



## Higher National Unit specification: general information

This Graded Unit has been validated as part of the HND Human Resource Management. 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:** Human Resource Management:  
Graded Unit 2

**Graded Unit code:** H1XW 35

**Type of Graded Unit:** Project

**Assessment Instrument:** Investigation

**Publication date:** October 2012

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 01

### Unit purpose

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

- ◆ To prepare candidates for employment at an appropriate level within the Human Resource Management field by developing their underpinning knowledge of theoretical concepts in HRM
- ◆ To develop knowledge and understanding of the more complex issues and how to apply them in managing people
- ◆ To develop a range of core and transferable skills essential for research and evaluation within Human Resource Management
- ◆ To further enhance the personal effectiveness of candidates
- ◆ To prepare candidates for progression to study at university

## General information (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	SCQF level	Title
H1XL 34	7	Human Resource Management: The Business Context
DN7D 34	7	Collective Employment Relations: Law
H1XV 35	8	Research Methods in Human Resource Management
H29V 35	8	Employee Resourcing and Talent Management
F7J7 35	8	Business Culture and Strategy

### Credit points and level

2 Higher National Unit 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 Access 1 to Doctorates.*

### 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.

### Assessment

This Graded Unit will be assessed by the use of an investigation which should provide the candidate with the opportunity to produce evidence that demonstrates she/he has met the aims of the Graded Unit, specifically:

- ◆ A plan of action with objectives
- ◆ An investigation report/portfolio with conclusions, recommendations and appendices
- ◆ Evidence showing evaluation and review of the investigation

This Graded Unit should be undertaken on an individual basis and involves the candidate undertaking the role of HR consultant to an organisation and acting accordingly. The innovative practices Unit is set in the context of the modern HR department and the contribution of HRM to the effectiveness and efficiency of the organisational environment. The initial research into innovative HRM practices can be conducted as a desk exercise and candidates are expected to make use of a variety of research tools as part of their investigation.

## **General information (cont)**

Candidates are expected to demonstrate that they have gained skills in identifying the tangible and intangible benefits of innovative HRM practices with the aim of arriving at commercially acceptable solutions. In addition they should demonstrate the ability to present and critically analyse, evaluate and synthesise ideas, concepts, information and issues which are within the common understanding of the subject discipline.

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 Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates

**Graded Unit title:** Human Resource Management: 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 (planning, development and evaluation), 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.

## 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

This will involve candidates:

- ◆ identifying a suitable organisation with
  - an existing and recognised HR function or
  - an HR function which is outsourced to a professional HR supplier or
  - a nominated person who carries out key HR roles on behalf of senior management
- ◆ carrying out research both primary and secondary, into innovations in practice within HRM
- ◆ analysing data and information
- ◆ considering and evaluating all factors that may impact on recommendations
- ◆ presenting arguments and justifying proposals for actions, including a plan for implementation
- ◆ reflecting on what has been done and draw conclusions for the future

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

**Graded Unit title:** Human Resource Management: Graded Unit 2

### 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 (70% — 100%)	Grade C (50% — 59%)
<p>Is a seamless, coherent piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ has sufficient evidence for the three essential stages of the project, is produced to a high standard, and is quite clearly inter-related</li> <li>◆ demonstrates an accurate and insightful interpretation of the project brief</li> <li>◆ is highly focused and relevant to the tasks associated with the project brief</li> <li>◆ is clear and well structured throughout and language used is of a high standard in terms of level, accuracy and technical content</li> <li>◆ effectively consolidates and integrates required knowledge, and skills</li> <li>◆ demonstrates a high degree of autonomy during all stages of the investigation but responds to advice and guidance in a constructive, reasoned manner</li> </ul>	<p>Is a co-ordinated piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ has sufficient evidence of the three essential stages of the project and is produced to an adequate standard</li> <li>◆ demonstrates an acceptable interpretation of the project brief</li> <li>◆ is focused and relevant to the tasks associated with the project brief</li> <li>◆ is satisfactorily structured and language used is adequate in terms of level, accuracy and technical content</li> <li>◆ consolidates and integrates knowledge and skills but this may lack some continuity and consistency</li> <li>◆ relies heavily on the tutor for guidance and support, may be unwilling to take action without prior confirmation and may respond to advice and guidance in an uncritical fashion.</li> </ul>

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

### Graded Unit title: Human Resource Management: Graded Unit 2

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.

### 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 Graded Unit.

Project Stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements
Stage 1 — Planning  25%	<p>A project proposal for the introduction of an innovative practice which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ A feasibility study showing the appropriateness of the chosen organisation and the selected HRM innovative practice.</li> <li>◆ Proposed theory and relevant literature for the selected topic.</li> <li>◆ Aims and objectives for the project/investigation including a plan for the evaluation at stage 3.</li> <li>◆ Proposed research methods (both primary and secondary research) including the factors influencing the investigation and how these inter-relate</li> <li>◆ A research plan with rationale/milestones showing consideration of resources and time available</li> <li>◆ Considerations of contingency plans</li> </ul> <p>In addition, candidates are required to demonstrate their underpinning knowledge of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) by creating a CPD plan.</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)

**Graded Unit title:** Human Resource Management: Graded Unit 2

Project Stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements
Stage 2 — Developing (Investigation)  45%	<p>Candidates need to provide evidence to demonstrate their skills and/or knowledge by showing that they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ undertake a literature review</li> <li>◆ collect and collate data including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— an analysis of the organisational need for improvement</li> <li>— the key features and benefits of the innovative practice for improvement</li> <li>— the resource constraints affecting the organisation</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ interpret and analyse data covering:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— an analysis of the organisational need for improvement</li> <li>— the key features and benefits of the innovative practice for improvement</li> <li>— the resource constraints affecting the organisation</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ draw conclusions</li> <li>◆ make recommendations</li> <li>◆ produce an implementation plan for the innovative practice to be adopted which considers resources, added value, etc</li> </ul> <p>The evidence should be presented in the form of a professional report along the following lines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ title page — report title, author, date</li> <li>◆ executive summary</li> <li>◆ contents page</li> <li>◆ introduction</li> <li>◆ main findings/body of report — methodology, analysis of data, findings, discussion of results, literature review (including discussion of key theories and literature which underpin the chosen topic) etc.</li> <li>◆ conclusions</li> <li>◆ recommendations</li> <li>◆ implementation plan</li> <li>◆ references and bibliography</li> <li>◆ appendices</li> </ul> <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)

**Graded Unit title:** Human Resource Management: Graded Unit 2

Project Stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements
Stage 3 — Evaluating  30%	<p>An evaluation report which should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Review and evaluate the planning and developing stage of the project in light of experience</li><li>◆ Assess the effectiveness of the research methods used</li><li>◆ Assess the extent to which the report meets the investigation brief</li><li>◆ Reflect upon knowledge and skills developed</li><li>◆ Consider anything the candidate would do differently</li><li>◆ Include an updated CPD record, based on what CPD the candidate determined necessary during the planning stage</li></ul> <p><i>The candidate must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Evaluating stage.</i></p>

### Support notes

#### Opportunities for Developing 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 Skill of *Problem Solving Working with Others, Communication and Information and Communication Technology (ICT)*.

#### 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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## General information for candidates

### Graded Unit title: Human Resource Management: Graded Unit 2

This Graded Unit is designed to provide you with a broad understanding of the key principles of Human Resource Management. It draws together your learning throughout the HND in Human Resource Management and will be undertaken as a project, usually in the second year of the HND, and will:

- ◆ Prepare you for employment at an appropriate level within the Human Resource Management (HRM) field by developing your underpinning knowledge of theoretical concepts in HRM
- ◆ Develop your knowledge and understanding of the more complex issues and how to apply them in managing people
- ◆ Develop a range of core and transferable skills essential for research and evaluation within HRM
- ◆ Further enhance your personal effectiveness
- ◆ Prepare you for progression to study at university

The Graded Unit is a project which involves three distinct stages — planning, developing and evaluating. The project is in the form of an investigation and will require you to undertake the role of an HR consultant to an organisation. You are tasked with improving the HRM function through researching and reporting on the introduction suitable HRM innovative practice and assessing its contribution to the effectiveness and efficiency of the business. This will involve you:

- ◆ planning and organising your work and carrying it through to completion
- ◆ identifying a suitable organisation with
  - an existing and recognised HR function or
  - an HR function which is outsourced to a professional HR supplier or
  - a nominated person who carries out key HR roles on behalf of senior management
- ◆ carrying out primary and secondary research into innovative practice within HRM
- ◆ analysing data and information
- ◆ considering and evaluating all factors that may impact on recommendations
- ◆ presenting your findings in a report format and justifying proposals for actions
- ◆ reviewing and evaluating the planning and developing stage of the project in light of your experience — and draw conclusions for the future

The project will be marked out of 100 and you must pass each stage of the project before you can move onto the next stage. The marks for each stage are:

Planning stage: 25 marks

Developing stage: 45 marks

Evaluating stage: 30 marks

An overall grade will be assigned to this Graded Unit based on the following grade boundaries:

A = 70%–100%

B = 60%–69%

C = 50%–59%