



Higher National project-based graded unit specification

General information

This graded unit has been validated as part of the HNC Retail. Centres are required to develop a project-based assessment in accordance with this validated specification.

Graded unit title: Retail: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

Graded unit code: HK5A 34

Type of Project: Case Study

Publication date: August 2018

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 03

Graded unit purpose

This graded unit is designed to provide evidence that the learner has achieved the following principal aims of the HNC Retail:

- ◆ To prepare learners for employment in a retail business as team leader, supervisory, or trainee management level.
- ◆ To develop an understanding of the environment in which the retail sector operates.
- ◆ Develop skills and understanding of the retail customer experience.
- ◆ To gain knowledge and skills of a range of specialist areas relating to practice of retailing.
- ◆ To prepare learners for progression to further study in retailing.

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:

- ◆ *Retail Environment*
- ◆ *Stock Presentation*
- ◆ *Retail Operations*
- ◆ *Retail Law*
- ◆ *Retail Customer Experience*
- ◆ *Financial Accounting Statements: An Introduction*
- ◆ *Organisations and Management*

Core Skills

Achievement of this graded unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill Problem Solving at SCQF level 6

Core Skill component None

There are also opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills which are highlighted in the support notes of this graded unit 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: Retail: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

Assessment

This graded unit will be assessed by the use of a project-based case study 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.

Conditions of assessment

The learner should be given a date for completion of the case study. 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.

Higher National project-based graded unit specification: Designing the project and assessing learners (cont)

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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 this level, learners should work independently. It is up to centres to take responsible steps to ensure that the project is the work of learners. 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 that where research, etc is carried out in other establishments or under supervision of others that the learner does not receive undue assistance.

To ensure authentication of work it is advisable for learners to complete a log or diary recording progress and tasks completed. There should be regular meetings between the tutor and learner to review progress and these meetings should be recorded.

Higher National project-based graded unit specification: Designing the project and assessing learners (cont)

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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>Evidence of an action plan which will enable the learner to carry out the instructions given with the case study, in a logical and organised manner, making the best use of time and resources. The plan will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Analysis of what is involved in the project and the key factors influencing the project and requiring investigation ◆ An action plan to carry out the project, based on the analysis undertaken ◆ Description of information required and how the information will be gathered ◆ Indication of other resources required to complete the three stages, including a schedule for completion of each stage <p>Written evidence of the above should be presented. It may be supplemented by oral, video, or audio evidence after consultation with the assessor. If oral evidence is used, notes covering the points discussed should be kept, (or it could be taped).</p> <p><i>The learner must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Planning stage.</i></p>	20%

Higher National project-based graded unit specification: Designing the project and assessing learners (cont)

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Project stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements	% Mark Allocation
Stage 2 — Developing	<p>Evidence of the learner carrying out the project, based on their plan, through the preparation of a written report which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Introduction ◆ Interpretation of the scenario and any attached data, with details of the areas for investigation ◆ Research sources and findings, with interpretation of data collected ◆ Conclusions and recommendations based on analysis of information gathered <p>The instructions given with the case study must ensure learners are able to apply their knowledge and skills from a minimum of any three mandatory units.</p> <p>The report should consist of 1,500–2,500 words and should be presented in the format of a business report, which includes a title, contents page, list of acknowledgements of sources and references. It may be supplemented orally in discussion with the assessor, and if this is done, a written record of the main points of the discussion should be provided or alternatively the conversations could be taped, or videoed.</p> <p><i>The learner must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Developing stage.</i></p>	60%

Higher National project-based graded unit specification: Designing the project and assessing learners (cont)

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Project stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements	% Mark Allocation
Stage 3 — Evaluating	<p>Learners will provide an evaluation of the effectiveness of the approach adopted for each stage of the activity. The evaluation should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ A brief outline of the case study and the points identified for consideration ◆ Review of the action plan, with reference to any modifications made during the course of the project, or any alternative methods, which could have been adopted, and identifying strengths and weaknesses of approach taken at each stage ◆ Assessment of the effectiveness of the plan with special reference to areas of research, sources of information, methods of gathering it, and best use of resources ◆ Recommendations for improved methods of carrying out a similar project in future ◆ Critical self-evaluation of strengths and weaknesses identified during the project, in terms of development or gaps in knowledge/skills <p>The evaluation stage could be assessed orally in the form of a presentation.</p> <p><i>The learner must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Evaluating stage.</i></p>	20%

Higher National project-based graded unit specification: Designing the project and assessing learners (cont)

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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.

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"> ◆ Has sufficient evidence of all three stages of the case study, is produced timeously to a high standard, and there is clear, explicit links between the three stages ◆ Demonstrates an astute interpretation of the scenario ◆ Is highly focussed, detailed, and relevant to the tasks associated with the case study ◆ Is highly focussed, detailed, and relevant to the tasks associated with the case study ◆ Demonstrates effective integration of knowledge, skills, and understanding across a range of specialist units (in excess of the minimum requirement) ◆ Includes well-considered and rational solutions, based on the knowledge and skills gained from the Course, and where appropriate, making reference to research findings from a number of sources ◆ Demonstrates the learner's ability to work autonomously 	<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 stages of the case study and is produced timeously to an adequate standard ◆ Demonstrates an acceptable interpretation of scenario instructions ◆ Is satisfactorily structured, whilst the use of language is adequate in terms of accuracy and use of specialist terminology ◆ Demonstrates an acceptable level of integration of knowledge, skills and understanding over the minimum number of specialist areas but may lack some continuity and consistency ◆ Includes reasonable solutions based on knowledge and skills gained on the Course, and where appropriate, making reference to research findings ◆ Demonstrates independent learning with minimum support and revision during project

Higher National project-based graded unit specification: Designing the project and assessing learners (cont)

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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: Retail: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

Guidance on approaches to delivery and assessment of this graded unit

This part of the unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Learners should be provided with information about the graded unit as early as possible but centres should ensure that learners have all the required knowledge and skills to begin the project. Learners must work independently but must also be supported throughout the process and effective tools such as progress logs or diaries should be used to motivate and monitor the learners' work and provide evidence of assistance given for grade consideration. An appointment system for progress interviews with learners should be identified at an early stage of the project.

As identified within this graded unit specification, projects should be assessed at each stage against minimum evidence requirements and learners should only progress to the next stage when they have met the minimum evidence requirements of the previous stage. Learners should be given a date for submission of each stage, if dates given are not met then the college's internal policy on missed deadlines will apply. At the end of each stage there should be opportunities for remediation and re-assessment on that particular stage.

If a learner fails the project overall or wishes to upgrade, then this must be done using a *substantially different* project, ie all stages should be undertaken using a new project, case study, etc. In this case, a learner's grade should be based on the achievement in the new project, if this results in a higher grade. It should be noted that the nature of a project based graded unit may not provide the opportunity for learners to undertake a substantially different project within the same academic year.

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

This graded unit has the Core Skill of Problem Solving embedded in it, so when learners achieve this Unit their Core Skills profile will be updated to show that they have achieved Problem Solving at SCQF Level 6

History of changes to graded unit

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Core Skill Problem Solving at SCQF level 6 embedded.	05/06/17
03	Update to Conditions of Assessment.	07/08/18

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SQA acknowledges the valuable contribution that Scotland's colleges have made to the development of SQA Advanced Qualifications.

FURTHER INFORMATION: Call SQA's Customer Contact Centre on 0345 279 1000.

General information for learners

Graded unit title: Retail: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

This unit will give you the opportunity to demonstrate your ability to integrate, evaluate and apply the knowledge and skills you have gained from a range of units from the HNC in Retail, and should therefore be completed toward the end of your course. You will be allocated a grade of A, B or C for the unit on successful completion of the project.

Typically the graded unit assessment is a project which takes the form of a case study. This may be set in the context of a retail organisation or the wider retail sector depending on the particular programme your centre operates.

The graded unit project is in three stages, planning, developing and evaluating. The work you produce for each stage of the project will form a portfolio of evidence.

The requirements for each stage must be met before you will be allowed to progress to the next. You will be given a deadline for the completion of each stage, please note that late submissions could be penalised in line with your centre's internal policy and could affect your grade.

The first stage is the **planning** stage. You will have to read the case study scenario and think about what you know and you will have to carry out research on the things you don't know about. You will identify the key tasks of the project and compile an action plan indicating timelines, references and sources of information.

The next stage is the **developing** stage and this is when you will detail your proposal. Your proposal should identify constraints and include a realistic plan for carrying out the project brief.

The final stage is the **evaluating** stage. For this stage you have to look back and comment on your approach to the project, how the planning went, how the developing went and comment on how this experience was in terms of the decisions you made, positive aspects of the process and what improvements you would make should you undertake a project again.

Remember that a grade will not be given until the final stage is complete and your work can be viewed as a whole. Grades are subject to external verification by SQA.

You will be given the opportunity during tutorials and/or progress interviews to discuss your progress. Feedback will be ongoing as part of the process and you will be encouraged to use a log book which you should maintain throughout your project and take to tutorials and/or progress interviews. This is your opportunity to discuss the work you have undertaken and agree next steps.

In undertaking this project you are required to display your ability to work independently to meet the standards required. At the same time, however, you will be under supervision and may need some support from your tutor.

General information for learners (cont)

Graded unit title: Retail: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

Arrangements for remediation and re-assessment will be in line with your centre's policy, however, if for any reason you were to be unsuccessful in the project overall, re-assessment must be on a substantially different project. It should be noted that your centre may not be able to provide the opportunity to undertake a substantially different project within the same academic year.

This graded unit has the Core Skill of Problem Solving embedded in it, so when you achieve this unit your Core Skills profile will be updated to show that you have achieved Problem Solving at SCQF Level 6