



Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Specification

General information

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

Graded unit title: Marketing Communications: Graded Unit 1

Graded unit code: HX47 34

Type of project: Practical assignment

Publication date: October 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 in Marketing Communications:

- ◆ Developing learners' knowledge and skills in key aspects of marketing communications with specific reference to marketing, advertising, public relations, digital and traditional media.
- ◆ Preparing learners for employment in marketing, advertising, public relations and media roles at an introductory/junior level across private and public sector agencies, consultancies and industry.
- ◆ Preparing learners for progression to further studies in marketing or advertising and PR at HND level or to 1st or 2nd year entry to higher education or professional qualifications in either marketing, advertising, public relations, or non-related qualifications.

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:

F7BX 34	<i>Marketing: An Introduction</i>
HK55 34	<i>Advertising: The Advertising Industry</i>
HC2P 34	<i>Public Relations: Principles and Practice</i>
HH9T 34	<i>Marketing Research Theory</i>
HW09 34	<i>Marketing Planning: An Introduction</i>
HX3V 34	<i>Digital Marketing Communications: Website Tools and Techniques</i>
HH6C 34	<i>Digital Marketing Communications: Content Development</i>

Core Skills

Achievement of this unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill	Problem Solving at SCQF level 5
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Core Skill component	None
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There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this graded unit.

Assessment support pack

The assessment support pack for this unit provides assessment and marking guidelines that exemplify the national standard for achievement. It is a valid, reliable and practicable instrument of assessment. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the assessment support pack to ensure a comparable standard. Assessment support packs are available on SQA's secure website.

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 our website: www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements

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Assessment

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

For this graded unit, learners are to produce an overall project action plan outlining what needs to be done to develop a marketing communications proposal for a client. Learners are then to produce and present their marketing communications proposal. Learners are required to maintain a log/diary of their activities during the Planning and Developing stages of this graded unit. The final stage involves learners producing an evaluation of their activity, which includes evaluation of both their project and identification of knowledge and skills they have developed/gained.

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

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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.

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.

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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>The learner is to produce an action plan for the overall project which includes the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 An outline of the aims and objectives of the action plan for the overall project. 2 Demonstrates an understanding of client brief including identifying objectives for proposed marketing communication campaign and target audience(s) based on brief. 3 Carrying out initial research into client's current marketing communication activities, including traditional and digital marketing where relevant. 4 Identification of key marketing information and methods of collection, required to develop marketing communications proposals for the client 5 Production of timetable for carrying out project activities across all three stages. <p>Learners are required to maintain a log/diary of activities carried out by them during the Planning stage.</p> <p>Additional guidance on grading</p> <p><i>The learner must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Planning stage. This can be done by presenting evidence covering all aspects of the Planning stage and achieving at least 50% of the marks for this stage.</i></p>	25% of total marks

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Project stage	Minimum evidence requirements	% Mark allocation
Stage 2 — Developing	<p>The learner is to produce a marketing communications proposal and a presentation which:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Uses secondary market research and analytics to collect marketing information as proposed in the plan. 2 Decides a campaign proposal based on marketing communication objectives in action plan. 3 Displays knowledge of marketing interdependence and integration of marketing communication activities. 4 Selects and justifies choice of media. 5 Selects and justifies choice of communication tools. 6 Produces examples of materials to support the proposal. 7 Displays awareness of any legislative or ethical controls that would affect the communications campaign. 8 Demonstrates the ability to manage materials and resources to carry out the activity within budget. <p>Learners are required to maintain a log/diary of activities carried out by them during the Developing stage.</p> <p>This stage includes the presentation and production of the marketing communication proposal. The learner is to present the material and the proposal in a confident manner which addresses the brief.</p> <p>Additional guidance on grading</p> <p><i>The learner must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Developing stage. This can be done by presenting evidence covering all aspects of the Developing stage and achieving at least 50% of the marks for this stage.</i></p>	60% of total marks

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Project stage	Minimum evidence requirements	% Mark allocation
Stage 3 — Evaluating	<p>The learner is to produce an evaluation of activity which includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 An overview of the Planning and development stages of the project. 2 Identification of areas of the plan which may have been modified during the course of the activity. 3 Evaluation of the project in terms of strengths and weaknesses of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ meeting the objectives of the campaign brief ◆ learner’s management of the project 4 Identification of knowledge and skills which have been gained or developed. <p>Additional guidance on grading</p> <p><i>The learner must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Evaluating stage. This can be done by presenting evidence covering all aspects of the Evaluating stage and achieving at least 50% of the marks for this stage.</i></p>	15% of total marks

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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**.

The evidence for the project is generated over time and involves three distinct stages. 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. It is up to centres to take reasonable steps to ensure that the project is the work of the learner. 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. 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 the supervision of others that the learner does not receive undue 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. However, any remediation/re-assessment will have an impact on grading as the degree of autonomous working is a criterion for a grade A.

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 for the three essential phases of the project, is produced to a high standard, and is quite clearly inter-related ◆ demonstrates an accurate and insightful understanding of the relevant issues relating to the marketing communications industry 	<p>Is a co-ordinated piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ has sufficient evidence of the three essential phases of the project, is produced to an adequate standard ◆ demonstrates an acceptable understanding of the relevant issues relating to the marketing communications industry

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Grade Related Criteria (cont)	
Grade A	Grade C
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ is highly focused and relevant to the tasks associated with the project brief ◆ is clear and well-structured throughout and language used is of a high standard in terms of level, accuracy and technical content ◆ effectively applies integrated and consolidated knowledge, understanding and skills of the core units of the award ◆ demonstrates the learner's ability to work autonomously 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ is focused and relevant to the tasks associated with the project brief ◆ is satisfactorily structured and language used is adequate in terms of level, accuracy and technical content ◆ consolidates and integrates knowledge and skills but this may lack some continuity and consistency ◆ demonstrates independent learning with minimum support and revision during project

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: Marketing Communications: Graded Unit 1

Guidance on approaches to delivery and assessment of this graded unit

Project brief: Practical assignment

The assignment task relates to planning, developing and evaluating of a project. The project task is to produce an outline proposal for a marketing communications campaign in response to a client brief. This will take the form of a proposal and a presentation.

The overall project will be marked out of 100. Only whole marks should be used.

Stage	Element	Available marks
Planning	Action plan	25
Developing	Proposal	50
	Presentation	10
Evaluating	Evaluation	15

Stage 1 — Planning

In this stage the learner is required to produce an overall **project action plan** which outlines what the learner needs to do in order to develop a marketing communications proposal for the client. This will consider the marketing communications brief, analyse the task and decide a plan of action for undertaking the project. Identifying the information, activities, resources and timetable needed to carry out the project.

This stage is worth 25 marks. The learner must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified to pass the Planning stage. The Planning stage will be assessed by submission of the **project action plan** and **activity log/diary**.

The tutor's role is as a facilitator and so to gain high marks the learner must demonstrate a high degree of autonomy in planning activities. A suggested marking scheme is noted below:

Up to 3 marks for an outline of the aims and objectives of the action plan for the overall project.

Up to 6 marks for demonstrating an understanding of the client brief including identifying objectives for a proposed marketing communication campaign and target audience(s) based on the brief.

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Up to 8 marks for carrying out initial research into the client's current marketing communication activities, including traditional and digital marketing where relevant.

Up to 6 marks for identifying the key marketing information and the methods of collection, required to develop the marketing communications proposal.

Up to 2 marks for producing a timetable for carrying out the project activities across all three stages.

The minimum evidence requirement includes the submission of an activity log/diary for the Planning stage. (However, marks for the planning activity log will be awarded at the Developing stage) **25 marks**

Stage 2 — Developing

This stage is worth 60 marks. The learner must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified to pass the developing stage. The developing stage will be assessed by submission of a written marketing communications proposal and a presentation. A suggested marking scheme is:

Up to 6 marks for using secondary market research and analytics to collect marketing information as proposed in the action plan:

- ◆ use of analytics to collect information
- ◆ use of other secondary research to collect information
(*This links to Evidence Requirement 4 in the Planning stage*)

Up to 8 marks for deciding an outline campaign proposal based on marketing communication objectives in the action plan which should outline:

- ◆ the public relations strategy, identifying target audience(s), specific objectives and key messages — and monitoring and control methods.
- ◆ the advertising strategy, identifying target audience(s), specific objectives and key messages — and monitoring and control methods.
(*This links to Evidence Requirement 2 in the Planning stage*)

Up to 2 marks for displaying knowledge of marketing interdependence and integration of marketing communication activities:

- ◆ interdependence
- ◆ integration

Up to 8 marks for selection and justification of choice of media:

- ◆ Public relations media:
 - print, social media, e-mail, press conference, others
- ◆ Advertising media:
 - traditional, internet, social media, others

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Up to 8 marks for selection and justification of choice of communication tools:

- ◆ Public relations tools — press conferences, press releases, speeches, special events
- ◆ Advertising tools — print, broadcast, internet, social media, video, (e-mail)

Up to 8 marks for producing examples of materials to support the proposal:

- ◆ This should include examples of traditional and online materials.

Up to 4 marks for displaying awareness of any legislative or ethical controls that would affect the communications campaign:

- ◆ This should cover both public relations and advertising

Up to 2 marks for demonstrating the ability to manage materials and resources to carry out the activity within budget.

The minimum evidence requirement includes the submission of an activity log/diary for the Developing stage.

In addition, up to 10 marks for the presentation and up to 4 marks for the activity logs/diaries covering Stages 1 and 2. 60 marks

Stage 3 — Evaluating

This stage is worth 15 marks. In this final stage, learners will review their assignment by considering the Planning and Developing stages of the project, including areas modified. In addition, learners will appraise their project in terms of strengths and weaknesses and also identify knowledge and skills which have been gained or developed throughout the graded unit. A suggested marking scheme is noted below:

Up to 4 marks for an overview of the planning and development stages of the project and identification of areas which may have been modified during the course of the activity.

Up to 11 marks for evaluation of the project in terms of strengths and weaknesses of:

- ◆ meeting the objectives of the campaign brief
- ◆ learner's management of the project, including identification of knowledge and skills which have been gained or developed

15 marks

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

Graded unit title: Marketing Communications: Graded Unit 1

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

◆ **Problem Solving — Components Critical Thinking, Planning and Organising and Reviewing and Evaluating**

Learners are to produce an action plan for the overall graded unit project including setting aims; identifying and obtaining resources required by the client brief; and identification of key marketing information; and methods of collection required to make sound marketing communications proposals. Using their research and analytics, learners are to develop campaign proposals and select and justify their choice of advertising and public relations media and tools from a wide range of available sources. They have to manage materials and resources to carry out the activities within budget and timescales. In Stage 3, learners will evaluate Stages 1 and 2 of this graded unit; highlight modifications made; show strengths and weaknesses in meeting the overall objectives and managing the project. They also undertake a self-evaluation by identifying knowledge and skills that they have developed.

◆ **Communication — Components Written Communication (Reading), Written Communication (Writing) and Oral Communication**

Learners are to read, understand and evaluate a range of complex information. Firstly they have to read and understand the client's brief then are to identify, summarise and select relevant marketing communications information, advertising and public relations media and tools. This will include complex and specialist vocabulary and could include diagrams, charts, tables, etc as well as words. Much of this will be in digital format. They have to produce sound marketing communication proposals which are to persuade a client that the brief has been met; this includes, eg interdependences and integration of marketing activities; recommendations on choice of advertising and public relations media and communication tools, etc. All proposals must also confirm to current legislation and ethical controls. At the end of Stage 2, learners are to present their proposals using relevant language, vocabulary and appropriate level of formality expected in the industry. As well as conveying information, they are to communicate their ideas with supporting detail to convince the audience that the client brief has been met.

◆ **Information and Communication Technology (ICT): Components Accessing information and Providing/Creating Information**

Within this graded unit, learners are to access a wide range of information which will mainly be through use of online sources. They are to undertake marketing research which will involve the use of online research tools. They can also use a range of digital tools as part of their presentation in Stage 2 and, as well as traditional marketing materials, they must also include online materials to support their proposals. In Stages 1 and 2, learners must maintain a log/diary of their activities — it is extremely likely that this will be in a digital format.

As learners progress through this graded unit, they will acquire skills necessary to plan, develop and present marketing communication proposals for a client. This will help them gain a good understanding of some of the demands of the marketing communication industry which could be used to enhance their employability prospects.

History of changes to graded unit

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Core Skill Problem Solving at SCQF level 5 embedded	30/05/18
03	Update of Conditions of Assessment	02/10/18

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SQA acknowledges the valuable contribution that Scotland's colleges have made to the development of Higher National qualifications.

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

General information for learners

Graded unit title: Marketing Communications: Graded Unit 1

The graded unit integrates the main knowledge and skills gained in the units within the HNC in Marketing Communications. It is expected that you will have completed the mandatory units of your HNC.

The graded unit is based on a project and the assessment is a practical assignment which relates to the Planning, developing and evaluating a response to a client marketing communications brief. There are three stages to this graded unit.

Stage 1 — Planning

You will produce an overall **project action plan** which outlines what you need to do in order to develop a marketing communications proposal for the client. This will consider the marketing communications brief, analyse the task and decide a plan of action for undertaking the project. Identifying the information, activities, resources and timetable needed to carry out the project.

Stage 2 — Developing

In the Developing stage you will collect marketing information, producing an outline marketing communications proposal, which will include deciding communications objectives, target audience(s), traditional and digital communication media and tools, and examples of advertising and public relations materials to support your proposal. You will also present your marketing communications proposals.

Stage 3 — Evaluating

In this final stage, you will review your assignment by considering the Planning and Developing stages of the project, including areas modified. You will appraise your project in terms of strengths and weaknesses and identify knowledge and skills which you have gained throughout the graded unit.

Your project will be marked out of 100 and **you must pass each stage before moving onto the next stage**. Each stage has the following marks:

Planning: 25 marks
Developing: 60 marks
Evaluating: 15 marks

You will be assigned an overall grade which will be based on the following boundaries:

Grade A = 70%–100%
Grade B = 60%–69%
Grade C = 50%–59%

Depending on how this graded unit is delivered by your tutor, there may be opportunities to develop Core Skills of *Communication*, *Problem Solving* and *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)*.

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.