



National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Crofting Year: Winter (SCQF level 5)

CODE F462 11

SUMMARY

This Unit is suitable for candidates wishing to develop knowledge and skills relating to crofting. This Unit is designed to allow candidates to acquire the skills needed during the Winter season on the croft together with the relevant underpinning knowledge to increase their understanding of the holistic and sustainable nature of crofting. Candidates will develop their knowledge of the breed characteristics of key crofting animals, the factors affecting balance within ecosystems, wool products and production and finally the implications of differing methods of crop and animal production. It contributes to their understanding of the seasonal activities required by small-scale mixed-use agriculture, and of the cultural background of crofting communities.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Describe and compare breed characteristics of key crofting animals.
- 2 Describe balance within a local ecosystem.
- 3 Investigate a range of traditional and contemporary wool products and production methods.
- 4 Investigate the implications of different methods of crop and animal production.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Entry is at the discretion of the Centre, however successful completion of the previous Units in the Crofting Year (*Autumn* level 4, *Winter* level 4, *Spring* level 4, *Summer* level 5 and *Autumn* level 5) 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 5 (3 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 5*).

**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 and compare breed characteristics of key crofting animals.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Identify local breeds of sheep and cattle and their main uses in crofting.
- (b) Describe behaviour and husbandry differences among local breeds of sheep and cattle.
- (c) Compare advantages and disadvantages of key breeds of crofting animals.

OUTCOME 2

Describe balance within a local ecosystem.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Give examples of the relationship between different organisms in a local ecosystem.
- (b) Describe energy flow in an ecosystem using local examples.
- (c) Give an example of a local land use practice which affects the ecological balance.

OUTCOME 3

Investigate a range of traditional and contemporary wool products and production methods.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Identify factors affecting fleece quality.
- (b) Identify wool products traditionally produced on the croft, and their production methods.
- (c) Prepare a short report on a selection of contemporary wool products.

OUTCOME 4

Investigate the implications of different methods of crop and animal production.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Identify local native breeds and historic cultivars.
- (b) Identify methods of specialised production including selective breeding, Genetic Modification (GM), organic and hydroponics.
- (c) Take part in a group discussion on the practical and ethical implications of specialised production methods.

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.

For Outcome 1 candidates must identify a minimum of two breeds each of sheep and cattle.

For Outcome 2 candidates must give at least two correct examples of relationships.

For Outcome 3 Product evidence is required in the form of a paper or media-based collection describing in images and words at least five examples of contemporary wool products.

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

The Unit builds upon knowledge and skills developed in the *Autumn*, *Winter* and *Spring* (level 4) and *Summer* and *Autumn* (level 5) Crofting Year Units. This is one of eight half-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

The Wild: ecology and relationships with the natural world

Seaweed, peat, geese, wildlife, fishing, forestry

Diversification: potential of local resources

Cheese, butchery, market gardening, crafts, training/presentation

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 centre, 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 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 the Written and Oral Communication components in Outcome 3 (production of a report) and Outcome 4 (group discussion) respectively.

Working with Others — there may be opportunities to develop this Core Skill in Outcome 4 (group discussion).

Problem Solving — there may be opportunities to develop the Critical Thinking component in Outcome 1 (advantages and disadvantages of key breeds) and Outcome 2 (effect of land use practices on the ecological balance).

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:

Outcomes 1, 2 and 4:

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

Outcome 3:

An assignment to produce a paper or media-based report on contemporary wool products

Outcome 4:

In addition to the information given above for Outcomes 1, 2 and 4 evidence of the candidate's contribution to group discussion could be recorded through the use of an assessor observation checklist.

Although there is no specific practical Outcome to this Unit, candidates will benefit from exposure to Unit content on the croft.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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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).