



Higher National Unit specification: general information

This Graded Unit has been validated as part of the HND in Supply Chain 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: Supply Chain Management: Graded Unit 2

Graded Unit code: H4JX 35

Type of Graded Unit: Project

Assessment Instrument: Investigation

Publication date: August 2018

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 02

Unit purpose

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

- ◆ Apply the main general practices and techniques of Supply Chain Management drawing on advanced and specialised knowledge with particular emphasis on strategic procurement
- ◆ Solve problems, undertake analysis, synthesis and evaluation within the confines of the supply chain and, in particular, procurement
- ◆ Develop solutions, some which will be innovative, to a variety of unpredictable problems within the confines of existing basic understandings of the Supply Chain sector
- ◆ Operate confidently numerically and graphically to the extent required by the Supply Chain sector and in support of established practices
- ◆ Communicate effectively with peers within the confines of established practice

General information (cont)

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Recommended prior knowledge and skills

It is recommended that the learner 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:

H31L 34	<i>Supply Chain Fundamentals</i>
H358 34	<i>Supply Chain Logistics: An Introduction</i>
BA2A 35	<i>Total Quality Management</i>
H31K 34	<i>Supply Chain Business Analysis: An Introduction to Techniques</i>
A614 34	<i>Legal Aspects of Commercial Transactions</i>
H35A 34	<i>Supply Chain Service Levels: Setting the Standards</i>
H313 34	<i>Supply Chain Organisations: Structures and Function</i>
H31J 35	<i>Supply Chain: Storage and Distribution</i>
H31F 34	<i>Supply Chain: Business Excellence</i>
H35G 35	<i>Supply Chain: Lean and Agile Approaches</i>
H35F 35	<i>Supply Chain: Associated Law</i>
H35H 35	<i>Purchasing Strategy</i>

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 National 1 to Doctorates.*

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.

Assessment

This Graded Unit will be assessed by the use of *an Investigation*. The developed Investigation should provide the learner with the opportunity to produce evidence that demonstrates she/he has met the aims of the Graded Unit that it covers.

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 learners

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Conditions of assessment

The learner should be given a date for completion of the Investigation. However, the instructions for the assessment task should be distributed to allow the learner 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 learners 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 learner 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 recording, and be made available to the internal and external verifier. In relation to Higher National Project-based Graded Units, learners 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 learner to work autonomously and the amount of support required. In relation to Higher National Project-based Graded Units, learners 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.

Where learners are not in employment, work placements must be arranged by centres as this is the only way learners will be able to investigate a 'real' situation. Therefore, centres **must** ensure that a work placement is available to each learner and the reason for this work placement is fully explained to the respective companies/organisations. Each company/organisation should be kept up to date at all times and should receive a copy of the learner's final report.

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

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Instructions for designing the assessment task

The assessment task is a project. 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 familiar or unfamiliar to the learner

The assessment task 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

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

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Guidance on grading learners

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.

Grade A	Grade C
<p>Is a seamless, coherent piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ contains sufficient evidence that clearly demonstrates the links between the three essential stages of the investigation and is produced to a high standard. ◆ demonstrates a clear understanding of the project brief which is evidenced by an accurate interpretation of the Supply Chain related topics. ◆ illustrates that a variety of relevant sources of information have been selected that provides strong support for the points made. ◆ is clear and well structured throughout and language used is of a high standard in terms of level, accuracy and technical content. ◆ includes careful and considered thinking on the investigation that leads to relevant and accurate conclusions and makes realistic recommendations based on Supply Chain requirements. 	<p>Is a co-ordinated piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ has sufficient evidence to meet the minimum requirements of the three essential stages of the investigation and is produced to an adequate standard. ◆ demonstrates an acceptable interpretation of the project brief in relation to the Supply Chain topics. ◆ uses a limited range of sources of information but which are still relevant to the tasks associated with the project. ◆ is satisfactorily structured and language used is adequate in terms of level, accuracy and technical content. ◆ demonstrates clear thinking on the investigation that leads to relevant conclusions and appropriate recommendations based on Supply Chain requirements.

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 learner for this Graded Unit based on the following grade boundaries.

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

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Any learner 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 learner's evidence at the time of the completion of the graded unit. Learners must be awarded the highest grade achieved — whether through first submission or through any re-assessment, remediation, and/or reasonable assistance provided.

NOTE: The learner 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 learners (cont)

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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 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
Stage 1 — Planning (Brief 15%)	<p>An action plan which includes:</p> <p>A brief, outlining the proposed investigation of an issue relating to Supply Chain topic(s) in any type of organisation. The issue must be directly related to a topic or topics covered as part of the Group Award.</p> <p>The brief must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ The title of the investigation report.◆ The objective(s) of the investigation.◆ The rationale for choosing this issue for investigation (if choice has been allowed), with the anticipated benefits that will result for the organisation and/or its customers.◆ Explanation of how the investigation will be conducted with reasons for the choice of methods adopted.◆ Statement of the criteria that will be used to assess the implications of the issue and the reasons why each has been selected. The criteria chosen and the justification for each criterion should be directly related to a topic or topics covered as part of the Group Award.
(Plan 5%)	<p>A plan, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Timescale for conducting the investigation, including final and interim completion dates.◆ Identification of the resources required to carry out the investigation, eg sources of information, procedures to be followed, people, equipment and other physical resources; resources should be wide ranging and some should be unfamiliar to the learner. <p>The Action Plan, including the brief and plan, should be presented in a suitable format and submitted at a time set by the assessor.</p>
	<p><i>The learner 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 learners (cont)

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Project stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements
<p>Stage 2 — Developing (60%)</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 Supply Chain issues within an organisation for the benefit of that organisation and/or its customers. It should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Contents Page ◆ 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 Supply Chain needs of the organisation and/or its customers ◆ The Objectives to be achieved ◆ Relevant underpinning knowledge — directly relating to the topic chosen for the investigation from the mandatory and/or option Unit(s) which make up the Group Award and/or from the learners own experience ◆ 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>Reporting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The report should be well structured and should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — adopt a convention used by the intended readership — have a structure that is appropriate to the purpose and audience — contain all ideas/information and supporting detail contributing to the main purpose of the communication, and these should be expressed accurately and coherently, have spelling, punctuation and syntax that are consistently accurate; sentence structure, paragraphing and vocabulary to suit the purpose and audience. <p>Where evidence is submitted as a written report is it recommended that the word count be approximately 4,000 words.</p> <p>Using graphical information: the learner should demonstrate the ability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ to analyse and interpret graphical information correctly. ◆ to present information in forms that are appropriate to the context (eg tables, line graphs, bar charts).

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

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Project stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements
Stage 2 (cont)	<p>Evidence will depend on the nature of the investigation, but may include summarising data and statistical analysis, developing costings, or a financial analysis. Evidence for use of numbers should normally be provided as part of the report.</p> <p><i>The learner must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Developing stage.</i></p>
Stage 3 — Evaluating (20%)	<p>An evaluation of the effectiveness of the approach/strategy taken which includes all stages of the activity, ie analysis of the activity, the planning and organisation of the activity and the Outcome of the activity.</p> <p>The evaluation should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ A brief outline of the investigation. ◆ Identification of the criteria on which to base the evaluation ◆ Assessment of the extent to which the original objectives were achieved. This should include details of any modifications made or considered, with sound reasons given for the action taken. ◆ In-depth evaluation of the effectiveness of the planning stage, highlighting any problems which arose, how they were dealt with and any modifications to the original plan. ◆ Identification and gathering of appropriate evidence, eg use of qualitative/quantitative methods, comparisons with other systems/products, impact studies, product testing or market research. ◆ Commentary on the investigation activity and the effectiveness of the 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 main body of the report. ◆ Description of any new knowledge or skills that have been learned and any areas of personal strengths or weaknesses that have been identified during the investigation. ◆ Conclusions as to how the process of carrying out the project could be improved, with evidence to support the conclusions drawn. ◆ Recommendations for the future which are relevant to the problem and justify the recommendations.

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Project stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements
Stage 3 (cont)	Evidence would normally be provided as a distinct section of the report on the findings of the investigation.
	<i>The learner must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Evaluating stage.</i>

Support notes

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.

This Unit is designed to assess the learner's ability to integrate knowledge and skills, and display organisational and investigative skills to a chosen issue relating to a company or organisation in the Supply Chain industry.

This Unit forms part of the HND Supply Chain Management Group Award. It is designed to enable learners to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of a variety of Supply Chain topics and also to enable the learner to demonstrate the practical application of a number of Supply Chain topics by producing a report based on an actual work place situation.

Learners should select a topic for investigation which should be discussed and agreed with their tutor. Learners should make sure this topic will enable them to meet all the requirements of this Graded Unit.

Where learners are not in employment, centres must ensure that learners have an appropriate work placement in which to carry out the investigation into a 'real' situation. It would also be advantageous for learners to have access to work place mentors. The role of the mentors would not be to instruct the learners what to do but to guide the learners to appropriate areas/functions within the workplace and help with access to data.

It is important that the company/organisation that offers learners a work placement is kept up to date with the learner's progress and they should receive a copy of the interim and final reports.

During the first stage of the assessment the company/organisation should be consulted in terms of the scope of the investigation and should agree the project plan, together with the centre and the learner. The plan should make it clear the processes the learner will follow and what access to the organisation will be required.

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The development stage will be where the learner carries out the most of the research work and will require access to company/organisation data. While it is not essential, this is where a company mentor would be useful in helping the learner secure appropriate information. During this stage the learner will produce an interim report, which should be reviewed by the assessor. The company/organisation will also receive a copy of the interim report and should be free to comment. Once this part of the process has been completed the learner should carry out any further work required and produce a final report for both the assessor and the company/organisation.

The third and final part of the assessment is to review the process. The learner will review how the investigation was conducted, how the original objectives had been met, or otherwise, having experienced the investigation, what changes to the approach used would the learner make for future investigations, and how well they worked with the staff of the company. The learner should also comment on any techniques used, and how effective these were, and also on any new Knowledge and/or Skills gained during the course of the investigation. The learner should finish by drawing any conclusions as to how the approach to the investigation could be improved and suggest how the investigation may be taken further.

The learner should justify any recommendations made.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There are no Core Skills embedded in this Unit but it is likely that learners will have the opportunity to develop all five Core Skills in the course of the investigation. The following gives further information on the Core Skills to which the Unit may contribute and on the opportunities which the Unit provides for Core Skills development.

Communication at SCQF level 6

Learners will have to read and understand complex information relating to the vocational area, with analysis and evaluation of key concepts and terminology.

Where learners present their evidence as a well-structured report containing complex information this will give them an opportunity to develop the Written Communication component of the Core Skill. The Oral Communication component may be covered during the meetings with the assessor and the company and centres may ask learners to give an oral presentation to their peers and others.

Numeracy at SCQF level 6

The Using Number component, of the Core Skill of *Numeracy*, may be covered during the analysis of company data as part of the investigation and learners are expected to produce graphs as part of their report which will cover the Using Graphical Information component.

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Information and Communication Technology (ICT) at SCQF level 5

Learners are likely to *process information* from company systems as part of their investigation and they will also *provide/create information* as part of their project report. They may present their findings using appropriate software packages.

Problem Solving at SCQF level 6

The aim of the project is to carry out an investigatory project that will improve some aspects of the Supply Chain. In order to do this, learners will have to *think critically*. They will have to analyse a complex situation, assess progress and implement remedial action if required. Before starting the investigation learners are required to *plan* their approach and *organise* how they will carry out their investigation. The third and final part of the project is to carry out a *review* to *evaluate* how well the investigation was carried out.

Working with Others at SCQF level 6

The investigation could not be carried out by the learners themselves and they will rely on their skills of *Working with Others* to achieve their objectives. Learners should acknowledge the contribution of the company employees in providing them with the necessary information.

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

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Update of Conditions of Assessment	09/08/18

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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.

General information for learners

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This Unit allows you to demonstrate the application of your knowledge and understanding of a variety of Supply Chain Management topics and techniques.

In order to do this you will need access to a company in order to gather sufficient information to allow you to recommend improvements in some Supply Chain aspects of the company. If you are not employed by a company, it will be necessary for you to secure a work placement. This may be organised by the centre and all activities you will be involved in during the course of this Unit where it involves access to the organisation must be done in full agreement between yourself, the company and the centre.

You will demonstrate the application of your knowledge and understanding by carrying out an investigation into an aspect of Supply Chain Management within a company with the objective of trying to bring about improvement in the processes used. The Outcome of your investigation will be a properly constructed report and the process you will follow will be in three parts:

- 1 Plan and organise how you will carry out the investigation. This will involve you, your assessor and the organisation where you will have your work placement. When you have completed this first part you must obtain approval from you assessor before proceeding to the next stage.
- 2 The next stage is carrying out the investigation and developing your thoughts in order to achieve the objectives of the investigation. This will involve you collecting information, analysing that information, developing alternative processes, drawing conclusions and making recommendations. This may be presented in a suitable format and again this part must be approved by your assessor prior to moving to the final stage.
- 3 The final stage is to carry out an evaluation of the investigation. This will include how well you achieved the original objectives, or otherwise, how effective you think the planning stage was in contributing to the Outcomes, how effective your activities during the investigation were in contributing to the Outcomes and what improvements you could have made.