

National Unit Specification: general information



UNIT Soft Landscaping — General Plantings (SCQF level 5)

CODE F6AW 11

SUMMARY

This Unit will enable the candidate to select, use, establish and maintain a range of plants. The plant groups include ground cover plants; bulbs; annuals; seasonal bedding; wall shrubs and climbers; and mixed border plantings. The Unit can be delivered in a variety of settings including parks, gardens and estates. The Unit is designed to provide the candidate with a range of practical skills in planting and maintaining an area and to provide the knowledge and understanding which underpins these horticultural practices.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Identify plants from a given range of groups and describe the conditions required by each group.
- 2 Produce a basic planting plan for a given area.
- 3 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of planting and maintenance.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, it would be beneficial if candidates had previous experience and knowledge of the horticultural sector. This may be evidenced by possession of the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ Rural Skills (SCQF level 4) or component Units of this award such as *Crop Production: an Introduction* (SCQF level 4) and *Soft Landscaping: an Introduction* (SCQF level 4).
- ◆ *Introduction to Soft Landscaping* (SCQF level 4).

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.*

Administrative Information

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

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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:

- ◆ *Working with Others* (SCQF level 5)
- ◆ *Problem Solving* (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 plants from a given range of groups and describe the conditions required by each group.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Identify a range of plants relevant to general plantings using appropriate botanical nomenclature.
- (b) Describe correctly the conditions required by each plant group.

OUTCOME 2

Produce a basic planting plan for a given area.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Identify the correct scale for use in the planting plan.
- (b) Select appropriate spacing for plants.
- (c) Select appropriate groupings for plants.

OUTCOME 3

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of planting and maintenance.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe briefly and carry out appropriate ground preparation tasks in preparation for planting.
- (b) Describe briefly, prepare and plant the planting materials.
- (c) Describe briefly and carry out a range of post planting treatments.
- (d) Demonstrate safe working practices.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Performance evidence supported by assessor observation checklists together with written and/or oral evidence is required to demonstrate that all Outcomes and Performance Criteria have been achieved. Evidence will be collected at appropriate points throughout the Unit. Outcome 1 and 3 should be collected under supervised closed book conditions and Outcome 2 collected under open book conditions.

For all Outcomes the plant groups referred to are ground cover plants; bulbs; annuals; seasonal bedding; wall shrubs and climbers; and mixed border plantings.

In relation to Outcome 1: written and/or oral evidence.

Candidates will correctly identify a total of 20 plants (a minimum of two from each group) from the plant groups and for each grouping state a minimum of two conditions required for growth. This could include a range of conditions such as temperature, soil type or season.

In relation to Outcome 2: product evidence.

Candidates will produce a planting plan which includes reference to appropriate scale, spacing and grouping. The plan will include at least one plant group, be in a minimum of A3 size with appropriate scale and will include a key to the plant names.

In relation to Outcome 3: performance evidence will be supported by an observation checklist which demonstrates that the candidate has prepared ground, planted and maintained a range of plants from more than one plant group and demonstrated safe working practices. Written and/or oral evidence for ground preparation, planting and aftercare will include:

- 1 The time of year the task is normally carried out.
- 2 The justification for carrying out the task.
- 3 The environmental requirements for each task chosen., eg soil conditions or weather conditions.

A minimum of three aftercare tasks should be chosen from, for example; weeding, feeding, mulching, dead heading, watering or pest and disease control (non-chemical only)

The Assessment Support Pack for this Unit provides sample assessment material. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the Assessment Support pack 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 Level 5 but can also be taken as a stand-alone Unit.

The Unit is designed to allow the candidate to develop the basic skills and knowledge relating to horticulture skills which may be applied in a range of different contexts including, for example estates.

It is important that the practical aspects of the learning takes place involving the introduction to soft landscaping 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.

The practical aspects of this Unit should take place in either a work or simulated work setting using live plant material. For all practical tasks a risk assessment should be carried out, particular attention should be paid to the PPE required by the candidates for each task. The importance of Health and Safety should be emphasised at every opportunity.

For all outcomes the plant groups referred to are ground cover plants; bulbs; annuals; seasonal bedding; wall shrubs and climbers; and mixed border plantings.

Suggested topics and themes are shown below:

Outcome 1: Where possible identification should be based on the use of live specimens. Where seasonality is an issue good quality photographic materials could be used. Conditions required for each group should include reference (where appropriate) to the season for planting, the soil type required, the soil pH, sun/shade requirement, drainage and aspect.

Outcome 2: A planting plan should be produced which includes reference to appropriate scale, spacing and grouping for the plant groups chosen. The plan should also include a key to plant names. This could be carried out as an open book exercise where candidates have reference to appropriate textbooks to choose the names, colours, sizes and spacing's of the plants. The plan should include a key to the plant names. Botanical terminology should be used in the key.

Outcome 3: Ground should be prepared according to the plant groups to be planted but would be expect to include forking and raking. Plants should be planted at an appropriate spacing and depth depending on the plants chosen. Aftercare tasks should be suitable for the plant groups chosen and could include weeding, feeding, mulching, dead heading, watering or pest and disease control.

National Unit Specification: support notes

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GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

It is important that candidates have access to live plant specimens and have an opportunity to view a wide range of plants as this will enhance the candidates experience and help in the underpinning theoretical knowledge and understanding. The theoretical elements can be delivered using a range of reference materials and photographic materials in a classroom setting. Small group work and classroom discussions are also recommended. The practical aspects of Outcome 3 should be delivered in a real work setting where possible and team working activities will enhance the learning experience.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

The practical activities carried out in small groups and team working exercises provide good opportunities to develop *Working with Others* while the production of the planting plan in Outcome 2 provides opportunities to develop *Problem Solving* skills.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

A suitable instrument of assessment would be:

Outcome 1: A series of restricted response questions. Correct identification should be based on botanical names and marking should be based on either genera 2 marks, species 1 mark, common name or cultivar 1 mark. No marks should be deducted for poor spelling provided the names are recognisable.

Outcome 2: Production of a planting plan from a given brief.

Outcome 3: A series of practical exercises and restricted response questions.

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)*.

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