



Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Specification

General Information

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

Graded Unit title: Sustainable Resource Management:
Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

Graded Unit code: H67T 34

Type of Project: Practical Assignment

Publication date: January 2014

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

Graded Unit purpose

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

- 1 Equip learners with the knowledge and understanding to recognise critical legal requirements relating to the waste sustainable resource management sector.
- 2 Support the development of innovative and creative approaches to work and enable quick responses to the challenges posed by changes in waste sustainable resource management sector.
- 3 Develop an understanding of the scientific principles which underpin the waste sustainable resource management sector.
- 4 Develop the knowledge and understanding of relevant European, National and Local Waste Management, Recycling and Resource Recovery strategies.

Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7)

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:

Sustainable Resource Management: Materials and Resources

Sustainable Resource Management: Policy and Legislation

Sustainable Resource Management: Science and Technologies

Sustainable Resource Management: Permitting and Operational Practice

It would be beneficial if the learner possessed knowledge and understanding in tools and techniques applied during the management of projects. Whilst at the discretion of the centre, this may be supported by the learner undertaking:

Project Management: An Introduction

Core Skills

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skills Problem Solving @ SCQF level 6

Core Skills component(s) None

There are also opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills which are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Specification.

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: Sustainable Resource Management:
Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

Assessment

This Graded Unit will be assessed by the use of a practical assignment 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.

Project brief

The underlying purpose of the practical assignment is to provide learners with an opportunity to demonstrate that they possess the personal competences needed to operate effectively within the waste sustainable resource management sector. It should also enable them to apply the theoretical concepts to tackle a particular situation and to deal with contingencies arising from it. The practical assignment should also enable learners to apply the knowledge and understanding of relevant environmental and legal issues and relevant scientific concepts to the particular situation.

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.

Learners should choose an activity, or related group of activities, which requires them to take responsibility for the achievement of a specific Outcome pertinent to the overall goals of an organisation. This could be something that is part of their normal work experience as an employee or a one-off assignment. The latter could be one which the learner has been asked to complete as part of their work role.

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

Graded Unit title: Sustainable Resource Management:
Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

Alternatively, it could be a topic which the learner has chosen. Those who are not currently working in a managerial capacity are likely to follow this route.

The practical assignment should involve the following stages:

Stage 1: Planning

- ◆ A brief outline of the activity and why it has been chosen
- ◆ Set specific objectives for the achievement of the activity and identify how these fit with relevant European, National and Local strategies for waste sustainable resource management sector
- ◆ Set personal objectives for the assignment
- ◆ Identify the human and non-human resources required to complete the activity
- ◆ Identify key legal issues and/or scientific principles relating to the activity
- ◆ Identify actions required to complete the activity
- ◆ Prepare a timetable for the completion of the activity
- ◆ Complete a risk assessment

Stage 2: Implementing

- ◆ Obtain resources needed to carry out the plan
- ◆ Communicate objectives for the activity to others involved in the activity
- ◆ Monitor the actual progress of the plan against the planned timetable
- ◆ Take corrective action as required

Stage 3: Evaluating

- ◆ Assess the extent to which personal objectives have been met
- ◆ Assess the planning and implementation of the activity
- ◆ Use the pre-determined criteria to judge the personal effectiveness and the contribution to which personal competences have made to effectiveness during the activity
- ◆ Recommend action to enhance personal competences which will contribute to improved effectiveness in activities within the waste sustainable resource management sector

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

Graded Unit title: Sustainable Resource Management:
Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

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.

Project stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements	% Mark Allocation
Stage 1 — Planning	<p>Develop a brief to investigate a business issue and assess its implications for an organisation. The issue must involve meeting the needs of waste sustainable resource management sector. The brief must include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 A brief outline of the activity and why it has been chosen. 2 Objectives, in Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely [SMART] terms, for the achievement of the activity. 3 Personal objectives for the assignment. 4 The human and non-human resources required to complete the activity. 5 Identification of relevant legislation and/or strategies and regularity requirements. 6 The actions required to complete the activity to include those of the learner and others. 7 Criteria to judge personal effectiveness referring to the learner's current level of personal competence. 8 An assessment of the relevance of the resources required completing the activity and the actions required to complete the project. 9 The impact of health and safety on the activity. <p>Devise an action plan to carry out the investigation. The plan must include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10 Negotiated dates for the planning, development and evaluation of the project. 11 Interim and final timescales and dates for conducting the investigation, which should be related to the objectives of the investigation. 12 Identification of the resources (including time) required to carry out the investigation. 	24

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

Graded Unit title: Sustainable Resource Management:
Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

Project stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements	% Mark Allocation
Stage 1 — Planning (cont)	<p>Producing a log of activities carried out by the learner. The log must include activities undertaken, resources used and time allocated.</p> <p>Evidence of all of the above should be presented. It may be supplemented by evidence provided orally by the learner in a discussion with the assessor. If oral evidence is provided by the learner, a record of the main points of the discussion should be recorded. The learner should retain evidence of their progress and experience to record the progress of the planning stage of the investigation and personal development of the learner to facilitate and support the evaluation stage by matching those experiences against the plan.</p> <p>The brief is worth 18 marks for the investigation while the plan is worth 6 marks.</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 Project-based Graded Unit Specification: Designing the project and assessing learners (cont)

Graded Unit title: Sustainable Resource Management:
Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

Project stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements	% Mark Allocation
Stage 2 — Developing	<p>Produce an account of the implementing stage which includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Detailed explanation of how the issue affects the organisation. The explanation should be justified by explicit reference to the data collected and to concepts covered in the mandatory Units of the HNC Sustainable Resource Management. The explanation should be consistent with objectives at the planning stage. 2 How the objectives were communicated to others involved in the completion of the activity including explanation of why the methods used were chosen. 3 The methods used to monitor the actual progress of the plan against the planned timetable including why they were chosen and how they worked in practice. 4 Any corrective action which was required including reasons why it was needed — if none was required, learners should provide reasons to explain why this was the case. 5 Assessment of the implications of these effects for the chosen organisation should be analysed in relation to the organisation, the operating environment and the impact upon stakeholders and should make reference to concepts and topics studied within the mandatory section of the Group Award. 6 Statement of the conclusions drawn from the investigation and any appropriate recommendations to be made to the organisation(s). These should be explicitly related to the issues being investigated and the needs of customers. <p>This account of the implementation should be 2,000 words long [+/- 10%]. It should include charts and diagrams. The report must be presented in a format suitable for a business report. This must include a contents page, a summary of findings, acknowledgements, references and a bibliography. The Evidence may be supplemented by evidence provided orally by the learner in a discussion with the assessor. If this is done, a record of the main points of the discussion should be recorded.</p>	52

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

Graded Unit title: Sustainable Resource Management:
Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

Project stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements	% Mark Allocation
Stage 2 — Developing (cont)	<p>The learner should retain evidence of their progress and experience to record the progress of the development stage of the investigation and personal development of the learner to facilitate and support the evaluation stage by matching those experiences against the plan.</p> <p>The developing stage is worth 52 marks.</p>	
	<p><i>The learner must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Developing stage.</i></p>	

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

Graded Unit title: Sustainable Resource Management:
Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

Project stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements	% Mark Allocation
Stage 3 — Evaluating	<p>Providing an evaluation of the effectiveness of all parts of the investigation. The evaluation should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 An assessment of the extent to which each of the original objectives of the investigation have been met. This should include reference to any modifications made during the course of the investigation and their importance and to any alternative courses of action considered but rejected. Throughout, the assessment should be supported with credible reasons. 2 Commentary on aspects of the planning and developing stages which worked effectively and why and/or aspects of the planning and development stages which did not work as effectively as expected. Three separate aspects should be covered — one for the planning brief, one for the plan and one for the development report. 3 Assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the report of the investigation. This should be supported by credible reasons and cover at least one strength and at least one weakness. 4 A judgment to which personal competencies have made to effectiveness during the activity. This should be based upon personal objectives for the assignment. 5 Recommendations for future investigations. These should be based on items above and must relate to the personal development of the learner (eg in terms of the further development of skills used in this investigation) and aspects of the process or product of the investigation (eg with respect to setting timescales, gathering information or possible future investigations). It should be clear from the recommendations that the learner has reflected on what happened and has drawn conclusions from this reflection. 6 Assessment of new skills and knowledge gained during the process of the investigation. 	24

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

Graded Unit title: Sustainable Resource Management:
Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

Project stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements	% Mark Allocation
Stage 3 — Evaluating (cont)	<p>The evaluation section of the practical assignment will be assessed by the submission of 1,000 words [+/- 10%] or equivalent, if presented verbally. Learners may present this evidence in a manner which they consider appropriate but it must be negotiated and agreed with the tutor. Evidence may be submitted using more than one type of assessment instrument. The Evidence may be supplemented by evidence provided orally by the learner in a discussion with the assessor. If this is done, a record of the main points of the discussion should be recorded.</p> <p>The evaluation stage is worth 24 of the marks for the investigation.</p> <p>The learner must achieve all of the six points specified above in order to pass the Evaluation stage.</p> <hr/> <p><i>The learner must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Evaluating stage.</i></p>	

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

Graded Unit title: Sustainable Resource Management:
Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

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.

Grade Related Criteria	
Grade A	Grade C
<p>Is a seamless, coherent piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Demonstrates clear and explicit links between the three stages of the assignment. ◆ Provides a convincing illustration of the competences of the learner influencing their effectiveness. ◆ Effectively applies and integrates knowledge and understanding of the concepts from the course Units. 	<p>Is a co-ordinated piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Contains sufficient evidence to meet the requirements of each of the three stages of the practical assignment ◆ Applies knowledge and understanding of legal and/or scientific concepts for the course Units across all stages of the practical assignments and makes use of a range of concepts ◆ Approaches the project brief in a manner which successfully allows the learner to use her/his personal competences

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

Graded Unit title: Sustainable Resource Management:
Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

Grade Related Criteria (cont)	
Grade A	Grade C
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Demonstrates a comprehensive and imaginative approach to the project brief so that it provides a challenging context within which the learner can deploy competences to operate with as high degree of effectiveness. ◆ Contains criteria for explanation which are coherently related to the learner's objectives and provide a strong basis for judging the learner's effectiveness. ◆ Includes a detailed explanation of how well the learner believes Stage 1 and Stage 2 progressed. ◆ Provides carefully justified and realistic recommendations for future action which are firmly grounded in the learner's experience during the completion of Stage 1 and Stage 2. ◆ Demonstrates a high degree of autonomy during all stages but responds to advice and guidance in a constructive, reasoned manner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Contains criteria for evaluation related to the learner's personal objectives ◆ Includes a self-evaluation of how well the learner believes Stage 1 and Stage 2 progressed. ◆ Provides justified recommendations for future action which should examine what the learner could do to improve their performance in completing Stage 1 and Stage 2. ◆ Responds to advice and guidance.

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

Graded Unit title: Sustainable Resource Management:
Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

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: Sustainable Resource Management:
Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

Guidance on approaches to delivery and assessment of this Graded Unit

The Unit is designed to build upon previously acquired transferable skills which can be best developed through application to an issue or issues identified by the learner in relation to an organisation. This approach will facilitate the contextualisation of the knowledge and skills from the Group Award and promote the importance and understanding of integration of the knowledge of waste sustainable resource management sector topics and concepts and the development of transferable skills including: planning, organisation, time management, techniques pertaining to research, problem solving, evaluation and presentation. Using this approach learners will be able to develop their knowledge and understanding of key competencies and will be provided the opportunity to apply innovative and creative approaches to issues pertinent to their chosen waste sustainable resource management sector. The issue must involve meeting the needs of an organisation. It is anticipated that opportunities to integrate content from Units within the mandatory section of the Group Award will promote greater knowledge and understanding of the interdependency of the waste sustainable resource management sector's topics and concepts. It is recommended that preparation for the investigation primarily takes the form of learner/tutor discussions and student led research and development.

The investigation requires the learner to demonstrate required knowledge and skills through the investigation of a challenging situation. The issue(s) and organisation(s) should test the breadth and application of the learner's knowledge and understanding of the specific aspects of the mandatory section of the Group Award. This should enable the learner to demonstrate their depth of knowledge in specific areas of these Units and provide innovative and creative problem solving approaches and an explanation of a challenging issue(s) in the waste sustainable resource management sector.

The Unit should be delivered and assessed over a period of the HNC course programme to enable learners to have completed or be in the process of completing the mandatory Units prior to embarking upon the Graded Unit. Staff delivering and assessing this Unit would be advised to discuss examples of Outcomes from within the mandatory Units of the Award that would make suitable topics for an investigation. It is expected this will facilitate the negotiation of a suitable topic for the project between the lecturer and learner.

It is best practice for a centre to ensure that all the staff involved in the delivery of the course programme and in particular, those involved in the delivery of the mandatory Units are made aware of the requirements of the Graded Unit. Whilst there is no one best way to deliver and assess the Unit, many instances of good practice have been noted where subject experts discuss possible options for investigation with the learners.

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

Graded Unit title: Sustainable Resource Management: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

Centres should be aware that the scheduling of mandatory Units within the course programme will have an impact upon the choice of suitable topics and the development of chosen topics.

It is recommended that learners discuss the feasibility of possible investigations with their tutor and negotiate appropriate resources, including time that should be utilised and managed throughout the course of the investigation. Learners must keep a record of their experience through the planning and development stages to facilitate and support the evaluation process. This could be done through some form of reflective log, diary or blog. The tutor should provide a mentor/support role and facilitate a learner-led investigation. The importance of planning, Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic Timely [SMART] objectives, time management, organisation and explanation should be discussed and reinforced on a regular basis by the tutor. In addition, examples of good practice in terms of assessment verification have existed where second marking or cross marking has taken place to satisfy the requirements of internal and external quality processes.

Centres may wish to use previous investigations as a useful stimulus for learners to assist them in their choice of issue(s) and organisation(s). This can in turn provide an opportunity for delivery staff to provide reflective feedback and promote constructive discussion. In general terms, the more specific the topic chosen for the investigation, the more manageable the investigation shall be for learners and staff alike. This will facilitate the formulation of SMART objectives which in turn provide focus and structure for the learner investigation.

Learners should be encouraged to investigate a range of information to ensure appropriate data is available for the investigation. The method(s) chosen for investigation should be clearly explained and justified by the learner. The sources of information and research should be consistent with objectives identified by the learner and should enable them to identify source material as the basis of explanation and recommendation.

The evaluation section of the Graded Unit will be assessed by the submission of approximately 1,000 words or equivalent. Possible opportunities for presenting the evidence for the evaluation could include a submission of work in a format suitable for a business report.

Since the Core Skills of Problem Solving at SCQF Level 6 is embedded in this Unit, it is strongly recommended that you follow the assessment guidelines given. If you wish to use a different assessment model, you should seek prior verification of the assessment instrument(s) you intend to use to ensure that the Core Skill is still covered.

The presentation of the evidence may provide opportunities for the development of the Core Skills of *Communication* and *Information and Communication Technology* at SCQF level 6, and *Working with Others* at SCQF level 6.

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

Graded Unit title: Sustainable Resource Management:
Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

This Unit has the Core Skill of Problem Solving embedded in it. This means that when candidates achieve the Unit, their Core Skills profile will also be updated to show they have achieved Problem Solving at SCQF level 6.

Candidates will have opportunities for learners to gather evidence which could help them demonstrate achievement for all Core Skills. The following table 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.

Core Skill	SCQF level	Opportunities for development
Problem Solving	6	Investigation and analysis of a complex problem. Plan, organise and carry out a suggested approach using identified objectives and resources. Analyse the problem solving activity and assess progress, implement remedial action where appropriate and evaluate process.
Communication	6	The reading and understanding of complex information relating to the vocational area, with analysis and evaluation of key concepts and terminology. Produce a well-structured document containing complex information. Discuss a complex issue through negotiation with the tutor.
ICT	6	Presentation of information using appropriate software packages. Accessing and communicating information using ICT facilities. Keeping information secure.
Numeracy	6	Statistical analysis of organisational and/or market data. Production, analysis and presentation of graphical data.
Working with Others	6	Review of involvement in the presentation of evidence of the evaluation stage. Negotiation with lecturing staff to agree suitable topics. Organisation of and participation in presentation of evaluation stage of the investigation. Seek support of others and provide support for others through audience interaction.

History of changes to Graded Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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General information for learners

Graded Unit title: Sustainable Resource Management: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

In this Unit you will develop skills in bringing together and applying the knowledge you have gained in the following Units:

Sustainable Resource Management: Materials and Resources

Sustainable Resource Management: Policy and Legislation

Sustainable Resource Management: Science and Technologies

Sustainable Resource Management: Permitting and Operational Practice

It is important, therefore, that you are familiar with the content of these Units. While there is no new content within the Unit, you will however work with your lecturer in identifying a suitable topic for investigation and in developing the necessary techniques and approaches to enable you to use the knowledge and understanding you have already gained and apply it to a complex situation from the waste sustainable resource management sector.

To achieve this Unit you will produce an investigative project. This will be based on an issue(s) and organisation(s) you identify in discussion with your tutor. The issue must involve meeting the needs of an organisation. The choice of an appropriate investigation and SMART objectives are vital and it is strongly recommended that tutor support and mentoring is provided to ensure a realistic and manageable issue(s) is chosen for your investigation. You must keep a record of your experience through the planning and development stages to facilitate and support the evaluation process. This could be done through some form of reflective log, diary or blog.

The investigation is divided into three stages; Planning, Development and Evaluation.

- ◆ Planning incorporates a brief and plan and this provides the basis for the subsequent stages.
- ◆ The Development Stage, assessed by submission of a formal business report of 2,000 words. It is the output of your practical activities as you collect and collate data, interpret and analyse information, summarise findings, draw conclusions and make recommendations.
- ◆ The evaluation section of the practical assignment will be assessed by the submission of approximately 1,000 words or equivalent possible opportunities for presenting the evidence for the evaluation could include a submission of work in a format suitable for a business report, eg a written report, an oral presentation, a blog, a meeting involving other learners.

The method to be used should be negotiated and agreed with the tutor.

This Unit gives automatic certification of the Core Skill *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 6. There may also be opportunities to develop the Core Skills of *Numeracy, Information and Communication Technology, Communication* and *Working with Others* at SCQF level 6 during the course of this Unit. This Graded Unit is marked out of 100 and to pass you must obtain at least 50% of the marks. You must also pass each of the three stages. You must attain a minimum of 50% of available marks to pass each stage.

General information for learners (cont)

Graded Unit title: Sustainable Resource Management:
Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

The distribution of marks is listed in the table below.

Stage	Element	Available Marks	Minimum Pass Marks	Total Marks
Planning	Brief	18	9	24
	Plan	6	3	
Development	Report	52	26	52
Evaluation	To be negotiated	24	12	24
Total		100	50	100

On successful achievement of the Unit a grade will be awarded based on the aggregated mark gained from each of the three stages, as follows:

70%–100% = Grade A

60%–69% = Grade B

50%–59% = Grade C

This grade will apply only to this Unit and not to the full HNC Sustainable Resource Management Group Award.