



## Higher National Unit Specification

### General information

**Unit title:** Marketing Communications: Investigation (SCQF level 8)

**Unit code:** HW04 35

**Superclass:** BA

**Publication date:** November 2017

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 02

### Unit purpose

This unit is about developing and applying the skills required to undertake a systematic investigation to examine and evaluate marketing communication operations in a business context. This investigation could be either on a particular industry sector or a defined area of an organisation's business activity. This unit allows learners to carry out an empirical study in order to examine how business practice compares with concepts and theories.

### Outcomes

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

- 1 Produce a proposal for an investigation.
- 2 Conduct a systematic investigation.
- 3 Produce a report on the investigation.
- 4 Present the findings of the investigation.

### Credit points and level

2 Higher National Unit credits at SCQF level 8: (16 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8)

### Recommended entry to the unit

Access to this unit is at the discretion of the centre, but it would be beneficial if the learner had achieved HN Unit *Marketing Research Theory* or similar unit or experience at SCQF level 7.

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

**Unit title:** Marketing Communications: Investigation (SCQF level 8)

### Core Skills

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill                      Problem Solving at SCQF level 6

Core Skill component                      None

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes for this 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.

### 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

**Unit title:** Marketing Communications: Investigation (SCQF level 8)

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.

### Outcome 1

Produce a proposal for an investigation.

#### Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Steps in the research process
- ◆ General and specific objectives of the investigation
- ◆ Research methodology
- ◆ Resource requirements and availability
- ◆ Constraints
- ◆ Scheduling activities

### Outcome 2

Conduct a systematic investigation.

#### Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Secondary research tools
- ◆ Primary research tools
- ◆ Scheduling of activities
- ◆ Analysis of secondary and primary data

### Outcome 3

Produce a report on the investigation.

#### Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Professional report formats
- ◆ Collation of materials
- ◆ Research findings
- ◆ Impartial/non-subjective style

## Higher National Unit Specification: Statement of standards (cont)

**Unit title:** Marketing Communications: Investigation (SCQF level 8)

### Outcome 4

Present the findings of the investigation.

#### Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Presentation planning and materials
- ◆ Presentation delivery and techniques
- ◆ Use of audio/visual aids

#### 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

For a given brief regarding marketing communications:

- ◆ identify a clear rationale for the investigation.
- ◆ produce a clear set of objectives for the proposed investigation.
- ◆ outline a clear research methodology.
- ◆ identify suitable resources.
- ◆ identify constraints on the investigation.
- ◆ produce a schedule of planned activities.

#### Outcome 2

For areas specified in the proposal produced for Outcome 1:

- ◆ access **three** secondary research sources, including relevant online sources.
- ◆ select and justify the use of three primary research methods.
- ◆ employ suitable research instruments for each of the three research methods selected.
- ◆ collate and analyse evidence and material in a systematic way and to an agreed timetable.

#### Outcomes 3 and 4:

From tasks undertaken in Outcomes 1 and 2, produce a report in a professional format which includes:

- ◆ suitable introduction
- ◆ methodology
- ◆ research findings
- ◆ conclusions and recommendations
- ◆ relevant materials and evidence in the form of appendices and bibliography
- ◆ referencing, where appropriate

## **Higher National Unit Specification: Statement of standards (cont)**

**Unit title:** Marketing Communications: Investigation (SCQF level 8)

Content of this report has to be in an impartial, non-subjective style.

Based on the formal report:

- ◆ prepare appropriate material and plan for presentation to a specified audience.
- ◆ present material accurately and demonstrate presentation skills appropriate for the situation.
- ◆ employ suitable audio/visual aids.

The unit is designed as a research project and assessment can take a variety of formats. More information can be found in the support notes.



## Higher National Unit Support Notes

**Unit title:** Marketing Communications: Investigation (SCQF level 8)

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 80 hours.

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

This unit at SCQF level 8 is an optional unit of group awards such as in HND Advertising Public Relations and HND in Marketing and it may also form part of other Higher National programmes.

It is intended to enable learners to carry out a systematic piece of research based on an empirical study which will allow them to examine and evaluate marketing communications either within an industry sector or a defined area of an organisation's business activity.

Examples could include:

- ◆ An investigation into a specific business issue within an organisation that the learner is familiar with — or has contact with. For example, use of marketing communications by an organisation, such as the activities of Advertising, PR, Direct Marketing and Digital Technology, etc.
- ◆ Comparing promotional techniques used by two organisations in the same sector and how each encourages brand loyalty, eg two large well-known organisations in the sports clothing sector.
- ◆ Why some brands are so successful, eg Disney; Apple, McDonalds.
- ◆ Does traditional print media still have a place in the digital landscape.

Learners should agree in advance with their tutors/assessors the issue that they will investigate to ensure it is appropriate and suitable to generate all evidence requirements of the unit. Tutors/assessors and learners could then jointly agree a brief on which learners are to base their proposals, etc.

In Outcome 1 learners start planning their investigation and establish their rationale, objectives, methodology, resources required and a timeline. They should also identify any constraints that they envisage at this stage.

## Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

### Unit title: Marketing Communications: Investigation (SCQF level 8)

In Outcome 2, learners are to be encouraged to use a range of sources to build up evidence, eg online websites, text books, interviews, etc. The size/type of organisation or issue being examined will dictate the type of sources that will be available. The following list is not prescriptive but is merely a suggestion of what might be available:

#### Secondary sources:

- ◆ Webpages: of individual organisations; professional bodies such as CIM, Institute of Direct Marketing, etc specific sectors/trades; chambers of commerce, etc
- ◆ Social media platforms
- ◆ In-house publications
- ◆ Organisations' intranets
- ◆ Magazines
- ◆ Newspapers — both print and digital
- ◆ Textbooks

#### Primary research tools:

- ◆ Observation
- ◆ Focus groups
- ◆ Personal interviews
- ◆ Telephone interviews
- ◆ Online questionnaires and surveys
- ◆ Postal surveys

In Outcome 3, learners are required to draw together their findings in a professional report format which includes conclusions and recommendations. This takes their report beyond a simple descriptive narrative. Learners should also be encouraged to support their research findings with relevant theories.

Outcome 4 requires learners to present their findings to a specified audience.

### Guidance on approaches to delivery of this unit

This unit is designed as an investigative project on a marketing communications issue, where the learner will work mostly on their own, but with support from tutors/lecturers where required, eg in a mentoring role; giving guidance and acting as a sounding board for learners ideas and proposals.

Having the learner tasked with finding a 'contact' for their investigation can be really useful for this unit. As well as being a valuable networking opportunity for learners, this can help encourage them to work independently and broaden their horizons. This could include, eg a sport journalist as a contact for an investigation into social media in football.

It is recommended that learners maintain logbooks or electronic diaries or blogs or similar records to note their progress against their original planned timescales, etc.

## Higher National unit Support Notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Marketing Communications: Investigation (SCQF level 8)

Completion of this unit will give learner a clear and practical understanding of the process involved in the completion of an investigation and the skills required to communicate the results both in a report format and as a presentation.

### 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.

As this unit is designed as an investigative project, assessment can take a wide variety of formats.

Assessment can be holistic with all outcomes integrated, ie the production of a proposal by learners which they follow as they research the agreed areas of activity/issues. The evidence to be produced includes a report in a professional format based on research carried out and presentation materials, which learners will use to present their findings to a specified audience. Where holistic assessment is used, it would be useful if tutors review and approve the learner's report (Outcome 3) prior to the presentation (Outcome 4).

Alternatively, each outcome can be assessed separately. Word counts, lengths of presentations, etc are not stipulated — instead, it is more important to ensure that all evidence requirements are covered.

As well as written reports and oral presentations, assessors should also consider the use of wikis, blogs and poster presentations as evidence for this unit.

### 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).



## Higher National unit Support Notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Marketing Communications: Investigation (SCQF level 8)

### 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 6

Learners will develop problem solving skills as they are to plan, organise and complete the complex task of investigating a marketing communications issue in a business context and present their findings; conclusions and recommendations. When researching and producing their findings, learners will analyse and seek solutions to a range of theoretical and practical problems. They have to analyse primary and secondary data; identify resources and constraints; work towards specific objectives and complete their tasks within an agreed timescale.

Depending on the teaching, learning and assessment approaches adopted there are also opportunities to develop Core Skills as follows:

#### **Communications: Components Oral Communication and Written Communication**

Learners are expected to read and understand complex written information regarding a marketing communications issue in a business context. As part of their research, learners could undertake personal/telephone interviews where they can develop concise and clear oral communication skills. Assessments for this unit include written work and oral presentations such as a proposal for their investigation; a professional standard report and a presentation outlining their findings; conclusions and recommendations.

#### **Information and Communication Technology: Components Accessing information and Providing/Creating Information**

Within this unit, learners are to access a wide range of information as part of their research of a marketing communications issue in a business context — much of which will be through use of online sources. They can also use a range of digital tools to present their evidence as part of their report and presentation.

As learners progress through this unit, they will acquire skills and knowledge necessary for carrying out research and producing a professional standard report of findings, conclusions and recommendations. These could be used to enhance learners' employability prospects and are also very useful skills for higher education, such as researching and producing dissertations or theses.

## History of changes to unit

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Core Skill of Problem Solving at SCQF level 6 embedded.	24/11/2017

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## General information for learners

### Unit title: Marketing Communications: Investigation (SCQF level 8)

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.

This is a stand-alone unit at SCQF level 8 and also included in a range of HN Marketing, Advertising and PR awards. It is for those studying marketing, advertising and PR and would like to work in this type of area (or related area) in the future. Also achievement of this unit could help you with further study of marketing communications at SCQF level 9 or above.

This unit lets you plan, organise and carry out an investigation into a particular marketing communications issue in a business context. This could be either on a particular industry sector or a defined area of an organisation's business activity. This could include, eg a business issue within an organisation that you are familiar with — or have had contact with; use of marketing communications by an organisation; comparing promotional techniques used by two organisations in the same sector; investigating why some brands are so successful, etc.

You will agree in advance with your tutor the topic/issue of your investigation and then develop a proposal outlining how you will take this ahead. You will use a range of research techniques whilst carrying out the investigation including desk research, observation, personal/telephone interviews, etc. You have to produce both a report and undertake a presentation on your findings, conclusions and recommendations.

On successful completion of the unit, you will therefore be able to:

- ◆ produce a proposal for an investigation.
- ◆ conduct a systematic investigation.
- ◆ produce a report on the investigation.
- ◆ present the findings of the investigation.

Assessments for this unit will include the production of your proposals; evidence of undertaking research; production of a professional report and making a presentation on your findings; conclusions and recommendations.

This 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

There are also opportunities to develop Core Skills in *Communication* and *Information Communication Technology (ICT)*.