

National Unit Specification: General Information

UNIT Local Investigations (Intermediate 1)

NUMBER D36J 10

COURSE

SUMMARY

Developing planning, organisational, investigative, interpersonal skills and self awareness and an understanding of aspects of the local area through investigation activities with limited tutor/trainer support.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Plan a local investigation with limited tutor/trainer support.
- 2 Carry out allocated tasks within a local investigation under limited supervision.
- 3 Work co-operatively with others in the analysis, planning and undertaking a local investigation.
- 4 Review the contribution of the knowledge and skills gained through a local investigation to own personal and social development.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Access to this unit is at the discretion of the centre. However, it would be beneficial if the candidate had achieved Local Investigations (Access) or equivalent.

CREDIT VALUE

1 Credit.

CORE SKILLS

Information on the automatic certification of any core skills in this unit is published in *Automatic Certification of Core Skills in National Qualifications* (SQA, 1999).

Administrative Information

Superclass: HB

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National unit specification: statement of standards

UNIT Local Investigations (Intermediate 1)

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 a local investigation with limited tutor/trainer support.

Performance Criteria

- a) An initial self-assessment clearly identifies qualities and skills and realistic personal goals are set.
- b) A limited range of relevant sources of local information is accurately identified.
- c) Definition of goals of investigation is clear and accurate.
- d) A step-by-step plan produced for the investigation is clear and comprehensive.
- e) Resources required for investigation are correctly identified and obtained.
- f) The feasibility of the plan is reviewed and the plan is adjusted as required.
- g) Allocation of tasks is carried out according to the pre-prepared plan and is based on self-assessment and others' strengths.

Evidence Requirements

PC (a) An initial self assessment.

PCs (b)–(g) An investigation plan for the investigation of one selected local investigation topic.

OUTCOME 2

Carry out allocated tasks within a local investigation under limited supervision.

Performance Criteria

- a) Resources to carry out plan are organised effectively.
- b) Activities are implemented according to the pre-prepared plan.
- c) Tasks are completed correctly and according to the pre-prepared plan.
- d) Records of investigation procedures are clear and accurate.
- e) Investigation activities are monitored effectively in order to establish whether their purpose has been achieved.
- f) A report of the investigation findings is clear and accurate and identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the plan.

National unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

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Evidence Requirements

PCs (a), (b), (c) and (e) Performance evidence for one local investigation topic.

PCs (d) and (f) Written and/or oral records, and report.

OUTCOME 3

Work co-operatively with others in the analysis, planning and undertaking a local investigation.

Performance Criteria

- a) Potential contacts are approached in a way which encourages co-operation.
- b) Questions asked are relevant to the purpose of the investigation.
- c) Responses of the contacts are listened to attentively.
- d) Advice, assistance and opinions on progress are sought and offered when required.
- e) Behaviour is modified appropriately to meet the needs of different situations.
- f) Ideas, information and judgements volunteered are relevant, accurate and sensible.

Evidence Requirements

Performance evidence which shows that the candidate has achieved all the performance criteria for one local investigation topic.

OUTCOME 4

Review the contribution of the knowledge and skills gained through a local investigation to own personal and social development.

Performance Criteria

- a) The initial self assessment is re-examined in terms of strengths and weaknesses and progress towards defined goals is reviewed effectively.
- b) Progress and learning gained are stated clearly and concisely and are justified.
- c) Feelings and reactions to learning gained are expressed clearly.
- d) The value of the learning gained in relation to personal, social and vocational development is reviewed.

Evidence Requirements

PC (a) An updated self-assessment.

PCs (b) – (d) Written and/or oral evidence for one local investigation topic.

National unit specification: support notes

UNIT Local Investigations (Intermediate 1)

This part of the unit specification is offered as guidance. None of the sections of the support notes is mandatory.

GUIDANCE ON CONTENT AND CONTEXT

Corresponding to outcomes 1-4:

- 1 The possible contexts for a local investigation are wide ranging. They include local history, local environment, local decision making, local culture, local leisure facilities, tourism in the locality, local industry, local economy. This list is not prescriptive and tutors/trainers will find that a range of other contexts provides appropriate topics for investigation which encourages the candidates to develop appropriate planning, organisational, investigative and interpersonal skills.

The scope for investigation activity within any of these contexts is wide ranging. In an investigation of local decision making, for instance, possible subjects might include housing, education, environmental health, planning, roads. Investigation could focus on pressure groups eg tenants' associations, ratepayers' associations, environmentalists, chambers of commerce, trade unions etc who may influence local decision making. In some investigation activities candidates may find overlap in such areas, thus contributing to a useful exchange of information where different investigations are being undertaken within the same candidate group.

- 2 The investigation techniques employed must be appropriate to the investigation. Candidates should be encouraged to use a variety of techniques as appropriate to particular contexts or issues. The range of investigation techniques which can be employed includes field studies; interviews; questionnaires; photographs; audio and video recordings; appeals for information and opinions via local press; library research; museum research; record office research; map work; 'opinion polls'; surveys.

Candidates, with limited support from the tutor/trainer should organise resources to carry out the investigation plan, implement the plan, keep an accurate record of the investigation procedures and report accurately on the investigation findings. The form which these records take may vary but each candidate should maintain a folder of material containing information on the planning and execution of the project and the investigation findings.

The findings can be presented in a variety of forms, including video recordings, tape slide presentations, written reports supported by graphical material, photographs, wall posters etc.

National unit specification: support notes (cont)

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- 3 Each candidate should gather information from people during the investigation. Tutors/trainers should ensure that methods of investigation and information retrieval provide opportunities for candidates to develop interpersonal skills. In a local history investigation, for instance, candidates might be encouraged to question visiting speakers, interview local historians or older members of the community, contact local historical societies, librarians or the press.

Candidates should demonstrate interpersonal skills in working cooperatively with others within the group, in approaching contacts, encouraging their cooperation, obtaining information and reviewing and responding to opinions of the tutors/trainers and others on the progress of the investigation. Candidates should show evidence of seeking advice and assistance where necessary and of modifying behaviour as appropriate to the needs of different situations.

- 4 Towards the end of the unit each candidate should review the investigation activity and what has been gained from the exercise. There should be a review of progress towards the achievement of the goals identified earlier in the unit. The learning gained should be identified and personal feelings and reactions towards this learning should be expressed. Candidates should review the value of the learning experience to their own personal and social development.

GUIDANCE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROACHES

In this unit candidates may choose whether to undertake the investigation individually or in groups. However, if a group approach is preferred each candidate must maintain an individual record of his or her part of the investigation. It is expected that in the course of the unit each candidate will compile a folder of assessment evidence containing self assessments, planning sheets of the proposed investigation, log sheets which record the activities undertaken by the candidates in the process of the investigation, material (in appropriate print or non-print format) which presents the results of the investigation activities and a final review sheet with reflections on the investigation process and its relevance to personal and social development.

Involving candidates in the decisions which affect them is valuable for personal development as well as being a powerful motivating factor. Among the areas for negotiation in this unit are:

membership of investigation groups; choice of investigation topics; roles within groups and allocation of tasks to group members; methods of investigation; methods of recording results of investigation.

National unit specification: support notes (cont)

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Corresponding to Outcomes 1-4:

- 1 Induction to the unit should include explanation of its key features and establishing working relationships. An important role of the tutor/trainer is to act as facilitator to provide the appropriate framework and climate where candidates can take responsibility for decision making, planning, organising and problem solving.

Appropriate tutor/trainer input will take the form of limited support for candidates who have little experience of methods of planning, monitoring progress, gathering information and presenting results. A variety of approaches might be appropriate, including short talks by candidates who have experience, a study of examples of investigation reports, discussions leading to individuals or the group drawing up notes for guidance.

Candidates should identify a topic for investigation with limited tutor/trainer support. A definition of local area must be agreed and possible content should be discussed between candidates and tutor/trainer. Candidates should be allowed to choose a topic which follows their own interests and allows exploitation of the human resources available in the locality. Advice from the tutor/trainer may be required as to the complexity of particular issues.

Establishing a base of knowledge for investigations in the local area can be achieved through a variety of methods eg visiting speakers, field work, case studies, visits to local libraries. This phase of the unit should be limited and merely provide the framework for subsequent investigation activities.

- 2 Each candidate or group undertakes the investigation, maintains accurate records of the investigation's procedures and reports on the findings. During this phase the tutor's/trainer's role is to provide limited support as required. However the candidate must demonstrate that he or she can effectively monitor his or her own investigation activities. It is important that the initiative lies with the candidate. The tutor/trainer must make a judgement regarding the timing and degree of intervention should problems arise.

Where possible, the findings of each investigation should be considered and discussed by the group as a whole. The sharing of knowledge and experience gained is valuable and the presence of an audience for the findings creates a sense of purpose.

National unit specification: support notes (cont)

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- 3 All learning activities should be designed to develop personal and social development skills. Individual or group exercises to enable candidates to identify qualities and skills necessary for successful investigation activities may be used. These might include tutor/trainer exposition, case studies, role play. Tutors/trainers should thus attempt to ensure that problems relating to investigation techniques and methods are anticipated before tasks are undertaken. Candidates should also be assisted with preparation for learning through the investigation activities through practice of personal and social development skills involved, such as interviewing skills, group work, time-management, record keeping, presentation of findings, self-evaluation.
- 4 In a short interview with each individual the tutor/trainer will discuss the initial planning process and activities undertaken throughout the unit and the feelings of the candidates towards these. Tutors/trainers should not prompt performance but should create an atmosphere and framework within which candidates are encouraged to speak openly about their progress towards the defined goals, their feelings and reactions in relation to the tasks undertaken and the contribution which the learning activities have made towards their own personal and social development.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT

During the unit the candidate is required to plan and undertake a local investigation during which he or she should assemble a folder of assessment evidence in relation to the outcomes. Personal interviews are central to the assessment and will be used to explore the candidate's experience of the investigation tasks in relation to the stated performance criteria.

The tutor/trainer may conduct personal interviews with individual candidates or with groups, as appropriate. The interviews will take place on an on-going basis throughout the unit and should draw on relevant evidence from the candidate's assessment folder.

Centres may use the Instruments of Assessment which are considered by tutors/trainers to be the most appropriate. Examples of Instruments of Assessment which could be used are as follows:

Corresponding to Outcomes 1-4:

- 1 Personal interview drawing on evidence from self assessment and planning sheet.
- 2 Personal interview drawing on evidence from planning sheet, log sheet and record of findings of investigation in appropriate format.
- 3 Personal interview drawing on evidence from log sheet.
4. Personal interview using review sheet.

National unit specification: support notes (cont)

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SPECIAL NEEDS

This unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. Special 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 Special Assessment and Certification Arrangements* (SQA, 1998).