



## Higher National Unit Specification

### General information

**Unit title:** Research Methods for Artists and Designers  
(SCQF level 7)

**Unit code:** HM02 34

**Superclass:** AG

**Publication date:** September 2017

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 2

### Unit purpose

This unit is designed to introduce learners to the knowledge and skills required to undertake art and design based research projects. Rigorous and systematic research can help artists and designers distinguish their projects from common sense explanations of behaviour and phenomena. Learners will learn about the theory of research, the research process, research methodologies and types of research data that can be used and their appropriateness for particular types of research.

It is intended for learners who have an interest in applying research methods to art and design projects, as well as those who would use it as a basis for further study.

### Outcomes

On successful completion of the unit the learner will be able to:

- 1 Explain theoretical approaches to research in art and design projects.
- 2 Describe and evaluate the methods of data collection.
- 3 Produce a research project.

### Credit points and level

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

## Higher National Unit Specification: General information (cont)

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### Recommended entry to the unit

Entry is at the discretion of the centre.

### Core Skills

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill                      Problem Solving at SCQF level 5

Core Skill component                      None

There are also opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills which are highlighted in the support notes of the unit specification.

### Context for delivery

If this unit is delivered as part of a group award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the group award to which it contributes.

The Assessment Support Pack (ASP) for this unit provides assessment and marking guidelines that exemplify the national standard for achievement. It is a valid, reliable and practicable assessment. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the ASP to ensure a comparable standard. A list of existing ASPs is available to download from SQA's website (<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/46233.2769.html>).

### Equality and inclusion

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

# Higher National Unit Specification: Statement of standards

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Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

Where evidence for outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the knowledge and/or skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Learners should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

## Outcome 1

Explain theoretical approaches to research in art and design projects.

### Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ The basic research process
- ◆ Literature review
- ◆ Theoretical approach
- ◆ Formulating a hypothesis

## Outcome 2

Describe and evaluate the methods of data collection.

### Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Primary and secondary data sources
- ◆ Primary and secondary reading sources
- ◆ Qualitative and quantitative approaches
- ◆ Data collection methods

## Outcome 3

Produce a research project.

### Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ project brief related research methods
- ◆ project plan development
- ◆ project presentation techniques and formats
- ◆ Evaluation and reflection techniques for project

## Higher National unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

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### Evidence requirements for this unit

Learners will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills across all outcomes by showing that they can:

#### Outcome 1

- ◆ describe the importance of following a research process for an art and design project.
- ◆ describe each stage of the research process.
- ◆ explain the purpose of a literature review.
- ◆ explain the significance of adopting a theoretical approach.
- ◆ explain the usefulness of a hypothesis.
- ◆ assemble an illustrative research report covering each of the knowledge and/or Skills, including explanatory notes.

#### Outcome 2

- ◆ describe and evaluate primary and secondary data sources for an art and design project.
- ◆ describe and evaluate primary and secondary reading sources for an art and design project.
- ◆ distinguish between qualitative and quantitative approaches.
- ◆ describe and evaluate data collection methods for an art and design project.
- ◆ assemble an illustrative research portfolio covering each of the knowledge and/or skills, including explanatory notes.

#### Outcome 3

- ◆ apply an understanding of research methods to a finished art and design project.
- ◆ develop research methods to a finished art and design project.
- ◆ present a finished research project in an appropriate format.



## Higher National Unit Support Notes

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Unit support notes are offered as guidance and 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.

### Guidance on the content and context for this unit

The purpose of this unit is to provide learners with an introductory knowledge of visualisation research methods and methodologies within an art and design context. The unit should provide them with an opportunity to develop an understanding with knowledge of the nature, role and importance of research in the development of art and design projects.

Since research is fundamental to all art and design projects, it is likely the unit will be delivered in year one of an award. This should allow the unit to be delivered in such a way that enables learners to appreciate the relevance of the unit to research in art and design projects. Wherever possible, examples used should have relevance to the subject units studied previously or simultaneously.

### Guidance on approaches to delivery of this unit

This unit has been developed as part of Computer Arts and Design award and is designed to be delivered within the context of a creative and visual discipline. There is a range of theoretical and technical knowledge that should be presented to the learner, which should then be applied to the research, and development of a creative project. A project brief could be either self initiated or given to the learner.

This unit is best delivered in the order of the outcomes. Outcome 1 establishes the importance of the use of rigorous and systematic research in art and design projects. By examining the research process the learners come to understand the dynamics of the relationship that exists in art and design between theory and research.

In Outcome 2 the detail of research is examined: the pros and cons of primary and secondary data, the significance of quantitative and qualitative data and the various methods of data collection. Learners should be aware of the differing methods of generating evidence. Examples should be provided from primary and secondary sources relevant to the disciplines studied. Methods of data collection that produce qualitative and quantitative evidence should be explored, eg case studies generate qualitative evidence whilst the experimental method generates quantitative evidence. Both forms of evidence are important to the artist and designer, for example a designer may apprehend a data visualization using qualitative data collection, whilst another practitioner may desire to create a socially reflective project using quantitative data. A range of research methods should be considered, appropriate to the

## Higher National unit Support Notes (cont)

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disciplines being studied. Commonly used research methods include observation, case studies, experimentation, interviews and questionnaires.

In Outcome 3 the learners would then be expected to demonstrate their understanding of both the theoretical and practical demands of a research project through annotated and illustrative sketchbook evidence. This will contain an analysis of primary and secondary sources; contain a literature review, a hypothesis, and qualitative and/ or quantitative approaches. This will underpin the subsequent research and development process for the given or self-initiated brief.

This unit could be delivered independently however there are a range of units within the Computer Art and Design Framework, which could be supported by an understanding of research theory. Such an approach would create an excellent holistic model of delivery.

### Guidance on approaches to assessment of this unit

Evidence can be generated using different types of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education.

This is a practical unit and assessment evidence should be gathered within the context of a practical art and design research project.

### Assessment guidelines

#### Outcome 1

Learners should demonstrate that they have a clear understanding of the theoretical approaches to research in art and design projects. The learner should demonstrate that they have developed research and analytical skills that relate to the content of the unit. Evidence would be primarily gathered in a sketchbook, which may be used as part of an art and design project, and should include a literature review, a hypothesis and evidence of a theoretical approach.

#### Outcome 2

Learners should demonstrate that they have understood methods of data and data collection within the context of developing an art and design project. There should also be evidence of contextualisation with contemporary practices in art and design research projects, with the learner drawing upon recent examples to assist in their evaluation of the Units content. Evidence would be primarily gathered using a sketchbook, which may be used as part of an art and design project which will include an analysis of primary and/ or secondary sources, and a clear qualitative and/or quantitative approach along with evidence of data collection.

## Higher National unit Support Notes (cont)

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### Outcome 3

Learners should demonstrate that they have understood research and data collection methods. Assessment should be made through product evidence and the learner's ability to orally present their idea. The learner will need to evaluate their project in terms of research theories and their methods. This could either be evidenced orally or a written document. There should be evidence of project research and the development of different ideas and solutions.

### Opportunities for e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all learner evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the evidence requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at [www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment](http://www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment).

### Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

This 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 5.

Applying theoretical knowledge and producing a finished art and design product to a given brief will develop creative problem solving skills to an advanced level. There are opportunities to consider integration with work across the award. Evaluation which examines all stages of the design in context would be on-going and learners could benefit from group and individual discussion to reinforce critical judgement. Learners will also have the opportunity to develop critical thinking and evaluation skills as they place the context of knowledge within the development of a practical project.

The delivery and assessment of this unit may contribute towards the development of Core Skills of *Communication*, *Numeracy* and *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* and the development of other transferable skills, such as, essay writing, referencing, citation and bibliography skills and thinking, analytical and critical skills.

## History of changes to unit

Version	Description of change	Date
2	Core Skill Problem Solving at SCQF level 5 embedded.	18/09/17

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## General information for learners

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This section will help you decide whether this is the unit for you by explaining what the unit is about, what you should know or be able to do before you start, what you will need to do during the unit and opportunities for further learning and employment.

The purpose of this unit is to provide you with an introductory knowledge of the practice of conducting research for an art and/ or design project. The unit should provide you with the opportunity to develop an understanding of methods, methodologies, data types and modes of data collection. By using processes from sociological research artist and designers have opportunities to underpin their projects with rigorous investigation giving the content of an artwork additional meaning. It is about finding the connection between the physical and theoretical worlds.

To begin with you will learn to pose a research question, whereupon you will guide a research project in an attempt to answer that question. You may expect to find a specific answer, explained as a hypothesis, where you aim to prove, or disprove your expected outcome. You will research first hand, or primary sources, and distinguish these from secondary sources of information relating to your research question.

Evaluating the usefulness of data sources will require you to parse information quickly. You will find that applying a methodological approach to your research very helpful. If for example, your question may be to analyse an issue about gender, a feminist approach may help to guide your research. You will summarise your initial findings in a literature review, which could include your reading, images or recordings.

As you conduct your research you may wish to collect a range of data types; interviews, field recording, surveys and questionnaires or focus groups which are all recognised methods of collecting data. You will learn the difference between qualitative data, and quantitative data, and you evaluate and use information from each.

This unit has the Core Skill of 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 5