

The assessment of this Outcome could be in the form of an assignment and report of approximately 1,000 words. In Outcome 1, the candidate identified how social, cultural and technological changes impact on the fashion industry. In this assessment, having selected a fashion retailer, they should now predict and accurately interpret the 'fashion look' for a particular season using a variety of sources of fashion information. The report may be supplemented by additional questions to ensure coverage of all aspects of the Evidence Requirements. The format of the report is not part of the mandatory Evidence Requirements for this Unit and it may be presented in any suitable way. Candidates may appendix their evidence with illustrations including drawings, photographs, mood board etc

## Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

**Unit title:** Fashion Merchandising

### Outcome 3

Explain the importance of fashion merchandise planning and management

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Distribution channels of merchandise from supplier to retailer
- ◆ The planning processes
- ◆ Sales plans
- ◆ Merchandise management and allocation

#### Evidence Requirements

Candidates will be required to provide evidence to show they can, with reference to a particular retailer, explain the importance of fashion merchandise planning. Oral or written evidence should accurately:

- ◆ describe the different channels of distribution of fashion goods from supplier to retailer with an evaluation of the preferred channel adopted by a named retailer
- ◆ identify the importance of managing the flow of merchandise from supplier to retailer
- ◆ demonstrate numeric and analytical skills used in planning
- ◆ use appropriate information and documentation

Evidence should be generated through assessment undertaken in controlled conditions. The use of a calculator is permitted.

#### Assessment Guidelines

The assessment of this Outcome could be in the form of a case study which would include a sales plan. The candidate should be able to show the relationship between market positioning, the financial investment (budget) and the product range to the retailer specified in the case study, balancing the width and depth of the range (shown in range plan) accordingly. From the case study, the candidate should also identify the source of fashion products, ie home produced or foreign products, with the benefits/suitability outlined of each source.

It is recommended that this assessment should be carried out in controlled conditions without reference textbooks, however candidates may have access to their own notes.

## Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

**Unit title:** Fashion Merchandising

### Outcome 4

Plan a merchandise presentation appropriate for a fashion retailer's customers

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Planning stages
- ◆ Setting clear objectives
- ◆ Importance of identifying customers and their needs
- ◆ Types of fashion presentations
- ◆ Selection of appropriate themes
- ◆ Identification of resources

#### Evidence Requirements

The candidate should provide evidence that s/he can, with reference to a particular retail situation, develop a plan that identifies the key stages involved in the presentation of fashion merchandise.

Written or oral evidence to show the candidate is able to:

- ◆ select an appropriate type of fashion merchandise presentation and theme
- ◆ determine clear objectives for the presentation
- ◆ identify the resources required
- ◆ prepare a schedule for the presentation

Evidence should be generated through open-book assessment where candidates can refer to textbooks, handouts, the internet and any other materials.

#### Assessment Guidelines

The assessment of this Outcome could be in the form of an assignment and report of approximately 1,000 words. The report may be supplemented by additional questions to ensure coverage of all aspects of the Evidence Requirements. The format of the report is not part of the mandatory Evidence Requirements for this Unit and it may be presented in any suitable way. Candidates may appendix their evidence with illustrations including drawings and/or photographs. A presentation, eg a fashion show, although not mandatory, could also provide evidence that the candidate's plan meets the stated objectives.

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes

### Unit title: Fashion Merchandising

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 80 hours.

### Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This Unit is intended for candidates who wish to pursue a career in the retail fashion industry and who are taking a qualification in HNC/D Retail Management, either on a fulltime or part-time basis, in which Fashion Merchandising is an Optional Unit for both HNC and HND. It may also be undertaken by candidates in employment wishing to develop their fashion merchandising knowledge and skills.

The following notes give additional information on each Outcome:

#### Outcome 1

Role of fashion merchandising: relationship between buyer and merchandiser; efficient stock planning, management and control of merchandise in order to maximise profitability.

Major drivers of fashion change: globalisation, media communication, technology, ecology, ethics, and demographics including lifestyles. Also consider fashion adoption theories, fashion life cycles, fashion attitudes of customers — fashion leaders/followers.

Structure of clothing retailing: the changing high street: larger conglomerates increasing pressure on independents; market leaders.

Future merchandising trends: increase in use of computerised planning systems; meeting local demands using IT; integration of merchandise planning and visual merchandising systems.

#### Outcome 2

Seasonal segments: traditional seasons: Spring/Summer; Autumn/Winter; contemporary seasons: less defined but could be up to twelve due to unpredictable weather patterns and also the greater emphasis on satisfying the needs of customers' changing lifestyles, eg greater foreign travel by customers, active leisure pursuits etc

Sources of fashion information: Primary research: fashion shows, surveys, fore-casting agencies, eg Promostyl, Worth Global Style Network (via the Internet), trade shows, eg Premier Vision; Secondary research: historical company performance, the media, social trends statistics etc used to determine profiles of target customers

Fashion trends: emerging garment types, styles, colours and fabrics

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Fashion Merchandising

### Outcome 3

Merchandise channels: domestic/international sources of supply channelled to the retailer through horizontal or vertical integration.

Planning process: historical performance, key trends.

Sales plans: external/internal influences including planned and unplanned, eg stock turn, breadth/depth of stock, the weather.

Merchandise management and allocation: documentation relating to weekly sales, stock intake, ie WSSI; mark-ups/markdowns; range plan and allocations; delivery schedule; use of IT systems.

### Outcome 4

Planning stages: Objectives, target customers, method of presentation, theme, resources

Setting objectives: SMART (ie specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound)

Target customers: importance of identifying customers and their needs; market segmentation

Types of presentations: talk, fashion show, video, advertisement, brochure

Themes: seasonal; special events

Resources: people, finance, merchandise, props, graphics, time and space

## Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

This Unit is likely to form the Group Award HNC/D Retail Management and may be delivered in year 1 or 2. It can be offered as a free-standing Unit as it is not dependent on any previous or wider fashion retail knowledge.

Candidates should be encouraged to visit fashion retail outlets, fashion shows, trade shows/conferences, read fashion consumer and trade magazines in order to ensure that they are up-to-date regarding current and future fashion trends. Visiting speakers from the fashion industry would also be very beneficial for candidates. A useful fashion internet site is available as a free resource to fashion candidates and colleges can register on [www.eduinfo@wgsn.com](mailto:www.eduinfo@wgsn.com).

The sources outlined above will assist candidates in gathering information and material for restricted open-book assessment 2 and open-book assessment 4, where assignments of approximately 1000 words are recommended.

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Fashion Merchandising

### Opportunities for developing Core Skills

The delivery and assessment of this Unit may contribute towards the development of the Core Skill of Problem Solving. The components Critical Thinking, Planning and Organising and Reviewing and Evaluating may be developed through various activities required to be completed by candidates throughout the Unit. Examples include identifying and researching primary and secondary sources of information, forecasting fashion trends and planning and preparing a presentation.

The delivery and assessment of this Unit may contribute towards the development of the Core Skill of Communication. The components of Written and Oral Communication may be developed through various activities such as preparation and production of reports and preparation and delivery of a presentation.

The delivery and assessment of this Unit may contribute towards the development of the Core Skill Numeracy. The components of Using Number and Using Graphical information may be developed through activities such as preparing sales plans, forecasting trends, calculating costs, etc.

The delivery and assessment of this Unit may contribute towards the development of the Core Skill of Information Technology. The component of Accessing Information may be developed through various activities including accessing websites to identify sources, carrying out research and presenting information.

### Open learning

This Unit could be delivered by distance learning. However, it would require planning by the centre to ensure the sufficiency and authenticity of candidate evidence. Arrangements would have to be made to ensure the assessments for Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 are delivered in a supervised environment under controlled conditions.

### Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website [www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements).

## History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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Additional copies of this Unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Please contact the Business Development and Customer Support team, telephone 0303 333 0330.

## General information for candidates

### Unit title: Fashion Merchandising

This optional Unit is designed to give you an understanding of how the role of merchandising is becoming increasingly important to the fashion retailer in aiding survival in an ever changing competitive environment.

It explores the major drivers of change and identifies how fashion retailers have responded by using more efficient merchandising methods. It emphasises the need to accurately forecast new fashion trends and highlights the sources of information and suppliers. Planning and management of stock is addressed theoretically and also using the appropriate documentation in practical exercises. Up-to-date fashion information should be accessed from the media, fashion and trade shows and the internet.

In order to complete the Unit successfully, you will be required to achieve a satisfactory level of performance on four pieces of assessed work. The evidence required is:

- 1 That you can explain, in writing or orally, the environmental changes that have taken place and how these have had an influence on current and future fashion merchandising activities within the retail industry. Evidence should be generated through assessment undertaken in controlled conditions. You may bring two sides of A4 notes to the assessment. No other material may be brought to the assessment.
- 2 That you can identify key seasonal segments and the sources of fashion information that will enable a forecast to be made of the new fashion trends. You should select an appropriate retailer and season upon which to base the assessment, which may be in the form of an assignment and report. Written or oral evidence should be generated through a restricted open-book assessment undertaken in controlled conditions.
- 3 With reference to a particular retailer, you can explain, either orally or in writing, the importance of fashion merchandise planning, highlighting the different channels of distribution of fashion goods from supplier to retailer and the importance of managing that flow of merchandise. You should also be able to use appropriate information and documentation while demonstrating numeric and analytical skills. Evidence should be generated through assessment undertaken in controlled conditions. A calculator is permitted.
- 4 That you can, with reference to a particular retail situation, develop a plan that identifies the key stages involved in the presentation of fashion merchandise. Evidence should be generated through open-book assessment where you may refer to textbooks, handouts, the internet and any other materials. This evidence may be presented as part of a report or in response to a specific question or questions. Organising a fashion show, for example, may help to provide evidence that your plan meets SMART objectives.

## **General information for candidates (cont)**

**Unit title:** Fashion Merchandising

### **Recommended Resources:**

#### **Books**

Principles of Retailing, Butterworth-Heinemann  
John Fernie, Suzanne Fernie and Christopher Moore (2003)  
Fashion Marketing: Contemporary Issues, Butterworth-Heinemann  
Tony Hines and Margaret Bruce (2001)  
Fashion Buying and Merchandising Management, Palgrave  
Tim Jackson and David Shaw (2001),

#### **Consumer Magazines**

Heat  
Elle  
Glamour  
GQ  
Vogue

#### **Trade Magazines**

Drapers Record  
Menswear

#### **Internet**

[www.fashionunited.co.uk](http://www.fashionunited.co.uk)  
[www.firstview.com](http://www.firstview.com)  
[www.retailbulletin.co.uk](http://www.retailbulletin.co.uk)  
[www.wgsn.com](http://www.wgsn.com)