



National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Volunteering in Environmental Conservation (SCQF level 5)

Unit code: FV4H 11

Superclass: QA

Publication date: September 2011

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

Summary

This Unit will introduce candidates to the range of volunteering opportunities in the area of environmental conservation, providing an insight into the different roles volunteers undertake and the range of volunteer involving organisations (VIO's) in the sector.

This Unit will highlight the importance of volunteering in the sector and benefits derived from this. On completion of this Unit, candidates will have a broad understanding of volunteering in environmental conservation and be able to explain the positive impacts of volunteering for the natural heritage. Candidates will have gained practical experience of involvement in environmental conservation projects.

This Unit is suitable for anyone wishing to gain an understanding of the role of volunteering in environmental conservation, the opportunities which exist and experience of environmental conservation project tasks.

This Unit is an optional Unit in the National Certificate in *Countryside Management* (SCQF Level 5) and is also available for candidates wishing to study the Unit on its own.

Outcomes

- 1 Describe volunteering opportunities in environmental conservation and the motivations of volunteers.
- 2 Describe the benefits of volunteering in environmental conservation.
- 3 Implement tasks in an environmental conservation project and review performance and success.

National Unit specification: general information (cont)

Unit title: Volunteering in Environmental Conservation (SCQF level 5)

Recommended entry

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, an interest in environmental conservation would be beneficial to candidates.

Credit points and level

1 National Unit 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

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit Specification.

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill component in this Unit.

National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Volunteering in Environmental Conservation (SCQF level 5)

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 volunteering opportunities in environmental conservation and the motivations of volunteers.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Identify organisations that provide volunteering opportunities.
- (b) Describe volunteering opportunities in environmental conservation.
- (c) Describe the motivations of volunteers in environmental conservation.

Outcome 2

Describe the benefits of volunteering in environmental conservation.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe the benefits of volunteering in environmental conservation in relation to the Volunteering Involving Organisation (VIO).
- (b) Describe the benefits of volunteering in environmental conservation in relation to the environment.
- (c) Describe the benefits of volunteering in environmental conservation in relation to the volunteer.

Outcome 3

Implement tasks in an environmental conservation project and review performance and success.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Implement tasks in an environmental conservation project.
- (b) Review own performance in relation to identified tasks.
- (c) Review the success of the implementation of the tasks.
- (d) Review the success of identified tasks implemented in relation to the given environmental conservation project.

National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Volunteering in Environmental Conservation (SCQF level 5)

Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Evidence is required to demonstrate that candidates have achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. Written and/or oral and performance evidence is required for this Unit.

Outcome 1 — Open-book assessment. The assessor must be satisfied that the evidence submitted is the individual candidate's own work.

Candidates will produce written and/or oral evidence to demonstrate that they can provide:

- ◆ an identification of a minimum of two non-statutory and two statutory organisations that provide volunteering opportunities in environmental conservation
- ◆ a description of one volunteering role provided by each of the identified organisations
- ◆ a description of four different motivations of volunteers in environmental conservation

Outcome 2 — Open-book assessment. The assessor must be satisfied that the evidence submitted is the individual candidate's own work.

Candidates will produce written and/or oral evidence which includes:

- ◆ a description of three benefits of volunteering in relation to the volunteer involving organisation
- ◆ a description of three benefits of volunteering in relation to the environment
- ◆ a description of three benefits of volunteering in relation to the volunteer

Outcome 3 — Open-book assessment. The assessor must be satisfied that the evidence submitted is the individual candidate's own work.

Candidates will produce performance evidence which includes:

- ◆ implementing identified tasks for a given environmental conservation project
- ◆ candidate performance will be assessed against the following as a minimum:
 - willingness to participate in tasks given
 - attitude towards group work
 - effectiveness in group working
 - productivity during tasks
 - selection and effective use of correct tools
 - health and safety
 - seeking advice from appropriate person

National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Volunteering in Environmental Conservation (SCQF level 5)

Candidates will also produce written and/or oral evidence to show that they can:

- ◆ review own performance in relation to identified tasks to include a minimum of four of the following:
 - attitude towards participation in tasks
 - attitude towards working in a group
 - effectiveness in group working
 - attitude towards working as an individual
 - productivity during tasks
 - selection and effective use of correct tools
 - health and safety
 - seeking advice and who this was sought from

Review the success of the implementation of the tasks. Candidates will reflect on and draw conclusions in relation to:

- ◆ what was being done during the tasks undertaken
- ◆ how tasks were carried out
- ◆ own contribution
- ◆ contributions of others

Review the success of the tasks in relation to the identified environmental conservation project. Candidates will reflect on:

- ◆ what was expected to be achieved by doing the tasks:
 - immediately
 - longer term
 - how well have these expectations been met in relation to the identified environmental conservation project

National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Volunteering in Environmental Conservation (SCQF level 5)

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 aligned to the following LANTRA National Occupational Standards (NOS):

- ◆ CU2 Monitor and maintain health and safety
- ◆ CU5 Develop personal performance and maintain working relationships
- ◆ CU89 Motivate and recognise voluntary effort

A large number of volunteer involving organisations or VIO's in the environmental conservation sector are non-statutory organisations. Examples of such organisations include: Scottish Wildlife Trust, the National Trust for Scotland, RSPB, Scotways, Local Geoconservation Groups, BTCV Scotland, Private landowners — for example Country Houses and Ranger Services (Hopetoun House), Alladale Estate (wilderness reserve), Friends of the Earth, WWF, British Trust for Ornithology, Marine Conservation Society, Bat Conservation Trust; Local Amphibian and Reptile Groups such as: LARG, The Woodland Trust, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, British Association for Shooting and Conservation, Geopark Trusts and World Heritage Site Trusts. A number of statutory organisations will also be classed as VIO's such as: Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), Natural England, Countryside Council for Wales, Environment and Heritage Service Northern Ireland, Historic Scotland, National Museums of Scotland, Forestry Commission, National Parks Authorities and Local Authorities (including local ranger services in country and regional parks).

The work of these organisations is diverse and may address issues and topics such as: climate change, biodiversity, geodiversity, environmental protection and sustainable development.

The roles carried out by volunteers in environmental conservation are equally as diverse as the organisations providing volunteering opportunities and include the following:

- ◆ practical work such as habitat management, pathwork and the construction and maintenance of boundaries
- ◆ survey work including wildlife, habitats and/or geodiversity
- ◆ site management — for example SWT site convenors
- ◆ interpretation — for example production of leaflets and leading guided walks
- ◆ awareness raising and campaigning/lobbying
- ◆ fund raising/membership
- ◆ administrative — for example writing up site management plans/site management statements

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Volunteering in Environmental Conservation (SCQF level 5)

Similar to the opportunities available in the sector, the motivations of people who volunteer in environmental conservation are very diverse and include the following:

- ◆ a desire to 'give something back' — a feel good factor
- ◆ to gain practical experience to support applications for employment (this is extremely important in the sector and volunteering is often the only way to get such experience to support paper qualifications in a sector which is often underfunded and reliant on contributions from the wider public)
- ◆ the development of practical skills
- ◆ having a special interest/enthusiasm for a particular species or wildlife group (for example: birds, amphibians and reptiles, bats, butterflies, orchids, trees)
- ◆ building self-confidence
- ◆ meeting people and socialising
- ◆ keeping fit — some conservation organisations promote the national health and well being agenda through practical conservation work
- ◆ enjoyment of the outdoors
- ◆ a desire to share personal enthusiasm and subject knowledge with others and to get more people involved in conservation work

As outlined above, the motivations of volunteers within the area of environmental conservation are diverse and equally it is found that there are many varied benefits derived from volunteering. The benefits of volunteering can be reaped by the VIO as simply as having an extra pair of hands to undertake work which internal resources would otherwise not have been able to accommodate. Furthermore, within the cohort of volunteers for any VIO the skills and experience of individual volunteers can sometimes bring expertise which is missing from the current workforce.

Within the area of environmental conservation, there are also benefits derived from volunteering in relation to the environment, these can be obvious physical improvements to the habitats of wildlife through practical conservation work with regard to both the biotic and abiotic aspects of the ecosystem. Furthermore, the human environment can also derive benefit through improvements made to local greenspaces and benefits to local communities such as the establishment of local groups to maintain greenspace areas, economic benefits of tourism in relation to environmental conservation work taken on by volunteers to raising community awareness.

There are also various benefits to the individual volunteers themselves which might include:

- ◆ practical experience to support applications to employment (extremely important in the sector and often only way to gain experience which is required by employers alongside paper qualifications)
- ◆ practical skills development
- ◆ confidence building
- ◆ social benefits eg meeting people
- ◆ keeping fit for example health and well being
- ◆ enjoyment of the outdoors

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Volunteering in Environmental Conservation (SCQF level 5)

The environmental conservation project in which tasks are implemented should be relevant to the candidates proposed career direction and also provide opportunity to carry out tasks which are commonly undertaken by volunteers. Ideally, this project work would be carried out on behalf of one of the organisations covered in Outcome 1, so that candidates are participating in real project work, similarly to volunteers with the organisation. The use of real projects will help candidates to foster a clearer and more detailed understanding of the range of benefits of volunteering within the sector. It will also allow candidates the opportunity to reflect on their own performance and contributions to tasks and also how effective a contribution the tasks made to the identified project. This process of reflection will provide candidates with the opportunity to develop evaluative skills and to make judgements based on real experiences. In reviewing the success of the implementation of tasks, candidates should reflect on what was being done during the tasks undertaken, how they were carried out, what was to be achieved by doing the tasks (immediately and longer term). Furthermore, candidates must have an understanding of how the tasks carried out actually relate to specific environmental conservation projects.

If this background is not considered then an effective review of the implementation of tasks and their effectiveness for a particular project is not going to be accurate.

Guidance on learning and teaching approaches for this Unit

During the delivery of this Unit candidates should be exposed to as wide a range of VIO's in the area of environmental conservation as possible. This could be achieved through a mixture of classroom based introductory lectures, individual and group research projects, guest speakers from VIO's (organisation representatives and volunteers) and visits to relevant VIO's. Ensuring direct contact with VIO representatives and volunteers themselves will enable candidates to gain first-hand knowledge of the diverse range of volunteering opportunities, the range of motivations of different volunteers and also the range of benefits derived from volunteering activities in the environmental conservation sector.

The background knowledge and understanding derived from the activities used to explore Outcomes 1 and 2 should be supported by hands on involvement in a range of tasks required within environmental conservation projects which are commonly carried out by volunteers. Additional benefits would be derived if these tasks were carried out on a real project for one of the VIO's covered in Outcomes 1 and 2. Possible tasks implemented in Outcome 3 are extremely diverse, but could include: on site practical habitat management work, path maintenance or construction, boundary maintenance or construction, administrative work related to the delivery and management of a specific project; survey work, awareness raising/lobbying, fundraising and membership activities. Templates could be created to assist candidates with reviewing the implementation of tasks and their own involvement in this and also reviewing the success of the tasks in relation to the identified environmental conservation project.

National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Volunteering in Environmental Conservation (SCQF level 5)

Guidance on approaches to assessment for this Unit

Outcomes 1 and 2 could be assessed by an extended response produced following individual and group research carried out in relation to a range of VIO's in the environmental conservation sector.

Logbook entries made during site visits and talks given by guest speakers could be an appropriate way to collect some of the evidence to support these Outcomes. Alternatively Outcomes 1 and 2 could be assessed as a project allowing candidates to explore the diversity of organisations, volunteering opportunities, motivations of volunteers and benefits of volunteering in environmental conservation work.

Performance evidence will be collected in relation to tasks carried out by candidates to allow assessors the opportunity to discuss with candidates their reviews of their own performance in the implementation of tasks and the success of the tasks in relation to the identified environmental conservation project. An extended response could be used to assess the other two Evidence Requirements for Outcome 3.

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)*.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

This Unit provides opportunities for candidates to develop Core Skills in *Communication*, *Problem Solving*, *Working with Others* and potentially *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* where investigative learning approaches are used to explore the range of VIO's and the volunteering opportunities they provide.

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

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2011

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged.

Additional copies of this Unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Please contact the Business Development and Customer Support team, telephone 0303 333 0330.