



National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Crofting Year: Spring (SCQF level 4)

CODE F461 10

SUMMARY

This Unit is designed to enable candidates to acquire the skills needed during the *Spring* season on the croft together with related knowledge *including birth and development of key crofting animals, biology of common plants and the history of crofting*. Through practical activities it contributes to their understanding of crofting as small scale mixed-use agriculture with a unique cultural background and a holistic and sustainable character.

This Unit is suitable for candidates wishing to develop knowledge and skills relating to crofting.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Describe the birth and development processes of key crofting animals.
- 2 Describe basic biology of common plants on the croft.
- 3 Participate in seasonally appropriate croft work.
- 4 Investigate the history of crofting.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Entry is at the discretion of the Centre, however successful completion of the previous Units in the Crofting Year (*Autumn* level 4 and *Winter* level 4) is recommended.

Administrative Information

Superclass: SA

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

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CREDIT VALUE

0.5 credits at SCQF level 4 (3 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 4*).

**SCQF credit 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 credit 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 in this Unit.

The Unit provides opportunities for candidates to develop aspects of the following Core Skills:

- ◆ Communication (SCQF level 4)
- ◆ Working with Others (SCQF level 4)
- ◆ Problem Solving (SCQF level 4)

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

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

OUTCOME 1

Describe the birth and development processes of key crofting animals.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe the birth process in sheep and cattle together with common difficulties.
- (b) Identify management practices before and after birth for sheep and cattle.
- (c) Describe the main factors affecting the growth of key crofting animals

OUTCOME 2

Describe basic biology of common plants on the croft.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Identify key plant structures and their functions.
- (b) Describe main types of plant reproduction and propagation.
- (c) Identify the minimal requirements needed for plant growth.

OUTCOME 3

Participate in seasonally appropriate croft work.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Participate in routine care of sheep and cattle.
- (b) Participate in routine land management tasks.
- (c) Identify examples of common wild and cultivated plants and describe their uses.

OUTCOME 4

Investigate the history of crofting.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Carry out a given research activity in the crofting community.
- (b) Identify key events in the development of crofting.
- (c) Contribute to a group discussion on the history of crofting using local examples.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Evidence is required to demonstrate that Candidates have achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

Written and/or oral evidence is required to demonstrate that candidates have achieved Outcomes 1, 2 and 4. The evidence will be gathered under open-book supervised conditions at appropriate points during the Unit. Candidates must produce evidence of their research in the crofting community for Outcome 4, this may be in the form completed questionnaires or recorded interviews.

For Outcome 1 candidates must describe a minimum of two main factors affecting key crofting animals.

For Outcome 2 candidates must identify a minimum of two key plant structures and a minimum of two types of plant reproduction or propagation.

For Outcome 3 performance evidence supplemented by an assessor observation checklist is required to show that candidates have participated in seasonally appropriate croft work. Candidates must identify a minimum of two common wild plants and two common cultivated plants and describe their uses

For Outcome 4 performance evidence, supplemented by an assessor observation checklist is required to demonstrate the individual candidates contribution to a group discussion.

National Unit Specification: support notes

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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 20 hours.

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

This Unit builds upon the knowledge and skills developed in the Units *Crofting Year: Autumn* SCQF level 4 and *Crofting Year: Winter* SCQF level 4. This is one of eight half credit Units comprising The Crofting Year, which is part of the SPA in Rural Skills, and is designed to be undertaken as part of this Course.

The Crofting Year intends to present crofting as it is today, with reference to its historical roots and the aim of preparing young people for their future. It is a Course about practical agriculture and about the ecological, social and cultural relationships that define crofting.

It is vital that the tutor reads the SPA Rural Skills: The Crofting Year Arrangements Document as it contains essential information on the background and character of Crofting.

Centres should be encouraged to explore a wide range of ecological, scientific, social and political matters. The Crofting Year is designed to allow the widest possible scope for such discussion and experiences.

This Unit covers the following aspects which are common to the Crofting Year Course:

Land: soils, crops, weather

Plant biology, soils science, cultivation, fodder, horticulture, drainage

Livestock: cattle, sheep, pigs, poultry

Biology, life cycle, breeds, care and feeding, health, management

History and Ethics: concepts and consequences for crafting

The human community, townships and grazings, animal behaviour and welfare, organics/GM/selective breeding

For those candidates following the SPA Rural Skills: Crofting Year Course it is recommended that the Unit 'Enterprise' is integrated at appropriate times throughout the delivery of the Course to enhance candidates understanding of the enterprising nature of crofting.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

The Crofting Year is designed to be delivered both in the classroom and on the croft. If the centre has (or plans to set up) a garden, greenhouse or even a 'school croft', these may be utilised for parts of the Course. Overall, about half of the Course should take place at the tutor, and half on the croft.

Crofting is in many ways defined by its culture and values: local knowledge, outlook, language and background are essential. The Course assumes a form of 'team-teaching', with academic elements taught in the classroom by the tutor, and practical, local aspects on the croft by a crofter. One or the other needs to be a 'tradition-bearer' who can express the values of crofting as well as demonstrating its practical knowledge.

Crofting developed in the context of Gaelic culture, and it is in the Highlands and Islands that it is still strongest. Scarcity and isolation taught people to care for the land and for each other, and to value hard work, courtesy, neighbourliness, respect, practical skills and modest goals in the awareness that disaster can be just around the corner. This is not to say that a crofter must be a Gael, but only that some of these traditional virtues are essential to crofting.

Candidates will be involved in actual practical experience of seasonal croft work and class-room based theory, together with an exploration of issues important to the local community. Due to the potential young age of the candidates this will involve group process and contact with others through activities such as questionnaires followed by group discussions, with support from relevant texts as appropriate. In general all knowledge-based Outcomes should be grounded in local examples.

Candidates will benefit from visits to other crofts and relevant local businesses such as the slaughterhouse, craft-producers, specialist breeders, vets, and so on. This will expose them to additional sources of information and help them to appreciate the skills and knowledge within their own community.

Candidates should be encouraged to recognise the importance of health and safety at all times and take responsibility for themselves. They should be asked to look for potential dangers when they visit any new site or take part in a new activity, and to create an oral 'risk-assessment' on the spot.

In general, **The Crofting Year** is designed to impart a very broad view of crofting, and expose candidates to the vocabulary and concepts from many disciplines. At this level, depth of knowledge is less important than developing the ability to see connections and to reason. Crofting is a demanding and satisfying way of living, and this Course should stretch candidates in many ways and help them develop into capable adults.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills in this Unit. The Unit may provide a range of theoretical classroom-based and practical croft-based opportunities to develop aspects of the following Core Skills:

Communication — There may be opportunities to develop Oral Communication component in Outcome 4 (contribute to a group discussion...).

Working with Others — there may be opportunities to develop the *Working with Others* Core Skills in Outcome 3 (participate in routine care of sheep and cattle/routine land management tasks).

Problem Solving — there may be opportunities to develop the Core Skill of *Problem Solving* in Outcome 3.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

Opportunities for the use of e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by information and communications technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or e-checklists. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all candidate evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. Further advice is available in *SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education (AA1641, March 2003)*, *SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools (BD2625, June 2005)*.

Suitable methods of assessment for each Outcome are detailed below:

Outcome 1, 2 and 4:

Open-book written or oral evidence in the form of completion, short answer or restricted response questions.

Outcome 3:

Practical activities recorded through assessor observation checklist. This evidence could be supplemented by the production of a log-book/diary by the candidate.

Outcome 4:

A practical exercise to carry out and present research findings.

CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES AND/OR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

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. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (www.sqa.org.uk).