

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT	Lifestyle and Consumer Technology: Consumer Studies (Higher)
NUMBER	D501 12
COURSE	Home Economics: Lifestyle and Consumer Technology (Higher)

SUMMARY

At the end of this unit, candidates will have acquired knowledge and understanding about consumer choice of goods and services. They will also have gained an insight into the manufacturers'/providers' perspective on a range of consumer issues. Candidates will be able to appraise the design of products and consider the consequences that technological developments have on others. They will be able to use a range of investigative skills enabling them to draw conclusions from information sources and make reasoned choices which are a requirement for the discerning consumer.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Use a range of investigative techniques to obtain information relevant to consumer issues.
- 2 Apply decision-making skills as a result of interpreting consumer information.
- 3 Apply specialist knowledge and understanding to address a problem or situation.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates will normally be expected to have attained one of the following:

- Standard Grade Home Economics at Credit level
- Intermediate 2 Home Economics or its component units
- a course or units at Intermediate 2 or Standard Grade at Credit level in a related subject.

The unit is also suitable for 'new starts' and adult returners with appropriate prior experience.

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Higher.

Administrative Information

Superclass:	BA
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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Lifestyle and Consumer Technology:
 Consumer Studies (Higher)

CORE SKILLS

There is no automatic certification of core skills or core skills components in this unit.

Additional information about core skills is published in the *Catalogue of Core Skills in National Qualifications* (SQA, 2001).

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Lifestyle and Consumer Technology: Consumer Studies (Higher)

OUTCOME 1

1 Use a range of investigative techniques to obtain information relevant to consumer issues.

Performance Criteria

- a) The information required is relevant and accurate, and established through appropriate research techniques.
- b) Results and data collected are produced accurately and presented concisely.
- c) Conclusions drawn are accurate and based on analysis of the findings.

Evidence requirements

Recorded evidence must be provided to show that each of the performance criteria has been met on one occasion. The proposed instrument of assessment is an investigation, which may form part of a design activity. The investigation could be completed on pro-forma. Attainment could be assessed by the use of a marking scheme and recorded using a checklist.

Specific advice:

- a) Appropriate research techniques would include at least two of the following: survey by questionnaire; survey by mail; interviews; literature search; scientific experiments or investigations; sensory evaluation; comparison testing. The techniques chosen must reflect appreciation of purpose.
- b) Methods used to present data should facilitate ease of interpretation, for example, accurately produced graphs.
- c) Evidence must reflect the candidate's ability to use results and draw conclusions showing appreciation of purpose.

OUTCOME 2

Apply decision making skills as a result of interpreting consumer information.

Performance criteria

- a) Explanation of the information interpreted is accurate and appropriate to the task given.
- b) An option or solution is selected with justification for the decision made.

Evidence requirements

Recorded evidence must be provided to show that each of the performance criteria has been met on one occasion. The proposed instrument of assessment is a report which may form part of a design activity. Attainment should be assessed by the use of a marking scheme.

Specific advice:

- a) Explanation should demonstrate how understanding of the information interpreted can be used to make a decision.
- b) Justification should include reasoned decisions which meet the requirements of the task/problem given.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Lifestyle and Consumer Technology:
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OUTCOME 3

Apply specialist knowledge and understanding to address a problem or situation.

Performance criteria

- a) Knowledge is applied in order to give accurate explanation and reasoned argument to address a problem or situation.

Evidence requirements

Recorded evidence must be provided to show that the performance criterion has been met on one occasion. The proposed instrument of assessment is a question paper which requires a range of short and restricted responses. The questions will sample the content. Attainment could be assessed by the use of a marking schedule.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Lifestyle and Consumer Technology: Consumer Studies (Higher)

This part of the unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the 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

The content on which this unit is based is listed in the course details for Home Economics: Lifestyle and Consumer Technology (H).

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

Learning and teaching approaches should match the unit outcomes. The knowledge and understanding of the content for the unit can be acquired or consolidated through practical activities which focus on the specific area of content.

Outcome 1 and 2

A candidate-centred approach to learning is recommended. There should be access to source materials, such as commercial products, as well as videos, magazines and catalogues. The shared experiences of the candidates can be a stimulus to learning, for example, home experiences or experience of the workplace. Brainstorming and group discussion should be used in the initial stages to motivate candidates and develop confidence.

Candidates should be given opportunities to identify the main features of consumer products, and to use these features as a basis for comparison with other products, which may be food, textile or white goods. Candidates could set up a range of testing activities to appraise consumer products, eg for their sensitivity to the environment. Interpretation of the results should be used to make decisions about consumer choices. It is important that the teacher/lecturer provides examples of the procedures for setting up investigations, testing and presenting results. The procedures must be clear so that candidates can replicate the processes for a variety of tasks.

Candidates should be encouraged to communicate and use discussion skills with each other and the teacher/lecturer, so that conclusions drawn can be exchanged during group activity.

Outcome 3

The underpinning knowledge and understanding should be reinforced by using a more traditional teacher-centred approach. This will ensure coverage of all the content of the unit. Arrangements for visits and outside speakers should be made to make learning more interesting for the candidate and give a real-life perspective.

The teacher/lecturer can pre-test knowledge and understanding of the content by using oral-questioning techniques during practical activities. When using a group approach, candidates may demonstrate knowledge and understanding by presenting a short talk after a practical activity. It is necessary to cover the entire content of the unit for the benefit of the overall candidate experience.

The use of information technology is recommended to enhance the generation of evidence, and access to appropriate software is important.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Lifestyle and Consumer Technology: Consumer Studies (Higher)

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

Whilst it is possible to devise test instruments for each of the unit outcomes, it is preferable to use ones which encompass more than one outcome. This approach will reduce the demands of assessment on candidates and leave more time for learning and teaching. The evidence requirements fall into two categories:

- activities — investigation
- demonstration of knowledge and understanding which underpins the practical activity.

Outcomes 1 and 2

While attainment of outcomes 1 and 2 need only be demonstrated on one occasion, it is unlikely that candidates would be ready for assessment until the later stages of delivery. Assessment could take place as an end of unit test. However, it is possible for evidence to be gathered when candidates are carrying out investigations throughout the unit.

The evidence requirements demand that the candidate can use investigative techniques to carry out a range of testing for products and can present results that are clear to the reader. The investigation could be targeted on a particular range of products and candidates would have some choice in the methods and techniques to be used.

The report containing the conclusion should be structured and concise.

Outcome 3

In the interests of confidentiality and national standards it would be more appropriate for all candidates to carry out this assessment item at the same time within anyone class.

Further guidance and exemplification on appropriate evidence will be provided in the Subject Guide.

The delivery and assessment of this unit is open to alternative methods to support the inclusion of all candidates. Examples include:

- extension to the notional design length
- use of technology to record information/instruction and to support assessment situations
- appropriate level of teacher/lecturer or auxiliary support in practical activities
- use of specialist equipment.

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 Arrangements* (SQA, 2001).