



National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Forests and Woodlands: An Introduction (SCQF level 5)

CODE F6AP 11

SUMMARY

This Unit allows candidates to develop some of the basic knowledge and skills in relation to the recognition and identification of common tree species and an understanding of the commercial, recreational and leisure activities associated with Scottish forests and woodlands.

The Unit is suitable for candidates who want to develop or further develop their skills in the appreciation of trees, woodlands and forests and the uses made of them at the present time. It is an optional Unit in the NPA Rural Skills (SCQF 5), but it can also be used on a standalone basis.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Identify common and commercially significant trees.
- 2 Investigate commercial forest and woodland operations.
- 3 Investigate leisure and conservation-based forest and woodland activities.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, it would be beneficial if candidates had previous experience and knowledge of rural land use, forests and forestry practices. This may be evidenced by possession of the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ Rural Skills or component Units of this award such as *Land Based Industries: An Introduction* (SCQF level 4)

Administrative Information

Superclass: SG

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CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at SCQF level 5 (6 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 5)
- ◆ *Problem Solving* (SCQF level 5)
- ◆ *Working with Others* (SCQF level 5)

These opportunities are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit Specification.

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

Identify common and commercially significant trees.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Identify the principal vegetative features of common and commercially significant trees.
- (b) Identify common and commercially significant trees by accepted common names.
- (c) Identify common and commercially significant trees using a given key.

OUTCOME 2

Investigate commercial forest and woodland operations.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Identify the distribution of forests and woodlands in the local area.
- (b) Visit a commercial forest or woodland and identify the commercial operations taking place.
- (c) Gather and record information about actual and potential operations including; tree maintenance, thinning, felling and post-harvesting in a given forest or woodland.
- (d) Present the findings from the investigation in a suitable format.

OUTCOME 3

Investigate leisure and conservation-based forest and woodland activities.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Identify available sources of information about recreation and leisure activities and the opportunities for wildlife conservation in a given forest or woodland.
- (b) Visit a commercial forest or woodland and meet with a relevant employee.
- (c) Gather and record information about the actual and potential recreation and leisure activities and opportunities for wildlife conservation in a given forest or woodland.
- (d) Review the findings and identify options for future development.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

To achieve Outcome 1 written and/or oral evidence is required. Candidates must identify:

- ◆ eight morphological features of the vegetative phase in the life cycle of common and commercially significant trees, including two related to stems, two related to leaves and two related to buds
- ◆ eight common and commercially significant trees by common names, including five deciduous and three conifers; identifications must be based on live trees growing *in situ* and must be carried out without access to identification aids
- ◆ five common and commercially significant trees using a key; routes through the key must be indicated clearly; trees selected for identification must be different to the twenty species used for the previous part of Outcome 1

Evidence will be produced under supervised open-book conditions.

The evidence for Outcomes 2 and 3 will be gathered through the production of a single portfolio. Candidates must plan and visit a local forest or woodland and include the following information:

- ◆ a map identifying the forests and woodlands in the local area
- ◆ one completed record sheet for actual or potential tree maintenance from; weeding, brashing, pruning and drain clearing
- ◆ one completed record sheet for actual or potential thinning from; respacing, marking/tariffing, line thinning and selective thinning
- ◆ one completed record sheeting for actual or potential felling from; brashing, felling and harvesting
- ◆ one completed record sheet for actual or potential post- harvesting operations from; brush bundling, ditching and dolloping and restocking
- ◆ details of four actual or potential recreation and leisure activities
- ◆ details of one actual or potential wildlife conservation opportunity relating to mammals
- ◆ details of one actual or potential wildlife conservation opportunity relating to birds
- ◆ details of one actual or potential wildlife conservation opportunity relating to invertebrates
- ◆ details of one actual or potential wildlife conservation opportunity relating to plants
- ◆ details of one completed record of a meeting with one forestry employee
- ◆ details of one option for future leisure/recreation development
- ◆ details of one option for future wildlife conservation development

All investigations must be recorded and reviewed satisfactorily using a standard pro forma (see Assessment Support Pack).

The investigations for Outcomes 2 and 3 may involve groupwork but all investigation records must be the work of the individual candidate.

The Assessment Support Pack (ASP) for this Unit provides sample assessment material. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the ASP to ensure a comparable standard.

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 40 hours.

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

This is an optional Unit in the NPA Rural Skills at SCQF at level 5 but can also be taken on a stand-alone basis.

The context for this Unit is Scottish forests and woodlands from small private or publicly owned areas to large plantations. The Unit should provide information on the distribution of local forests and woodlands, the trees comprising these forests and woodlands, the timber production operations that occur in the area and the resource that area provides to plants and animals as a habitat and to humans for amenity, recreation and leisure activities.

It is important that the practical aspects of the learning takes place involving the introduction to forests and woodlands in either a work setting or simulated work setting. Partnerships with Land-based colleges, training providers or employers are likely to provide the most appropriate settings.

It is important that the deployment of appropriate learning environments is preceded by a valid risk assessment, particularly identifying any protective personal equipment which the candidate may require.

For Outcome 1, the emphasis is on trees found in local forests and woodlands and should cover both broadleaves and conifers, including deciduous and evergreen examples. It is important that most of the delivery for this Outcome involves living trees growing *in situ*. Any commercially significant species for the UK forestry industry should also be included using a range of resources. The vegetative features that help to distinguish individual species should be used as a tool to aid identification and should include overall height range and canopy features as well as trunk, twig, bud and leaf features. The focus should be on distinctive species and not on closely related and easily confused trees such as European, Japanese and Hybrid Larch. Keying out unknown species should be carried out using simple keys (eg Field Studies Council publications) rather than the very comprehensive dichotomous keys found in most floras.

For Outcome 2, the emphasis is on the working forest or woodland. The stages in the life of a forest or woodland from preparation for planting through to felling and post-felling preparations for replanting should be investigated by guided visits to a local area. Although it may be difficult to experience all commercial operations in action, it should be possible to explore the circumstances and potential for any that cannot be witnessed firsthand.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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For Outcome 3, the emphasis is on the forest or woodland as an amenity, leisure or recreation resource for local and wider communities and as a habitat, or potential habitat, for wildlife. This should result in a balanced approach being developed towards forests and woodlands and is intended to foster a sense of responsibility for the wider environment. Although the leisure and recreation activities will vary from area to area, careful selection of the site(s) visited should ensure suitable examples. Actual or potential biodiversity enhancement opportunities for mammals could consider small mammals, red squirrels, badgers or roe deer; for birds — woodpeckers, buzzards or goshawks; for invertebrate — butterflies, moths or spiders; for plants — bluebells, primroses or ferns.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

It is vital that this Unit is delivered in a very practical way, involving visits to an appropriate local site. After an initial site visit, Outcome 1 could be consolidated upon using tree samples in the classroom and by using the numerous CD, DVD, internet and Virtual Learning Environment resources.

Outcomes 2 and 3 should be developed by case studies based on site visits to an appropriate local forest or woodland. Local employees such as foresters and rangers could make valuable contributions to the development of knowledge and understanding. An investigative approach is to be encouraged and could involve teamwork on site and also for gathering background information using classroom, library and ITC resources.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Outcome 1 could provide opportunities for the development of *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 5 through the use of keys.

Outcomes 2 and 3 could provide opportunities for the development of *Communication*, *Problem Solving* and *Working with Others* at SCQF level 5 through the investigations.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

A suitable instrument of assessment for Outcome 1 would be a set of restricted response questions. For Outcomes 2 and 3 a portfolio is recommended.

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 Communication 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)*.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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DISABLED CANDIDATES AND/OR THOSE WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website

www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements