

**ECONOMICS**  
**Advanced Higher**

**First edition– published 2005**

# National Course Specification

## ECONOMICS (Advanced Higher)

**COURSE NUMBER** C038 13



### COURSE STRUCTURE

This Course has three mandatory Units:

<b>DM4W 13</b>	<b><i>Microeconomics (Advanced Higher)</i></b>	<b><i>1 credit (40 hours)</i></b>
<b>DM50 13</b>	<b><i>Economic Issues and Policies (Advanced Higher)</i></b>	<b><i>1 credit (40 hours)</i></b>
<b>DM51 13</b>	<b><i>Economic Research (Advanced Higher)</i></b>	<b><i>1 credit (40 hours)</i></b>

All Courses include 40 hours over and above the 120 hours for the Units. This may be used for induction, extending the range of learning and teaching approaches, support, consolidation, integration of learning and preparation for Course assessment.

### RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have achieved one of the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ Higher Economics or its Units
- and*
- ◆ Higher English or its Units.

### PROGRESSION

The Course or its Units may provide progression to:

- ◆ Higher National programmes
- ◆ higher education programmes
- ◆ training or employment

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### Administrative Information

**Publication date:** April 2005

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 01

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## **National Course Specification: general information (cont)**

**COURSE**                      Economics (Advanced Higher)

### **CREDIT VALUE**

The Advanced Higher Course in Economics is allocated 32 SCQF points at SCQF level 7\*.

*\*SCQF points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

### **CORE SKILLS**

This Course gives automatic certification of the following:

**Core Skills components for the Course**                                      Planning and Organising at Higher

## **National Course Specification: course details**

**COURSE**                      Economics (Advanced Higher)

### **RATIONALE**

This Course is designed to promote an understanding of the economic environment. Business and enterprise are at the heart of national growth and development and this is reflected in the important place that business education assumes in the curriculum. The provision offers opportunities for individuals to develop the crucial skills and knowledge which allow them to access, understand and contribute to the dynamic and complex business and information environment. Whatever the career pathway or progression route, business education can provide a valuable context which enhances individual effectiveness.

All societies, organisations and individuals face the basic economic problem of allocating scarce resources among competing uses. Economics is the social science which provides the knowledge base and the range of skills which promote an understanding of the economic dimension of life which revolves around the production and consumption of goods and services. Economics is therefore concerned with decisions made by individuals, businesses, government and other organisations, and the environment in which they operate. The Advanced Higher in Economics is concerned with the application of economic concepts to the ways in which choices about the use of resources are made. It concentrates particularly on the analysis and evaluation of current economic issues and the implications which these have for individuals, organisations and society as a whole. It develops skills in interpreting, analysing and evaluating the processes of economic change and development in contemporary society. The methodology of the subject encourages candidates to use the processes of deductive and inductive reasoning to assess and evaluate various types of data and to weigh up the benefits and costs of alternative courses of action. The Course will enable candidates to appreciate that economic problems can be considered from a number of different perspectives. Hence, at this level, candidates are encouraged to think independently and to take greater responsibility for their own learning.

As a result, candidates will develop an ability to analyse critically the many public and private decisions which affect the working of markets and influence the living conditions in Scotland, the United Kingdom, the European Union and the wider world today. It will also enable them to develop further as informed citizens, producers and consumers, able to contribute to the society in which they live.

The study of Economics at Advanced Higher level will provide a strong foundation for those wishing to undertake further study in Economics. It will also be beneficial to those intending to progress into Courses in areas such as business, social studies and management, and into professional qualifications in law, accountancy, etc. It will also be of benefit for anyone contemplating a career in central or local government, commerce or industry.

## National Course Specification: course details

### COURSE Economics (Advanced Higher)

The three Units of the Course reflect this rationale. *Microeconomics (Advanced Higher)* concentrates on extending economic knowledge and understanding and develops fundamental economic concepts of the theory of the firm and market behaviour introduced in *Microeconomics (Higher)*. *Economic Issues and Policies (Advanced Higher)* emphasises the application of economic principles in the analysis of contemporary national and international economic events and pays particular attention to the use of different economic perspectives. It takes forward ideas originally considered in *The UK Economy (Higher)* and *The International Economy (Higher)*. The latter two Advanced Higher Units emphasise contemporary economic issues. *Economic Research (Advanced Higher)* provides an opportunity for candidates to extend this and look in detail at a contemporary economic issue of their choice. This enables them to develop research and investigative skills and to present a reasoned, economic argument, all of which are key aspects of the work of professional economists.

### AIMS

The aims of the Course build on the knowledge and understanding gained in Higher Economics, and to:

- ◆ develop a knowledge and understanding of:
  - the economic concepts involved in an analysis of the behaviour of firms
  - the different economic perspectives used in the explanation and analysis of economic issues
- 
- ◆ develop the ability to apply economic knowledge and understanding to contemporary issues relating to:
  - the economic problem and the allocation of scarce resources among alternative uses
  - the behaviour of firms
  - the national and international economic environment
- ◆ develop the skills of:
  - analysing and discussing current economic issues and problems from a number of perspectives
  - suggesting possible solutions to current economic issues and problems
  - presenting an economic argument in a coherent and effective manner which builds to a logical conclusion
- ◆ promote, encourage and extend an understanding of:
  - economic issues and their effects on the individual in society as a consumer, employee, producer and citizen
  - the social costs involved in economic decisions
  - the international impact of economic issues particularly those arising from UK membership of the European Union

and to provide a basis for further study, particularly in terms of facilitating the transition to higher education.

## National Course Specification: course details

### COURSE Economics (Advanced Higher)

Satisfactory completion of the Course will provide candidates with:

- ◆ enhanced economic knowledge and understanding
- ◆ the ability to apply economic principles to explain and analyse contemporary economic events and issues
- ◆ an understanding of economics and of study skills which will enable them to progress confidently into more advanced courses in economics or in business and other courses where economics is a significant part
- ◆ the ability to communicate complex ideas in a coherent, logical manner leading to a reasoned conclusion supported by relevant evidence
- ◆ other transferable skills such as the ability to research and investigate.

The Economics Course at Advanced Higher has been designed to provide progression from Higher Economics. It achieves this in several ways:

- ◆ the Course content develops and extends the economic ideas and concepts of Higher, particularly in the theory of the firm in *Microeconomics (Advanced Higher)*.
- ◆ the context of the Advanced Higher is more complex and demanding than at Higher, particularly in terms of the application of economic concepts to contemporary economic issues
- ◆ the dissertation requires a more sophisticated level of communication skills as candidates must present a logical, reasoned argument related to a contemporary economic issue
- ◆ the dissertation also requires that candidates develop and demonstrate research and investigative skills which are not expected at Higher level
- ◆ the Outcomes, Performance Criteria and evidence requirements in the Units at Advanced Higher are more demanding than at Higher, for example with respect to the depth of understanding required and the need to consider alternative economic perspectives
- ◆ the emphasis on contemporary economic issues allows a greater degree of integration than that which takes place at Higher level.

## National Course Specification: course details (cont)

**COURSE** Economics (Advanced Higher)

### COURSE CONTENT

The Course content is organised into three Units: *Microeconomics (Advanced Higher)*, *Economic Issues and Policies (Advanced Higher)* and *Economic Research (Advanced Higher)*. There is no specific Economics Course content associated with *Economic Research (Advanced Higher)* and the Dissertation which is directly related and based on content associated with the remainder of the Advanced Higher Economics Course.

All of the Course content will be subject to sampling in the Course assessment.

A critical aspect of the Course content at Advanced Higher is the requirement that candidates must apply their knowledge and understanding of Economics to the analysis of contemporary economic issues. For the purposes of this Course, ‘contemporary’ is taken to mean within the last 18 months. This includes ‘ongoing’ issues which have their origins well before the preceding 18 months.

A summary of the Course content is given below.

#### **N.B. The content of the lower levels underpins this award.**

#### **Microeconomics (Advanced Higher)**

Perfect competition	Underpinning assumptions: large number of buyers and sellers, perfect knowledge, homogeneous product, freedom of entry and exit to the market.  Equilibrium in the short and long run for the firm and the industry.  Advantages and disadvantages of perfect competition.
Monopoly	Underpinning assumptions, for example, single supplier, total barriers to entry.  Equilibrium in the short and long run.  Advantages and disadvantages of monopolies.  Price discrimination.
Monopolistic competition	Underpinning assumptions, for example, independence of firms, product differentiation.
Oligopoly	Equilibrium in the short and long run. Underpinning assumptions, for example, existence of barriers to entry, interdependence between firms.  Behaviour of firms in oligopoly – kinked demand, collusion (for example, cartel, price leadership), non-collusive behaviour, non-price competition.

Externalities	Positive and negative externalities. The conflict between private costs and benefits and social costs and benefits. The effects of externalities on resource allocation.
Government response to externalities	Effectiveness of government policies - impact on producers and consumers; achievement of intended objectives.

***Economic Issues and Policies (Advanced Higher)***

UK current economic issues	<p>The UK's current economic performance over the last 10 years including statistics and reasons for changes in gross domestic product, inflation rates, unemployment figures and trade statistics.</p> <p>Current issues in the UK economy</p> <p>Demand management policy; monetary policy; supply side policy; exchange rate policy</p> <p>UK budget, UK monetary policy framework.</p> <p>NB The above domestic policies are examples of areas where specific issues might arise during the study period covered by the Unit. Other issues such as transport and housing policy may be current at a particular time.</p>
International policy issues	<p>European Union; globalisation; international slowdowns and recessions; the relationship between developed and developing countries.</p> <p>NB The above international policy issues are examples of areas where specific international issues might arise during the study period covered by the Unit. It is possible that other issues such as international trading agreements and the role of the WTO may also be current at a particular time.</p>

**Economic Research (Advanced Higher) and the Dissertation**

The dissertation is assessed separately and the following should be taken into account.

Planning	Aims, methods of investigation.
Information	Validity, reliability

## National Course Specification: course details (cont)

**COURSE** Economics (Advanced Higher)

### ASSESSMENT

To gain the award of the Economics (Advanced Higher), candidates must pass all the Units and the Course assessment. The candidate's Grade is based on the Course assessment.

#### Assessment Objectives

The key objective of assessment is to ensure that candidates have achieved the aims of the Course. In particular, assessment seeks to ensure that candidates have understood and can apply the Course content and that they can communicate their understanding.

Unit assessment aims to ensure candidates can complete a range of extended response questions which require them to explain and analyse economic situations and issues and to apply economic concepts to familiar situations. *Economic Research (Advanced Higher)* allows integration across the Course content but, in the other two Units, integration is confined to the topics covered within the Unit.

Course assessment aims to ensure candidates can explain and analyse contemporary economic issues in unfamiliar and more complex contexts through the use of interpretation items, extended response questions and a dissertation. Some topics are integrated and integration is across the whole of the Course content.

#### Unit Assessment

The Unit assessment for the two Units *Microeconomics (Advanced Higher)* and *Economic Issues and Policies (Advanced Higher)* will be a closed book assessment which should take place at an appropriate time. The maximum time allowed for each assessment is 60 minutes.

The assessment for the Unit *Economic Research (Advanced Higher)* will be a plan accompanied by a commentary. The commentary will be completed in 30 minutes under controlled conditions.

Each Unit is assessed against the standards set out in the *National Unit Specification: statement of standards* for each Unit. Full details of the outcomes, performance criteria and evidence requirements may be found in the Unit Specifications.

Further details about Unit assessment for this Course can be found in the National Assessment Bank materials produced in conjunction with each of the three Unit Specifications.

#### Course Assessment

The Course assessment has two components - a Question Paper and a Dissertation:

	Time allocation	Mark allocation
Paper	2 hours 15 minutes	75
Dissertation	Completed during Course	25

## National Course Specification: course details (cont)

**COURSE**                      Economics (Advanced Higher)

### Question Paper

- ◆ The paper examines the knowledge and understanding and the application of economic concepts covered in the Course content and also assesses analysis, evaluation and problem solving.
- ◆ Questions will cover the interpretation of economic information and require an extended response.
- ◆ The paper will consist of two sections, A and B.
- ◆ Section A will consist of an interpretation item while Section B will be extended response questions.
- ◆ Questions will relate to contemporary economic issues and may focus on particular areas of Course content but will also provide an opportunity to integrate topics across all areas of the Course content. A contemporary economic issue is taken to be any major economic event or issue which has become prominent in the 18 months prior to the examination.

### Section A – total marks available 25

This section of the paper will assess analysis, evaluation and problem solving.

It will consist of a single interpretation item each with a number of questions totalling 25 marks. Candidates will be expected to attempt all questions for the interpretation item.

The information presented to candidates will relate to a contemporary economic issue. It may take a number of forms, including extracts from newspapers or magazines or articles from relevant economic publications. It may incorporate data in tabular, graphical or diagrammatic form and will cover material taken from the areas of the Course content covered in the *Microeconomics (Advanced Higher)* Unit.

Candidates will be required to analyse the economic issues involved by identifying the key features of these and extracting and processing relevant information to reach valid conclusions. They will also be required to make and justify predictions with respect to the economic issues involved.

### Section B – total marks available 50

This section of the paper will assess knowledge and understanding and the application of economic concepts.

Candidates will attempt any two questions from a choice of six questions. Each question will be worth 25 marks each and may be drawn from any part of the Course content. However, at least one of these six questions will concentrate on the microeconomics section of the Course content. The other questions will be concerned with contemporary economic issues. These economic events and issues will not be confined to the UK. The questions will require extended answers.

## **National Course Specification: course details (cont)**

**COURSE**            Economics (Advanced Higher)

### **Dissertation**

This part of the external assessment has 25 marks available. It will assess the ability of candidates to apply their knowledge of economic theory in a critical way. It also assesses their ability to evaluate evidence from a range of sources and to draw valid conclusions from this evidence.

## National Course Specification: course details (cont)

### COURSE Economics (Advanced Higher)

Candidates are required to select and investigate a topic linked to a contemporary economic issue which includes a number of complex issues. They should present their findings in the form of a dissertation. The topic for the dissertation may be drawn from any part of the Course content.

Candidates will plan an approach to their dissertation, research the topic, analyse the issues, decide on an approach and organise the structure and content of the dissertation. The dissertation should reach a conclusion based on the evaluation of the evidence gathered.

An annotated bibliography should also be submitted giving a list of sources consulted by the candidate. This will be taken into account in the assessment of the Dissertation.

The dissertation, excluding footnotes and bibliography, should be between 3,500 and 4000 words in length. The dissertation will be externally marked. Centres will be informed by the SQA of the date by which dissertations should be received.

#### Relationship between Unit and Course assessment

With the exception of *Economic Research (Advanced Higher)*, the Unit assessments sample the knowledge and understanding gained during the learning and teaching process. Each Unit assessment is self-contained and covers only the content relevant to that Unit. A significant purpose of the Unit assessment is to enable candidates to demonstrate that they have grasped the essential aspects of the economic concepts and principles introduced during a Unit. They do allow candidates to apply their knowledge and understanding but in contexts which are familiar to them. As such, they provide an on-going benchmark against which candidates can measure their progress.

Unit assessment for *Economic Research (Advanced Higher)* concentrates on the process of planning the research and gathering and evaluating information for it. It requires candidates to evaluate the way in which they have completed these vital early stages and how they have responded to suggestions and advice on how to proceed.

The Course assessment is split into two parts. The Question Paper samples all aspects of the Course content and covers material from the two Units, *Microeconomics (Advanced Higher)* and *Economic Issues and Policies (Advanced Higher)*. It also tests knowledge and understanding but does so in a way which involves integration of topics from both Units. The interpretation item requires candidates to apply their knowledge and understanding to an unfamiliar context and adopt a more analytical, problem solving and integrative approach than the Unit assessments.

The dissertation builds on the Unit assessment in that candidates must carry out their plan and submit their completed piece of work. During the work for the dissertation the candidate will become very familiar with the topic chosen but will be expected to integrate knowledge from all aspects of the Course content where this is appropriate to the topic. In addition, candidates will be required to produce an extended economic argument which is based on suitable supporting evidence, is logically sequenced and leads to a clear conclusion. In this way the dissertation component of the Course assessment provides a more demanding challenge than that required by the Unit assessments.

## **National Course Specification: course details (cont)**

### **COURSE**                      Economics (Advanced Higher)

The different emphasis of the Unit and Course assessments will ensure that there is no unnecessary duplication of assessment. On occasions, it is possible that the same topic may feature in both assessments but candidates will be expected to carry forward the knowledge and understanding of a specific topic from the Unit assessment and apply it in unfamiliar contexts and/or in association with other topics in an integrative way.

#### **The ‘added value’ of the Course**

The Unit and the Course assessments complement each other. Candidates may undertake Units on a stand-alone basis. Because of the holistic approach to Unit assessment, those who take this route will be able to demonstrate specific achievement in a particular aspect of Economics. The Units all build on work at Higher level and those who successfully complete them will be able to show that they can apply economic concepts to consider some aspects of contemporary economic issues. Candidates who undertake the Course will have additional demands imposed upon them which will enable them to gain significant benefits over and above those gained by completing Unit assessment.

The additional demands will require candidates to:

- ◆ demonstrate the retention of knowledge from all areas of the Course content
- ◆ integrate knowledge and understanding from all areas of the Course content
- ◆ respond to questions relating to unfamiliar and more complex contexts
- ◆ explain, analyse and interpret complex contemporary economic issues from different economic contexts, which may be unfamiliar
- ◆ present a lengthy reasoned economic argument relating to a contemporary economic issue.

The additional 40 hours for the Course is to allow these additional demands to be met. It also gives those delivering the Course the opportunity to make use of a wide range of teaching and learning strategies to assist candidates in meeting these additional demands.

## **National Course Specification: course details (cont)**

**COURSE**                      Economics (Advanced Higher)

### **GRADE DESCRIPTIONS**

The candidate's grade will be based on the total score obtained from the Course assessment.

The descriptions below indicate the nature of achievement required for an award at Grade C and Grade A in the Course.

For an award at Grade C, candidates should be able to:

- ◆ apply knowledge and understanding to the analysis of current economic issues
- ◆ demonstrate ability to integrate material drawn from the Course content
- ◆ show an understanding of different economic perspectives and how they can be applied to economic behaviour
- ◆ demonstrate an ability to suggest and analyse solutions to current economic problems
- ◆ communicate economic ideas effectively.

For an award at Grade A, candidates should be able to:

- ◆ consistently apply knowledge and understanding to the analysis and evaluation of current economic issues
- ◆ demonstrate a high degree of ability to integrate material drawn from the Course content
- ◆ compare the ways in which different economic perspectives can be used to analyse economic behaviour
- ◆ demonstrate an ability to suggest and analyse solutions to current economic problems taking account of different economic perspectives
- ◆ communicate complex economic ideas effectively
- ◆ demonstrate clarity, coherence and logic in the presentation of their arguments.

### **ESTIMATES AND APPEALS**

#### **Estimates**

In preparing estimates, evidence must take account of performance across the Course and must be judged against the Grade Descriptions. Further advice on the preparation of estimates is given in the Course Assessment Specification.

## **National Course Specification: course details (cont)**

### **COURSE**                      Economics (Advanced Higher)

#### **Appeals**

Evidence assembled in support of an Assessment appeal should cover the content of the Course. Ideally, this will comprise evidence generated by a properly constructed, integrated prelim which matches the Course assessment in both format and standard.

Although a prelim is not mandatory it is desirable. This is because it provides evidence of how well a candidate can perform in conditions which replicate the Course Assessment. The prelim can test retention of knowledge and understanding across all areas of the Course content, provide opportunities for integration and allow candidates to apply their knowledge in unfamiliar and more complex contexts. It can also result in evidence which is produced within the same time constraint as that specified by the Course Assessment.

When developing prelim papers, centres should bear in mind that past papers, including SQA past papers, will not be accepted in their entirety. However, questions selected carefully from a minimum of three past papers, preferably adapted (to ensure the breadth and depth of coverage required to satisfy the Course Grade Descriptions) can be combined to form a valid assessment instrument for a prelim. Centres must also be certain that the question paper used for a prelim is not in the public domain and has not been previously seen by candidates. It is the responsibility of centres to ensure the validity, reliability and security of assessment instruments used as a basis for estimates and appeals.

High scoring evidence generated through Unit assessments can lend weight to an appeal. However, evidence from Unit assessment cannot on its own generate sufficient evidence of how a candidate can perform against the Course Grade Descriptions because it does not fully replicate the Course Assessment with respect, for example, to retention and integration.

If evidence from Unit assessment is submitted in support of an appeal, therefore, it should be supplemented by additional evidence, which is comparable in depth and breadth to that required in the Course assessment. This could take the form of evidence from performance in integrated tasks/questions based on the Grade Descriptions for the Course and undertaken in closed book conditions. A supplementary prelim may also be a source of evidence. Evidence relating to the dissertation need not be submitted, as this is expected to be the candidate's best work.

#### **QUALITY ASSURANCE**

All National Courses are subject to external marking and/or moderation. External markers, visiting examiners and moderators are trained by SQA to apply national standards.

The Units of all Courses are subject to internal moderation and may also be chosen for external moderation. This is to ensure that national standards are being applied across all subjects.

Courses may be assessed by a variety of methods. Marking is undertaken by trained markers. Markers' meetings and central marking ensure that a consistent standard is applied. The work of all markers is supported throughout and subject to scrutiny by the Principal Assessor.

To assist centres, principal assessor and senior moderator reports are published on the SQA's website [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk).

## National Course Specification: course details (cont)

**COURSE** Economics (Advanced Higher)

### APPROACHES TO LEARNING AND TEACHING

The learning and teaching approaches adopted for Advanced Higher Economics should reflect the nature of the Course. It is based on the knowledge and skills acquired at Higher Grade, and intended to help prepare candidates for higher education. It seeks to extend the knowledge and understanding of candidates but also includes the application of economic concepts and the use of different perspectives in analysing economic issues.

Candidates will normally come to this Course with some previous knowledge of Economics. Learning and teaching methods can, therefore, be designed to build on this. There is the opportunity, for example, for a much greater emphasis on independent study and investigative research where candidates work under their own initiative and take responsibility for their own learning. Class discussion can be a vital part of the learning and teaching process. New topics may be introduced by traditional means such as teacher/lecturer exposition but candidates can be given prior reading to enable them to contribute to the sessions through discussion and questioning.

The Course concentrates on the study of contemporary current economic issues which is taken to mean issues which have arisen in the preceding 18 months. From the learning and teaching point of view, therefore, it is vital to ensure that the Course is contemporary.

This means that candidates should be encouraged to keep up to date with economic events as they occur. The economic and financial sections of newspapers are a prime source of current information and candidates who read these regularly will benefit greatly. Periodicals, magazines and journals, particularly those which concentrate on current economic affairs, are also valuable, as are television programmes. There are a number of comprehensive websites, some devoted specifically to Economics, which can also provide material on contemporary economic events as well as more theoretical discussion. The Internet in general is a source of current information, especially up to date economic statistics.

Candidates can be encouraged to keep a file of information gathered from such sources. This can be used for class discussions but its prime purpose is likely to be to help candidates with their dissertation. Centres, too, may find it helpful over time to build up files of their own which can be accessed by candidates, perhaps as a starting point in the building of their own files. Centre files can cover those economic issues which are of constant concern to society, for example, inflation, unemployment, and workings of markets.

Other valuable ways to support the learning and teaching process at this level are computer simulations of the economy (often available through the Internet) and participation in competitions based on economic analysis and forecasting. The latter in particular can make a significant contribution to increasing candidate commitment and motivation.

The teaching approach implicit in the ordering of the Units in this document is to begin with *Microeconomics (Advanced Higher)* and move on to *Economic Issues and Policies (Advanced Higher)*. Candidates should, however, start planning for their dissertation as soon as possible as the Unit *Economic Research (Advanced Higher)* may well run concurrently with the other Units.

## National Course Specification: course details (cont)

### COURSE Economics (Advanced Higher)

Because of the emphasis on contemporary economic issues and the *Economic Research (Advanced Higher)*, it is possible to adopt a learning and teaching approach, particularly with the *Economics Issues and Policies (Advanced Higher)* Unit, which considers relevant economic issues as and when they arise (such as the publication of statistics on inflation, employment, consumer spending and so on). It is important, clearly, to make sure that all parts of the Course content are fully covered but this approach has the benefits of immediacy and relevance which can help promote and develop the interest of candidates.

The dissertation is a vital aspect of the Course and learning and teaching approaches for this should also give candidates the opportunity to take as much responsibility as possible for their own learning. They can be encouraged, for example, to select the topic for their dissertation and identify for themselves suitable sources of information and appropriate methods of investigation. Teachers and lecturers do, however, have a key role in guiding candidates through all aspects of the dissertation as well as being a source of knowledge and expertise on which candidates can draw. Candidates should be encouraged to reflect on the advice and support that they are given and how they have made use of it.

There are opportunities throughout the Course for candidates to work collectively. They can, for example, collaborate to prepare presentations on current economic issues and share information that they have gathered. For the dissertation, they can help each other to identify suitable sources of information and methods of investigation. Candidates could present findings or report on progress to other members of the group. They could also share experience of the strengths and weaknesses of the various stages of their dissertations.

### CANDIDATES WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

This Course Specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (SQA, 2004).

## National Course Specification: course details (cont)

### COURSE Economics (Advanced Higher)

#### ECONOMICS IN A BROADER CONTEXT

A number of national initiatives and programmes promote themes that are important to contemporary society such as citizenship and enterprise. These themes contribute to individual subjects and Courses by making connections beyond the subject boundaries and enrich the learning experience of candidates. Similarly, the specialist knowledge and skills developed through study of a particular subject contributes to the understanding of these themes.

Economics is a subject which by its very nature deals with matters which impact on the everyday life of everyone in society. It covers things which most people do every day like making decisions about buying goods and services. Economic issues like inflation, trade and employment are regularly reported in the national and local news. As such, therefore, it permeates throughout all aspects of life.

It is, too, a subject of international significance. There is, for example, a Nobel Prize for Economics. It is a subject with a long and distinguished history in Scotland. Adam Smith is widely regarded as the leading figure in the early development of economic ideas.

All parts of the Economics Courses at all levels contribute to building a wider awareness of contemporary society. In particular, candidates who complete the Course will be better informed citizens who, as a result, will be able to participate in an enterprise economy and have a basis for life long learning. They will also have a strong awareness and appreciation of the place of the UK in the European and the world economy and the effect that global economic events can have on the UK. Examples of each of these are given below.

Education for citizenship – Economics increases awareness of key social and political issues like inflation and unemployment. As such, those who have studied the subject are better able to understand and make sense of current events. They are thus able to make better-informed decisions and to ask more careful questions. The teaching and learning approaches for this subject actively encourage candidates to keep up to date with current developments.

Education for enterprise – Economics is the basis for the study of many business subjects. Economics itself deals directly with the economic environment within which businesses operate which means that it promotes skills in identifying relevant information for business and in analysing this information. In addition it provides key underpinning knowledge on factors like demand, costs and profit which are of great significance to business and particularly important in assessing the likely success of a new business venture. Further, Economics provides important skills relevant to decision making in business such as predicting the likely effect of changes in the price of a product/service or of changes in the income of consumers.

Lifelong learning – Economics increases candidate awareness of current affairs and, as already noted, the learning and teaching approaches for the subject are built around the use of current examples. These examples come from a wide variety of sources such as the Internet, newspapers, magazines and journals and well as television programmes. The study of Economics, therefore, promotes habits of being interested and aware of current developments which can last a lifetime. It also helps candidates to gain knowledge and skills which they can use throughout life in making personal decisions such as house purchase. It helps them, therefore, to deal with and prosper in a changing and developing society.

## National Unit Specification: general information

<b>UNIT</b>	Microeconomics
<b>NUMBER</b>	DM4W 13
<b>COURSE</b>	Economics (Advanced Higher)

### SUMMARY

This Unit enables candidates to understand the behaviour of firms under different market conditions and to develop their knowledge and understanding of externalities and government responses to them. It concentrates on extending economic knowledge and understanding of the fundamental economic concepts of the theory of the firm and market behaviour introduced in *Microeconomics (Higher)*.

This Unit is a mandatory Unit of the Course Economics (Advanced Higher) and is also available as a free-standing Unit.

This Unit is suitable for candidates progressing from Higher Economics and provides a base for further study.

### OUTCOMES

- 1 Explain the main characteristics of different types of markets.
- 2 Analyse the characteristics of externalities and the government response to them.

### RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Entry is at the discretion of the centre, but candidates will normally be expected to have attained the following or equivalent:

- ◆ Higher Economics or its Units

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### Administrative Information

**Superclass:** EB

**Publication date:** April 2005

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 01

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## **National Course Specification: general information (cont)**

**UNIT**        Microeconomics (Advanced Higher)

### **CREDIT VALUE**

1 credit at Advanced Higher (8 SCQF points at SCQF level 7)\*

*\*SCQF points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates*

### **CORE SKILLS**

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components in this Unit

## **National Unit Specification: statement of standards**

### **UNIT            Microeconomics (Advanced Higher)**

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 the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

#### **OUTCOME 1**

Explain the main characteristics of different types of markets.

##### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) Explain the main characteristics of different types of markets making reference to equilibrium.
- (b) Include accurate and relevant cost and revenue diagrams in the explanation.
- (c) Explain profit and efficiency in a market.

#### **OUTCOME 2**

Analyse the characteristics of externalities and the government response to them.

##### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) Produce an accurate assessment of the reasons for externalities in a particular context.
- (b) Analyse the consequences of externalities in a particular context.
- (c) Analyse possible government responses to externalities in a particular context.
- (d) Analyse the effectiveness of government initiatives to correct externalities in a particular context.

## **National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)**

### **UNIT           Microeconomics (Advanced Higher)**

#### **EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE UNIT**

The content for this Unit is specified in Appendix 1 – Unit Content

Evidence is required to demonstrate that candidates have met the requirements of both Outcomes and all Performance Criteria.

Candidates are required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the Unit content by answering a combination of short answer and extended response questions drawn from all areas of the Unit content and covering both Outcomes.

Evidence will be produced by candidates completing a number of short answer and extended response questions in a closed book assessment. Candidates must attempt this assessment in controlled conditions on a single occasion. The maximum time allowed is 60 minutes.

If re-assessment is required, it should consist of a different instrument of assessment with a different sample from the range of Unit content.

Achievement can be determined by the use of a cut-off score. The standard to be applied and the breadth of coverage are illustrated in the National Assessment Bank items available for this Unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessment for this Unit, it should be of a comparable standard.

## **National Unit Specification: support notes**

### **UNIT            Microeconomics (Advanced Higher)**

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.

#### **GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT**

This Unit is one of three mandatory Units in the Advanced Higher Economics Course. It views the different types of competitive market and explains how individual firms behave in setting price and output. The Unit also analyses how externalities occur and the government response to them. It examines cost and revenue curves and normal and abnormal profit. Candidates should also be aware of topical issues and apply relevant examples.

The extent of knowledge required for each Outcome of the Unit is detailed in Appendix 1 - Unit Content.

#### **GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT**

It is important to adopt an integrative approach to the learning and teaching process. The Unit should be approached holistically so that candidates appreciate the relationship between different kinds of markets and the notion of externalities. Wherever possible, actual examples should be used to illustrate the way in which competitive markets work. At this level, learning and teaching approaches should aim to promote independent study and candidates can be encouraged to find suitable examples for themselves. Regular reading of the economic, financial and business sections of newspapers and periodicals can help them to achieve this as can accessing relevant websites, including government sites.

Candidates should be aware of the importance of diagrams in illustrating the economic concepts involved. They should be able to reproduce key diagrams for each market.

#### **GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT**

Short answer and extended response questions are most likely to enable candidates to generate suitable evidence for this Unit. Short answer questions allow candidates to explain the meaning of relevant terms while extended response questions provide the opportunity for candidates to present reasons to explain economic situations and to justify the effects of intervention. For this Unit, assessment will involve the candidate in drawing suitable diagrams to illustrate the working of economic concepts.

#### **CANDIDATES WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS**

This Unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative Outcomes for units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (SQA, 2004).

## National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

### UNIT Microeconomics (Advanced Higher)

#### Appendix 1 – Unit Content

*NB: This Appendix is within the statement of standards ie the mandatory requirements of the Unit.*

Outcome 1	
Perfect competition	Underpinning assumptions: large number of buyers and sellers, perfect knowledge, homogeneous product, freedom of entry and exit to the market.  Equilibrium in the short and long run for the firm and the industry.  Advantages and disadvantages of perfect competition.
Monopoly	Underpinning assumptions, for example, single supplier, total barriers to entry.  Equilibrium in the short and long run.  Advantages and disadvantages of monopolies.  Price discrimination.
Monopolistic competition	Underpinning assumptions, for example, independence of firms, product differentiation.  Equilibrium in the short and long run.
Oligopoly	Underpinning assumptions, for example, existence of barriers to entry, interdependence between firms.  Behaviour of firms in oligopoly – kinked demand, collusion (for example, cartel, price leadership), non-collusive behaviour, non-price competition.
Outcome 2	
Externalities	Positive and negative externalities. The conflict between private costs and benefits and social costs and benefits. The effects on externalities on resource allocation.
Government response to externalities	Effectiveness of government policies - impact on producers and consumers; achievement of intended objectives.

## National Unit Specification: general information

**UNIT** Economic Issues and Policies (Advanced Higher)

**NUMBER** DM50 13

**COURSE** Economics (Advanced Higher)

### SUMMARY

This Unit enables candidates to apply their theoretical grounding in Economics to the explanation and analysis of current economic issues affecting the UK economy and the international economic community. It emphasises the application of economic principles to the analysis of current national and international economic events and takes account of different economic perspectives. It takes forward ideas originally considered in *The UK Economy (Higher)* and *The International Economy (Higher)*.

This Unit is a mandatory Unit of the Course Economics (Advanced Higher) and is also available as a freestanding Unit.

This Unit is suitable for candidates progressing from Higher Economics and provides a base for further study.

### OUTCOMES

1. Analyse a current issue facing the UK economy.
2. Analyse a current international economic issue.

### RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Entry is at the discretion of the centre, but candidates will normally be expected to have attained the following or equivalent:

- ◆ Higher Economics or its Units

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### Administrative Information

**Superclass:** EB

**Publication date:** April 2005

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 01

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## **National Unit Specification: general information (cont)**

**UNIT** Economic Issues and Policies (Advanced Higher)

### **CREDIT VALUE**

1 credit at Advanced Higher (8 SCQF points at SCQF level 7)\*

*\*SCQF points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates*

### **CORE SKILLS**

This Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

**Core Skills components for the Unit**

Critical Thinking at Higher

## **National Unit Specification: statement of standards**

### **UNIT Economic Issues and Policies (Advanced Higher)**

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 the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

#### **OUTCOME 1**

Analyse a current issue facing the UK economy.

##### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) Provide a detailed analysis of the cause(s) of the issue.
- (b) Explain the importance of the issue to the UK economy.
- (c) Analyse the effectiveness of possible solution(s) to the issue.

#### **OUTCOME 2**

Analyse a current international economic issue.

##### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) Provide a detailed analysis of the cause(s) of the issue.
- (b) Explain the importance of the issue to the current international economic situation.
- (c) Analyse the effectiveness of possible solution(s) to the issue.

## **National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)**

### **UNIT** Economic Issues and Policies (Advanced Higher)

#### **EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE UNIT**

The content for this Unit is specified in Appendix 1 – Unit Content.

Evidence is required to demonstrate that candidates have met the requirements of both Outcomes and all Performance Criteria.

Candidates are required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the Unit content by answering a combination of short answer and extended response questions drawn from all areas of the unit content and covering both Outcomes.

Evidence will be produced by candidates completing a number of short answer and extended response questions in a closed book assessment. Candidates must attempt this assessment in controlled conditions on a single occasion. The maximum time allowed is 60 minutes.

If re-assessment is required, it should consist of a different instrument of assessment with a different sample from the range of Unit content.

Achievement can be determined by the use of a cut-off score. The standard to be applied and the breadth of coverage are illustrated in the National Assessment Bank items available for this Unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessment for this Unit, it should be of a comparable standard.

## **National Unit Specification: support notes**

### **UNIT Economic Issues and Policies (Advanced Higher)**

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.

#### **GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT**

This Unit is one of three mandatory Units in the Advanced Higher Economics Course. It looks at current economic issues facing the UK economy and issues affecting the international economic environment. Candidates are expected to apply the economic knowledge and understanding that they have gained at Higher level to contemporary economic issues. The Unit is designed to enable candidates to explore current issues and, as a result, the exact issues discussed will vary over time. Candidates are expected to focus on the UK economy but also draw on the experience of the USA, the European Union, Japan and other parts of the world.

For the purposes of this Unit, ‘contemporary’ is taken to mean within the last 18 months. This includes ‘ongoing’ issues which have their origins well before the preceding 18 months. The emphasis should, therefore, be on economic developments within the last year or so and particularly ones which arise during the time when candidates are studying this Unit.

Appendix 1 - Unit Content gives a broad indication of the knowledge required for each Outcome. It is important to recognise, however, that the Unit is about current issues and the exact knowledge required will depend on recent national and international economic events.

#### **GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT**

Learning and teaching approaches should aim to promote independent study and investigative research. As a result, candidates should be encouraged to make use of current sources of information. Regular reading of the economic, financial and business sections of newspapers and periodicals, as well as accessing relevant websites, including government sites, should be encouraged.

Candidates can be encouraged to keep a file of relevant information which can help them maintain an up to date record of contemporary macroeconomic issues.

#### **GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT**

Short answer and extended response questions are most likely to enable candidates to generate suitable evidence for this Unit. Short answer questions allow candidates to explain the meaning of relevant terms while extended response questions provide the opportunity for candidates to analyse the effect of economic policy on the performance of the UK and other economies. These questions are to be attempted in controlled conditions so candidates should be prepared to tackle such an assessment event.

#### **CANDIDATES WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS**

This Unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative Outcomes for units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (SQA, 2004)

## National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

### UNIT Economic Issues and Policies (Advanced Higher)

#### Appendix 1 – Unit Content

*NB: This Appendix is within the statement of standards ie the mandatory requirements of the unit.*

#### Outcome 1

##### Current UK economic issues

The UK's economic performance over the last 10 years including statistics and reasons for changes in gross domestic product, inflation rates, unemployment figures and trade statistics.

Current issues facing the UK economy.

Demand management policy; monetary policy; supply side policy; exchange rate policy

UK budget, UK monetary policy framework.

NB The above domestic policies are examples of areas where specific issues might arise during the study period covered by the Unit. Other issues such as transport and housing policy may be current at a particular time.

#### Outcome 2

##### International policy issues

European Union; globalisation; international slowdowns and recessions; the relationship between developed and developing countries.

NB The above international policy issues are examples of areas where specific international issues might arise during the study period covered by the Unit. It is possible that other issues such as international trading agreements and the role of the WTO may also be current at a particular time.

## National Unit Specification: general information

<b>UNIT</b>	Economic Research (Advanced Higher)
<b>NUMBER</b>	DM51 13
<b>COURSE</b>	Economics (Advanced Higher)

### SUMMARY

This Unit provides candidates with the knowledge and skills to plan and evaluate research into a contemporary economic issue and to plan how to present their findings in a coherent and structured format. It builds on their study of Economics and requires that they examine the process of preparing a dissertation on an economic topic of their choice.

This Unit is a mandatory Unit of the Course Economics (Advanced Higher) and is also available as a free-standing Unit.

This Unit is suitable for candidates progressing from Higher Economics and provides a base for further study.

### OUTCOMES

1. Plan research into a contemporary economic issue
2. Evaluate the learning gained during the research process

### RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Entry is at the discretion of the centre, but candidates will normally be expected to have attained the following or equivalent:

- ◆ Higher Economics or its Units

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### Administrative Information

**Superclass:** EB

**Publication date:** April 2005

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 01

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## **National Unit Specification: general information (cont)**

**UNIT** Economic Research (Advanced Higher)

### **CREDIT VALUE**

1 credit at Advanced Higher (8 SCQF points at SCQF level 7\*)

*\*SCQF points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

### **CORE SKILLS**

This Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

#### **Core Skills components for the Unit**

Critical Thinking at Higher  
Reviewing and Evaluating at Higher

## **National Unit Specification: statement of standards**

### **UNIT Economic Research (Advanced Higher)**

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 the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

#### **OUTCOME 1**

Plan research into a contemporary economic issue.

##### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) Create a plan to include clear aims, proposed structure of any report and methods of investigation.
- (b) Identify suitable economic theory relevant to the research.
- (c) Identify information which, in terms of range and relevance, will be suitable for the research.

#### **OUTCOME 2**

Evaluate the learning gained during the research process.

##### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) Review the planning of the research and reach reasoned conclusions about its effectiveness.
- (b) Review the advice given during the planning of the research and draw reasoned conclusions on how it influenced the planning of the research.
- (c) Review the sources of information identified for the research and reach reasoned conclusions about their usefulness and validity.
- (d) Draw and justify conclusions for planning future economic research.

## **National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)**

### **UNIT Economic Research (Advanced Higher)**

#### **EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE UNIT**

Candidates are required to provide the following evidence in a written or recorded oral format:

1. A plan for the research which covers the title, proposed aims, structure of any report, methods of investigation and information to be used.
2. A commentary on the learning during the research process.

Candidates will be given guidance to enable them to structure their evidence in a suitable format. The guidance will include a planning checklist and a sheet for teacher/lecturer comments and recommendations. The plan should be the outcome of the initial process of developing and agreeing the dissertation, the approach to it and its structure. It should be the work of the candidate but produced as a natural outcome of the process of preparing for the dissertation.

The commentary should be produced in controlled conditions on a single occasion. The maximum time allowed is 30 minutes.

In order to complete the Unit successfully, the candidate must produce a satisfactory and comprehensive plan for the dissertation which should be in a suitable format. Candidates must also provide a satisfactory commentary.

The evidence submitted should meet the requirements of the performance criteria. Achievement for the commentary can be determined by the use of a cut-off score. The standard to be applied and the breadth of coverage are illustrated in the National Assessment Bank items available for this Unit.

## **National Unit Specification: support notes**

### **UNIT Economic Research (Advanced Higher)**

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.

#### **GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT**

This Unit is one of three mandatory Units in the Advanced Higher Economics Course. It is designed to enable candidates to examine the process of applying their economic knowledge and understanding to the analysis of a contemporary economic issue. For the purposes of this Unit, 'contemporary' is taken to mean within the last 18 months. It could include the study of an 'ongoing' issue such as the balance of payments or environmental policy which has its origins well before the preceding 18 months. However, if such a topic is chosen the emphasis should be on developments within the last 18 months.

This Unit concentrates on the process involved in researching an economic issue, particularly the planning stage. If the candidate is undertaking this Unit as part of the Advanced Higher Economics Course, the planned research will be carried out and written up as a dissertation and submitted as a component of the Course assessment. This Unit takes candidates through selecting their topic, identifying aims for the research and deciding on suitable information and where to gather it. Candidates are also given the opportunity to evaluate the research process, to draw lessons for the future and to show how comments they have been given by teachers or lecturers have been incorporated into their work.

A list of suggested topics for the research and any subsequent report or dissertation is available on the SQA website at [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk). The topics in the list should act as a stimulus for candidates and are not necessarily intended to be specific titles for immediate use. They can be adapted by candidates and used as the basis both for selecting a topic and for developing their own lines of investigation of any one of the topics listed. The list is not exhaustive and candidates can choose any subject that has clear economic content that is deemed to be of current significance during the 18 months preceding the Course assessment.

#### **GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT**

Learning and teaching approaches should give candidates the opportunity to take as much responsibility as possible for their own learning during the research process. For example, they can be encouraged to select the topic for their research beginning perhaps with the list mentioned above. They can also identify for themselves appropriate information, including suitable sources, and appropriate methods of investigation. Teachers and lecturers do, however, have a key role in guiding candidates through all aspects as well as being a source of knowledge and expertise on which candidates can draw. Candidates should reflect on this advice and are required to demonstrate how they have made use of it. Learning and teaching approaches of this type would help to prepare candidates for higher education.

This Unit focuses on planning research into a topic in Economics. It includes ensuring that candidates are able to present the information in a coherent and structured form. The outline chapter headings are thus a key part of the planning process and candidates should be encouraged to sequence them in a logical manner. Candidates who go on to produce a dissertation will thus be helped to ensure that it builds towards its conclusion. The Unit also requires that candidates evaluate the learning they have gained during the research process.

## **National Unit Specification: support notes(cont)**

### **UNIT Economic Research (Advanced Higher)**

Candidates who are undertaking the Advanced Higher Course in Economics and go on to produce a dissertation will prepare their dissertations individually. During the research process, however, there are opportunities for candidates to work collectively – for example in identifying and sharing suitable sources of information and methods of investigation. Candidates could present findings or report on progress to other members of the group. They could also share experience of the strengths and weaknesses of the early stages of the research prior to attempting the internal assessment for this Unit.

The Unit emphasises a contemporary economic issue. It is vital, therefore, that candidates do keep up to date with current developments. Regular reading of the economic, financial and business sections of newspapers and periodicals, as well as accessing relevant websites including government sites, should be encouraged.

Candidates may find it helpful to maintain a file of relevant information. Those candidates who are undertaking the Advanced Higher Course in Economics may find that this will also help them in their study for other Units.

It is important that candidates are given firm deadlines for the various stages of the research. This is particularly important for those going on to complete a dissertation as there is a danger that the final product will be rushed and not reflect the full ability of the candidate.

A suitable deadline as far as this Unit is concerned is the end of October. At this point, an outline of the proposed research can be submitted to the teacher or lecturer. This can be discussed fully with the candidate and the discussion recorded for use in the internal assessment. At this stage, it may be appropriate to submit plans as part of the internal assessment process.

Candidates can be encouraged to evaluate their progress during the research, for example, by keeping a diary or a record of particular events that worked well or did not quite work out as planned. This on-going record will help them to provide a considered and reflective commentary as required for evidence.

#### **GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT**

Assessment centres on the process of the research concentrating on planning and an overall evaluation of the learning from the research process.

The plan should be developed by the candidate in conjunction with advice from her or his teacher. It should be submitted at a suitable stage in the process, perhaps before the writing stage commences. Candidates may, of course, modify their plan in the light of advice and other developments and can comment on this and why it happened as part of their evaluation.

The commentary on the evaluation should be held in controlled conditions but the plan should be produced as a normal outcome of the research process.

#### **CANDIDATES WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS**

This Unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (SQA, 2004).