

National Unit Specification: General Information

UNIT Investigating Europe (Intermediate 2)

NUMBER D36K 11

COURSE

SUMMARY

Developing planning, organisational, investigative, interpersonal skills and self-awareness through investigation activities into European themes.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Plan an investigation into a European theme.
- 2 Undertake a European investigation.
3. Initiate and sustain working relationships in the analysis, planning and implementation of a European investigation.
- 4 Evaluate the contribution of the knowledge and skills gained through a European 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 Investigating Europe (Intermediate 1) or equivalent.

CREDIT VALUE

1 NC 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 Investigating Europe (Intermediate 2)

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 an investigation into a European theme.

Performance Criteria

- a) An initial self-assessment clearly identifies qualities and skills and realistic personal goals are set.
- b) Factors affecting the European investigation are clearly identified and assessed.
- c) Definition of goals of investigation is clear and accurate.
- d) Task is analysed and responsibilities allocated to individuals based on self assessments and others' strengths.
- e) A step-by-step plan produced for the investigation is clear and comprehensive.
- f) Resources required for investigation are correctly identified and reviewed.
- g) The feasibility of the plan is analysed, evaluated and the plan is adjusted as required.

Evidence Requirements

PC(a) An initial self-assessment.

PCs (b)-(g) An investigation plan for one European investigation topic which provides written and/or oral evidence which supports the plan.

OUTCOME 2

Undertake a European investigation.

Performance Criteria

- a) Resources to carry out plan are organised effectively.
- b) Tasks in investigation activities are prioritised as appropriate to the achievement of the set goals.
- c) Plan is implemented according to the pre-prepared plan.
- d) The strategy for undertaking the European investigation is explained clearly and accurately.
- e) Investigation activities are undertaken with commitment and confidence.
- f) Flexibility, initiative and problem-solving skills are demonstrated clearly in the investigation activities.
- g) Performance in investigation activities is self-monitored in order to establish whether the purpose of the activities has been achieved.
- h) Records of investigation procedures are detailed and accurate.
- i) A report of the investigation findings is detailed and accurate and includes evidence to support the evaluation of the investigation strategy.

National unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

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Evidence Requirements

PCs (a) – (f) Performance evidence for one European investigation

PCs (g)-(i) Written and/or oral evidence in the form of records and a report.

OUTCOME 3

Initiate and sustain working relationships in the analysis, planning and implementation of a European investigation.

Performance Criteria

- a) Cooperative working relationships in unfamiliar situations are initiated independently.
- b) Ideas, information and judgements volunteered to others are relevant, accurate and appropriate.
- c) Anticipated needs of others are responded to relevantly.
- d) Advice is sought as required and evaluated effectively.
- e) Opinions of others during the progress of the investigation are evaluated critically.
- f) Behaviour is modified appropriately to meet the needs of different situations.

Evidence Requirements

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

OUTCOME 4

Evaluate the contribution of the knowledge and skills gained through a European 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 evaluated effectively.
- b) Progress and learning gained are described clearly and concisely.
- c) Feelings and reactions to learning gained are expressed clearly.
- d) Performance in task management skills and interpersonal skills is evaluated and related to future personal, social and vocational goals.

Evidence Requirements

PC(a) An updated self-assessment.

PC(b)-(d) Written and/or oral evidence for one European investigation topic.

National unit specification: support notes

UNIT Investigating Europe (Intermediate 2)

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 European investigation are wide ranging covering, for example, culture, society, environment, politics, education, transport, consumer issues, leisure, finance etc. 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 and self-awareness.

Candidates may wish to focus their investigations on countries within the European Union with the exception of Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Investigations undertaken into European countries outwith the EU are equally valid. Tutors/trainers should encourage topic choice which enables candidates to follow their own interests and to exploit the range of resources available on European issues.

In the initial stages of the unit the tutor's/trainer's role is as a consultant or facilitator but all necessary preparations for the investigation activity should be made by the candidate.

Individuals or groups of candidates, working independently, should identify and clearly define the goals of a European investigation. Choice of investigation topic will be made after examination of a number of possible options and review of information from a range of sources identified by the candidates. Definition of goals will be set out in a project brief/statement of intent which outlines the subject for research. This brief will include the topic or subject title, a brief indication of the candidate's previous knowledge, an outline plan indicating general themes to be investigated, the location of possible sources of information (people who can be contacted etc) and a brief indication of the research programme.

Candidates should then produce a detailed step-by-step plan outlining specific areas to be investigated and indicating a timescale for these. Specific information on sources of information, people to be contacted, methods of investigation should be included in the detailed plan. Candidates should analyse and evaluate the feasibility of the plan, adjusting it as necessary.

National unit specification: support notes (cont)

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- 2 The candidate should take responsibility for the organisation and implementation of the European investigation. The high level of organisational skills required of candidates in this unit should be reflected in the investigation activities. 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 interviews; questionnaires; photographs; audio and video recordings; appeals for information and opinions via local press; library research; museum research; map work; 'opinion polls'; surveys, discussion with nationals of other European countries living in the local community.

Where possible use might be made of European embassies and consulates, European Institutes, university departments, Commission of the European Community's Information Office, tourist offices of European countries, newspapers and TV programmes and the Internet.

Although a visit to another European country is not essential for this unit, many candidates do have the opportunity to visit Europe and where the investigation activity can be enhanced by such a visit, this should be discussed with the candidate so that all opportunities are explored.

Candidates should organise resources to implement their plan and detail and prioritise tasks appropriate to achievement of the goals outlined earlier. Activities should be organised to a self-constructed timescale and candidates will require to demonstrate evidence of commitment and competence in undertaking the investigation. The tutor/trainer should look for evidence of flexibility, initiative and problem-solving throughout. In addition candidates should demonstrate evidence of effective self-monitoring of performance, record investigation procedures and report findings in a detailed and accurate manner.

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

- 3 European investigations provide an appropriate context for the development of interpersonal skills. The tutor/trainer should emphasise to candidates the importance of this aspect of the investigation activity.

National unit specification: support notes (cont)

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Candidates should ensure that methods of investigation and information retrieval provide opportunities to develop interpersonal skills. Individuals or groups should initiate and develop contact with individuals or agencies and provide evidence that they can effectively contribute to establishing a rapport in unfamiliar situations, as well as seeking and critically evaluating advice and opinions on the progress of the investigation. Tutors/trainers should ensure that candidates provide evidence that they can volunteer ideas, information and judgements to others and can alter behaviour to meet the needs of different situations.

- 4 Candidates should be given the opportunity to analyse and evaluate the learning gained during the investigation activity at interim review sessions and in the final debriefing interview. They should describe their personal feelings and reactions with a significant degree of insight and evaluate their progress towards their identified goals. The final interview provides an opportunity for candidates to evaluate performance of task management and interpersonal skills and to relate these to their personal, social and vocational 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, project brief, preliminary and detailed 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 investigations 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)

UNIT Investigating Europe (Intermediate 2)

This unit may be used in a number of ways eg:

- as a follow-up to Local Investigations 2 or 3 it can assist candidates to identify similarities and differences between local patterns of living, culture, environment etc and those in Europe;
- as a follow up to Experiencing Europe 2 or a complement to one of the Experiencing Europe units to assist candidates to investigate in detail a European theme in which an interest has been developed. It could also be integrated with a unit on Experiencing Europe.
- before candidates visit Europe to provide a useful framework for preparatory activity in finding out about the European country to be visited.

Corresponding to Outcomes 1-4:

- 1 Induction to the unit including 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. At this level the tutor/trainer acts in a consultative role and it is important that this is fully explained to candidates at the outset. Tutors/trainers should ensure that a framework is established which encourages independent activity and autonomy.

Candidates working in groups should identify a European topic for investigation and focus on a particular context or issue. At this level candidates should not be discouraged from tackling complex issues. The issue should be set out in the project brief. Methods of investigation and possible content should be discussed and agreed between candidate and tutor/trainer.

- 2 Each candidate or group undertakes the investigation, maintains accurate records of the investigation as it progresses and presents investigation findings. During this phase the tutor/trainer's role is to act as a facilitator or consultant. It is important that the initiative lies with the candidates. The tutor/trainer must make a judgement regarding the timing and degree of intervention should problems arise.

Candidates will have chosen the method of presentation of the findings early in the investigation. 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)

UNIT Investigating Europe (Intermediate 2)

- 3 Candidates should also be assisted with preparation for learning through the investigation and resource activities. Where necessary they should practise personal and social development skills, research techniques and task management skills involved in fieldwork activities, library visits, interviewing, planning, information retrieval, group work (if appropriate), time management, record keeping, presentation of findings, review and self-evaluation.

The level of skills required in relation to the above is high and should be reflected in candidate performance throughout the unit.

- 4 In a short debriefing interview with each individual the tutor/trainer will discuss the candidate's experiences of planning and undertaking the investigation and research activity. Tutors/trainers should not prompt performance but should create an atmosphere and framework within which candidates are encouraged to evaluate progress towards defined goals, describe learning gained and critically evaluate performance of task management and interpersonal skills relating to future 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 learning 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 with a final debriefing interview at the end of the unit. Interviews 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, project brief/statement of intent and preliminary and detailed planning sheets.
- 2 Personal interview drawing on evidence from planning sheets, log sheets and presentation of findings of investigation in appropriate format.
- 3 Personal interview drawing on evidence from log sheets.
- 4 Personal interview drawing on evidence from 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).