



## Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Specification

### General Information

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

**Graded Unit title:** Applied Sciences: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

**Graded Unit code:** H91W 34

**Type of Project:** Investigation

**Publication date:** October 2018

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 04

### Graded Unit purpose

This Graded Unit is designed to provide evidence that the learner has achieved the following principal aims of the HNC Applied Sciences:

- ◆ Develop learners' Knowledge and Skills such as planning, developing and evaluating.
- ◆ Develop employment skills and enhancing learners' employment prospects.
- ◆ Enable progression within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).
- ◆ Develop transferable skills including Core Skills.
- ◆ Prepare for employment in a Science-related post at technician or professional level.
- ◆ Develop a range of vocational skills appropriate to employment at technician or professional level in the Science sector.

### 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)

**Graded Unit title:** Applied Sciences: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

### Recommended entry to the Graded Unit

It is recommended that the learner should have completed or be in the process of completing the following HN Units relating to the above principal aims prior to undertaking this Graded Unit:

H92X 34	<i>Fundamental Chemistry: Theory and Laboratory Skills</i>
H927 34	<i>Cell Biology: Theory and Laboratory Skills</i>
H922 34	<i>Biochemistry: Theory and Laboratory Skills</i>
H93F 34	<i>Physics for Life Sciences</i>
H8XT 33	<i>Statistics for Science 1</i>
H8XP 33	<i>Mathematics for Science 1</i>
H91V 34	<i>Laboratory Skills for Science Industries</i>

### Core Skills

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill                      *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 5

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

### Understanding Standards Materials

Understanding Standards materials have been developed to assist the delivery of this Unit and to provide advice on general assessment and marking principles. These materials are available securely at the SQA Understanding Standards website (<http://www.understandingstandards.org.uk>).

### 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](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements)

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

**Graded Unit title:** Applied Sciences: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

## Assessment

This Graded Unit will be assessed by the use of a project-based investigation developed by centres. The project should provide the learner with the opportunity to produce evidence that demonstrates they have 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

Learners must carry out the investigation individually, and learners should not produce joint evidence. Assessors must be satisfied that the work has been completed by the individual learner.

## 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.

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.

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

**Graded Unit title:** Applied Sciences: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

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.

At SCQF level 7 learners should work independently. It is the responsibility of the centre to take reasonable steps to ensure that the project is the work of the learner. For example, centres may wish to informally question learners at various stages on their knowledge and understanding of the project on which they have embarked. Centres should ensure, where research, etc is carried out in other establishments or under the supervision of others, that the learner does not receive undue assistance.

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

**Graded Unit title:** Applied Sciences: 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Identification of the processes involved in carrying out the investigation. (1.1)</li> <li>◆ Identification of the topic for research. (1.2)</li> <li>◆ Identification of the main issues for research. (1.3)</li> <li>◆ Identification and introduction of the methods of research and sources to be used. (1.4)</li> </ul>	20%
	<i>The learner <b>must</b> achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Planning stage.</i>	
Stage 2 — Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Collection and collation of information/data. (2.1)</li> <li>◆ Interpretation/analysis of information/data. (2.2)</li> <li>◆ Findings and conclusions drawn. (2.3)</li> </ul>	60%
	<i>The learner <b>must</b> achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Developing stage.</i>	
Stage 3 — Evaluating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Briefly outline the investigation. (3.1)</li> <li>◆ Evaluation of the output of the investigation. (3.2)</li> <li>◆ Evaluation of the processes involved in carrying out the investigation. (3.3)</li> </ul>	20%
	<i>The learner <b>must</b> achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Evaluating stage.</i>	

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

**Graded Unit title:** Applied Sciences: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

**Important Note:** Centres **must** complete the Grading Checklist on pages 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 for each Applied Sciences project. Completed checklists will be used as part of the external verification process to ensure the accuracy and consistency of grading between learners in the centre and across the centres.

### 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. 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.

To pass the Graded Unit learners must achieve:

Planning stage:

- ◆ A minimum of 50% of the total marks (10 marks) **and** all of the minimum Evidence Requirements.

Developing stage:

- ◆ A minimum of 50% of the total marks (30 marks) **and** all of the minimum Evidence Requirements.

Evaluating stage:

- ◆ A minimum of 50% of the total marks (10 marks) **and** all of the minimum Evidence Requirements.

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

**Graded Unit title:** Applied Sciences: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

The Grade Related Criteria to be used to judge learner performance for this Graded Unit is specified in the following table.

Grade Related Criteria	
Grade A	Grade C
<p>Is a seamless, coherent piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Has sufficient evidence of the three essential phases of the project that is produced to a high standard, and is 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>◆ Provides the initial project timetable containing a comprehensive list of project activities and timings.</li> <li>◆ Is clear and well-structured throughout with language of a high standard in terms of level, accuracy and technical content used.</li> <li>◆ Effectively consolidates and integrates required knowledge, and skills.</li> <li>◆ Identifies clear and full details of the new knowledge and skills the learner has developed as a result of doing the project such as keeping deadlines and researching expert sources.</li> <li>◆ demonstrates the learner's ability to work autonomously</li> <li>◆ The learner demonstrates a high level of self-motivation throughout the project.</li> <li>◆ The learner undertakes additional research well beyond that demanded by the project.</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 phases of the project that 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>◆ Provides the initial project timetable containing all essential project activities and timings.</li> <li>◆ Is satisfactorily structured with adequate language in terms of level, accuracy and technical content used.</li> <li>◆ Consolidates and integrates knowledge and skills but this may lack some continuity and consistency.</li> <li>◆ Provides at least three examples of new knowledge and skills the learner has developed as a result of doing the project.</li> <li>◆ demonstrates independent learning with minimum support and revision during project</li> <li>◆ The learner demonstrates an acceptable level of motivation.</li> <li>◆ Does not contain additional research well beyond that demanded by the project.</li> </ul>

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

**Graded Unit title:** Applied Sciences: 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.

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.





## **Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Support Notes**

**Graded Unit title:** Applied Sciences: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

### **Guidance on approaches to delivery and assessment of this Graded Unit**

Learners should be advised that they are aiming to produce a report of between 3,000 – 6,000 words (not including references).

In order to pass the Graded Unit a learner must pass each one of the three stages (Planning, Developing, Evaluating) ie they must achieve a minimum of 50% of the total marks for each stage, and achieve all of the minimum Evidence Requirements on at least one occasion for each stage. Centres should note that the grading checklist should be applied holistically and it is not a requirement that learners address all of the bullet points in the checklist.

### **Grading Checklist**

A grading checklist is presented below to facilitate the allocation of marks.

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

**Graded Unit title:** Applied Sciences: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

**Applied Sciences: Graded Unit 1**

### Grading Unit Checklist

**Centre Name:** .....

**Centre Number:** .....

**Learner Name:** .....

**Learner Number:** .....

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

**Graded Unit title:** Applied Sciences: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

### Stage 1: Planning Stage — The Action Plan

Grading Criteria		Maximum Mark	Mark
1.1 (a)	The aims and objectives of the project.	2	
1.1 (b)	Timescales for achieving these aims and objectives.	2	
1.2	An introduction to the topic to be investigated.	4	
1.3	Identification of the main issues for research.	4	
1.4	Identification of methods of research and sources of information.	4	
1.5	The evidence is a concise, structured plan (1,000 words +/- 10%).	2	
1.6	Works with little supervision and high level of motivation to produce a plan of a high standard.	2	
<b>Total</b>		<b>20</b>	

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

**Graded Unit title:** Applied Sciences: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

### Stage 2: Developing Stage — The Investigation Report

Grading Criteria		Maximum Mark	Mark
2.1 (a)	Uses a variety of different resource types.	3	
2.1 (b)	Uses different resources (1 mark per 2 resources).	4	
2.1 (c)	Introduction section contains accurate details of the topic and summary of what is covered by investigation.	3	
2.1 (d)	Gathers appropriate evidence — text contains 10 relevant pieces of substantive scientific information that are commensurate with SCQF level 7.	10	
2.1 (e)	Develops a coherent line of thought such that sections of the report link appropriately to each other and to overall topic.	3	
2.2 (a)	Correctly interprets and analyses the assimilated information.	10	
2.2 (b)	Use of appropriate statistical methods of data analysis to facilitate interpretation or presentation.	4	
2.3	Substantial conclusions and findings drawn from the report, commensurate with SCQF level 7.	10	
2.4	A contents page.	1	
2.5	Appropriate referencing of sources and references including full and appropriate referencing within the report through use of an established system (eg Vancouver or Harvard).	4	
2.6	Clear, well structured, and concise report, using technically accurate language commensurate with SCQF level 7.	4	

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

**Graded Unit title:** Applied Sciences: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

Grading Criteria		Maximum Mark	Mark
2.7	Works with little supervision and high level of motivation to produce a report of high standard.	2	
2.8	Produces additional research well above the minimum required for the project. This might be illustrated, for example, by using a diverse range of sources (eg non published sources such as expert testimony, laboratory and field measurements, surveys, etc) by collating evidence and drawing conclusions across diverse aspects of science, or by displaying detailed consideration of the impacts of science on society.	2	
<b>Total</b>		<b>60</b>	

### Stage 3: Evaluation Stage — The Evaluation Report

Grading Criteria		Maximum Mark	Mark
3.1	Brief outline of the investigation (investigation remit, research methods used, resources used).	2	
3.2 (a)	The extent to which the investigation covers the topic and action plan is evaluated and justified.	4	
3.2 (b)	Assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the output of the investigation report (two strengths/two weaknesses).	4	
3.3 (a)	Assessment of the effectiveness of the research methods.	4	
3.3 (b)	Summary of any difficulties encountered and how they were handled.	2	

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

**Graded Unit title:** Applied Sciences: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

Grading Criteria		Maximum Mark	Mark
3.3 (c)	Identification and justification of specific knowledge and skills which have been gained and/or developed.	4	
<b>Total</b>		<b>20</b>	

Centres are strongly advised to give learners adequate time to choose their topic and carry out the planning stage. Careful planning enables the learner to complete the following tasks of developing and of evaluating more effectively.

The briefing task sheet for the learners should include clear indications of how the Unit is being assessed so that the learner can provide all the evidence required to complete the Unit. It is strongly advised that learners are provided with a detailed description of the requirements of the planning stage to enable them to carry out the task prior to proceeding to the development stage. It is advisable that the planning stage should be assessed prior to the learner progressing to the developing stage.

However if the development stage does not progress as anticipated the learners may return to their plans and modify them. If changes to plans are needed during the developing stage this can be reflected on during the evaluation.

The evaluation stage develops the reflective skills of the learners.

### Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

This Unit has the Core Skill of *Problem Solving* embedded in it. This means that when learners achieve the Unit, their Core Skills profile will also be updated to show they have achieved *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 5.

The delivery and assessment of this Unit may also provide learners with the opportunity to develop the Core Skills of *Communication*, *Numeracy* and *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)*.

The precise nature and level of these will vary depending on the nature of the project topic, however some indicative examples are given below.

#### **Communication— Writing at SCQF level 6**

Learners will produce a written communication which presents, analyses, and evaluates a substantial body of information, and develop interpretations and conclusions in relation to an issue which is explored in depth.

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

**Graded Unit title:** Applied Sciences: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

### ***Communication*— Writing at SCQF level 6**

Learners will be required to extract, summarise, and provide a full explanation of the relationships between substantive information drawn from a range of different sources.

### ***Numeracy*— Using Graphical Information at SCQF level 6**

Learners may use an appropriate form of complex table, chart, diagram, or qualitative form, to communicate complex information.

### ***Information and Communication Technology (ICT)*— Providing Information at SCQF level 5**

Learners will select appropriate websites/data sources to research an issue and present findings in an appropriate format including referencing.

## History of changes to Graded Unit

Version	Description of change	Date
04	Guidance on word count amount added	19/10/18
03	Update of Conditions of Assessment.	06/08/18
02	'Assessment Support Pack' section on page 2 changed to 'Understanding Standards Materials' section and text changed to read 'Understanding Standards materials have been developed to assist the delivery of this Unit and to provide advice on general assessment and marking principles. These materials are available securely at the SQA Understanding Standards website ( <a href="http://www.understandingstandards.org.uk">http://www.understandingstandards.org.uk</a> ).'	31/08/16

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## General information for learners

### Graded Unit title: Applied Sciences: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

This is a 1 credit Unit at SCQF level 7. This Unit is project-based and is assessed by an investigation and the report of that investigation. You will carry out the investigation using a variety of research methods and tools. The topic of research will be left to your choice with advice from your lecturer. This enables you to find out more about an area of applied science that interests you particularly and may reflect some developing fields of applied science or an interest at your employment.

The investigation will be marked out of 100. To pass the Graded Unit you must achieve 50% of the total marks and all of the minimum Evidence Requirements for each of the three sections. The three sections are:

**The Planning Stage:** Where you will produce a plan outlining the nature of the investigation and the requirements to proceed.

**The Developing Stage:** Where you will undertake the investigation, and produce a comprehensive written report.

**The Evaluating Stage:** Where you will summarise the output of the developing stage (ie the report), and evaluate the report and the processes evolved in undertaking the project.

Your report should be between 3,000 – 6,000 words (not including references).

### Core Skills

This Unit has the Core Skill of *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 5 embedded in it. You may also have opportunities to develop the Core Skills of *Communication*, *Numeracy* and *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)*.