



Higher National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Research Methods in Human Resource Management

Unit code: H1XV 35

Superclass: GE

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Unit purpose

This Unit is designed to provide candidates with the knowledge and skills required to undertake research projects. Candidates will learn about the theory of research; the research process; research methodologies and types of research data that can be used and their appropriateness for particular types of research.

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

- 1 Explain theoretical approaches to research in Human Resource Management.
- 2 Explain research methodology in Human Resource Management.
- 3 Produce a research proposal.

Recommended prior knowledge and skills

Candidates would normally be expected to have competence in communication skills at SCQF level 6 or similar qualifications or experience. It is also recommended that candidates have completed the following Units: *IT in Business — Word-processing, Spreadsheets and Databases: An Introduction* or have relevant IT experience.

Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit 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.*

General information (cont)

Core Skills

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit specification.

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this Unit.

Context for delivery

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.

The assessment exemplar 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 exemplar to ensure a comparable standard. Assessment exemplars are available on SQA's secure website.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Research Methods in Human Resource Management

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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 theoretical approaches to research in Human Resource Management.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ The purpose of research
- ◆ Approaches to research
- ◆ The research process
- ◆ The selection of an appropriate research project

Evidence Requirements for Outcome 1

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ Explain the purpose of research
- ◆ Explain the underpinning theory of Human Resource Management research
- ◆ Describe the process used to undertake research
- ◆ Select an appropriate research project

Outcome 2

Explain research methodologies in Human Resource Management.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Types of research data
- ◆ Techniques for collecting research data
- ◆ Validity and reliability
- ◆ The conduct of organisationally-based investigations

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Research Methods in Human Resource Management

Evidence Requirements for Outcome 2

The Evidence Requirements for Outcome 2 are combined with Outcome 3.

Outcome 3

Produce a research proposal.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Selection of appropriate research topic
- ◆ Research methodology
- ◆ Research proposal

Evidence Requirements for Outcomes 2 and 3

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ Prepare and justify a proposal for research which is practical and feasible in terms of available resources and time scales
- ◆ Select research methods suitable for the investigation and justify the choice by considering the advantages and disadvantages of those chosen for the investigation

The proposal should also:

- ◆ Provide reasons for the research methods which were rejected
- ◆ Address the issues of validity and reliability
- ◆ Meet acceptable conduct of organisationally based research

Candidates are required to present their proposal in an effective manner.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Research Methods in Human Resource Management

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 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This Unit is a mandatory Unit in the HND Human Resource Management. The majority of candidates undertaking this Unit are likely to have completed the Graded Unit 1 within the HNC Human Resource Management and will therefore be familiar with some of the research techniques and the personal and practical skills associated with the management of a research project. This Unit provides a more in depth study of the research theory and methodologies. Candidates will select an appropriate topic for the research. They will prepare and justify a proposal for the research which is practical and feasible in terms of available resources and time scales but will not actually carry out the research project. There are other Units in the HND Human Resource Management which could be integrated with this Unit in terms of carrying out an actual research project, for example, Employee Resourcing and Talent Management.

This Unit is primarily concerned with equipping candidates with the tools required to:

- ◆ understand the theory of research and research methodologies
- ◆ produce a proposal

It is envisaged that the proposal could be in a significant area of the HR function such as:

- ◆ People Resourcing
- ◆ Employee Relations
- ◆ Performance and Reward Management
- ◆ Learning and Development

In addition it could be carried out to deal with some contemporary issues within the above fields, such as:

- ◆ Human Capital
- ◆ Emotional Intelligence
- ◆ Knowledge Management
- ◆ Talent and Diversity Management
- ◆ Employer Branding
- ◆ Transformational Leadership
- ◆ The Psychological Contract

It is important that contemporary HRM issues are dealt with in the research proposal.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Research Methods in Human Resource Management

It is recommended that in this field of study the experience of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development should be taken on board, and the following CIPD text would be helpful in the context of preparing candidates to complete this Unit.

Title: Research Methods in Human Resource Management 2nd Edition

Author: Valerie Anderson

Publishers: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

Publication date: July 2009

ISBN-13: 978-1843982272

Guidance on the delivery of this Unit

This Unit is designed to be practical in nature and, as such, both the contents and processes are to be assessed to ensure that the candidate can demonstrate both knowledge and application of that knowledge in the context of the research proposal.

The Unit can be delivered through a combination of lecturer-mediated discussion and 1:1 interactions. The former can be used to cover topics such as the underpinning theory of HRM research, the research process and research methodologies. The 1:1 interactions can be used to provide support to candidates and discuss their proposals. They can also play a key part in ensuring authenticity.

Delivery can be in a traditional face-to-face environment or using a virtual learning environment or by various combinations of the two such as classroom interaction augmented by an on-line forum.

Guidance on the assessment of this Unit

This Unit fully lends itself to holistic and ongoing assessment through the use of a combined assessment that covers both Outcomes and enables candidates to learn through assessment.

It is recommended that candidates are assessed within the following Assessment Guidelines.

Assessment Guidelines

Outcome 1

Create an opportunity to assess the candidate's knowledge at the beginning of the Unit. Such an activity should serve the purpose of making sure the candidate is familiar with all relevant concepts to commence the research proposal in an informed manner. This could be through responses to open-book questions or production of a report, etc.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Research Methods in Human Resource Management

Outcomes 2 and 3

The remainder of the Unit focuses on the provision of the more advanced techniques and processes. It should also be noted that the major part of the assessment is very much of a practical nature, and is assessed at the end of the delivered Unit. Candidates will evaluate research methodologies and produce a proposal for a research project.

It is recommended that this Outcome could be used not only to assess the candidate's knowledge but to give candidates the opportunity to demonstrate:

- ◆ Decision making
- ◆ Ability to present information within a given timescale
- ◆ Ability to work under pressure

It is important that the candidate has developed the necessary skills to complete the Unit to a professional standard in terms of the contents of the research proposal.

It is suggested that candidates present their proposal for research to the tutor and their peers.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Research Methods in Human Resource Management

Online and Distance Learning

There are considerable opportunities for Online and Distance Learning and Assessment of this Unit.

It is possible to co-ordinate a learning and teaching/assessment programme through a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) which would allow geographically dispersed candidates to initiate, develop and maintain contact with each other.

Centres which wish to use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) must ensure that the national standard is applied to all candidate evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. Further advice is available in *SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education (AA1641, March 2003)* or latest issue if this version is superseded.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

Candidates are able to develop Core Skills in this Unit at SCQF level 6 as noted below.

Communication: Reading, Written and Oral

All Outcomes provide candidates with the opportunity of analysis and evaluation of a formal research report. This provides underpinning knowledge by reading complex information on a suitable format and presentation of a human resource management issue. For all Outcomes, the completion of the research proposal develops written communications for identifying and recording a complex issue in human resource management. Oral communication could be developed in all Outcomes through group discussions which will analyse and evaluate related information on in-depth human resource management topics.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

ICT skills could be developed in all Outcomes through internet research and word processing and presentation of the research proposal.

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

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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General information for candidates

Unit title: Research Methods in Human Resource Management

This Unit is designed to develop your knowledge of the underpinning theory of Human Resource Management research. You will be required to evaluate various research methodologies discussing the advantages and disadvantages of each method.

You will, with tutor support, select an appropriate research project and prepare a research proposal which will include your justification for the choice of research methodologies. Your proposal for research will need to be practical and feasible in terms of available resources and time scales. You will also be required to present your proposal in an effective manner.

The Unit will give you the opportunity to further your career progress by demonstrating your development in reference to:

- ◆ Research Methods
- ◆ Human Resource Management (HRM)
- ◆ Proficiency in producing reports
- ◆ Presentation proficiency

It gives you the opportunity to build up a cohesive and interrelated field of study in the important area of people management.

By successfully completing this Unit you should be able to :

- ◆ explain theoretical approaches to research in HRM
- ◆ explain research methodology in HRM
- ◆ produce a research proposal

This Unit can be assessed in a variety of ways, eg a combination of open-book questions and then production of a research proposal.

However your tutor will confirm exact assessment arrangements with you.