



## National Unit Specification

### General information

**Unit title:** Academic Study Skills (SCQF level 6)

**Unit code:** HV9Y 46

**Superclass:** HC

**Publication date:** November 2017

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 02

### Unit purpose

The aim of this unit is to prepare learners at SCQF level 6 for progression to Higher National qualifications and/or higher education. The unit will provide the learner with the opportunity to develop skills in time management, note-taking, planning and research methodologies. The learner will advance their skills in academic writing and the referencing of sources. It will allow the learner to identify areas for development of their study skills.

Progression route: This unit will prepare school leavers or college students for the next stage in their learning, either at college or university, it will assist learners in their transition to Higher National and/or Degree programmes. It may also benefit those learners who have not studied for some time and are planning to return to formal education at SCQF level 6 or 7 and will also consolidate skills at SCQF level 6.

### Outcomes

On successful completion of the unit the learner will be able to:

- 1 Demonstrate planning and organisational skills during academic research and study.
- 2 Demonstrate effective communication of academic research.
- 3 Develop skills in the use of academic resources and referencing.
- 4 Analyse personal strengths and areas for development in relation to study skills.

### Credit points and level

1 National Unit credit at SCQF level 6: (1 SCQF credit point at SCQF level 6)

## National Unit Specification: General information (cont)

**Unit title:** Academic Study Skills (SCQF level 6)

### Recommended entry to the unit

Whilst entry is at the discretion of the centre, learners would normally be expected to have attained qualifications at SCQF level 5 or equivalent.

### Core Skills

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following Core Skills component:

Complete Core Skill	None
Core Skill component	Critical Thinking at SCQF level 4 Planning and Organising at SCQF level 4

There are also opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills which are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit specification.

### Context for delivery

If this unit is delivered as part of a group award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the group award to which it contributes.

### Equality and inclusion

This unit specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Further advice can be found on our website [www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements).

## **National Unit Specification: Statement of standards**

**Unit title:** Academic Study Skills (SCQF level 6)

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**

Demonstrate planning and organisational skills during academic research and study.

#### **Performance criteria**

- (a) Search for information relating to a chosen topic and filter for specific relevance.
- (b) Demonstrate effective note-taking in the collection of relevant information.
- (c) Describe the tools and techniques used when searching and evaluating research information.
- (d) Produce a study plan for a given learning programme.

### **Outcome 2**

Demonstrate effective communication of academic research.

#### **Performance criteria**

- (a) Produce a planned structure for the report.
- (b) Evaluate the information relevant in your chosen topic.
- (c) Organise the information selected using the planned structure to produce the report and conclusions.
- (d) Prepare and deliver an oral presentation of the report.

### **Outcome 3**

Develop skills in the use of academic resources and referencing.

#### **Performance criteria**

- (a) Identify appropriate and available sources of information and how to access them.
- (b) Explain the importance of avoiding plagiarism in academic writing.
- (c) Identify, reference and correctly cite resources.

### **Outcome 4**

Analyse personal strengths and areas for development in relation to study skills.

#### **Performance criteria**

- (a) Describe the range of approaches to learning and study you have used.
- (b) Identify your learning strengths and areas for development.
- (c) Explain the importance of independent learning skills.

## **National Unit Specification: Statement of standards (cont)**

**Unit title:** Academic Study Skills (SCQF level 6)

### **Evidence requirements for this unit**

Evidence is required to demonstrate that learners have achieved all outcomes and performance criteria. A holistic approach is recommended for assessment of this Unit and evidence must be generated through open-book conditions.

The centre/assessor should negotiate with learners on a choice of a research topic which has:

- ◆ more than one source of information.
- ◆ will develop the learners study skills.
- ◆ has opportunity to make reference to material throughout.
- ◆ is contextualised to study.

### **Outcome 1 — Written and/or oral evidence**

- ◆ record of information and how collated (eg a research diary).
- ◆ a table of the techniques applied in order to gather the information.
- ◆ copy of study plan.

### **Outcomes 2 and 3 — Written and/or oral evidence**

- ◆ a copy of a report plan.
- ◆ a copy of a report which shows evidence of adherence to planned structure and includes: correct citation of appropriate sources and a reference list.
- ◆ a list of relevant sources/explanation of plagiarism.
- ◆ performance checklist.
- ◆ question and answer short response on plagiarism and referencing

### **Outcome 4 — Written and/or oral evidence**

- ◆ completion of a self-evaluation exercise which identifies own strengths and areas for development re study skills.
- ◆ production of a reflective log.
- ◆ an explanation of the importance of independent learning skills and a description of the tools and techniques that learners can use.



## **National Unit Support Notes**

**Unit title:** Academic Study Skills (SCQF level 6)

Unit support notes are offered as guidance and 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**

The unit may be delivered on-line or face to face. The overall aim of the unit is to provide learners with the knowledge and skills required for further study at SCQF level 7 or equivalent.

Learners will explore research methods to identify appropriate, efficient tools and procedures available to use for the research task. This will involve looking at a range of information sources, extracting and organising the information found and evaluating the information to ensure it is relevant to the task. Learners identify deadlines for the tasks to allow the development of time-management skills. Any or all parts of the investigation can be completed on an individual basis, or as a group, but each learner should provide their own documentation for their portfolio.

Report findings should be presented in a clear and organised manner using appropriate methods. Information should be edited and completed within a set time limit. Learners must develop a clear understanding of plagiarism and why it must be avoided. They must also be introduced to appropriate referencing conventions for report writing and academic papers and they must demonstrate their referencing skills using the agreed format. The learner should evaluate the techniques they have used and provide a summary of their approach and areas for development.

#### **Outcome 1**

Within this outcome, the learner will develop their research, note-taking and time-management skills. Students are encouraged to develop a range of approaches to study, for example mnemonics, concentration techniques, mind-mapping, etc. Further assessment tasks could include a study plan in order to develop time-management skills and opportunity to demonstrate the study skills used to structure the chosen topic.

## **National Unit Support Notes (cont)**

**Unit title:** Academic Study Skills (SCQF level 6)

### **Outcomes 2 and 3**

On completion of Outcome 1, the learner should produce a planned structure of the essay/report. Learners may be given a list of criteria, eg word limit, number of references, etc for the presentation.

The learner will develop skills in use of their own words in reports/essay writing. They will develop understanding of referencing the work of others and acknowledging the sources. A task may be given in reviewing a piece of text and summarising in their own words. An assessment may be provided in the use of academic referencing, eg Harvard.

The presentation can take any format but must meet the agreed criteria.

### **Outcome 4**

Achievement of Outcome 4 is integrated within the tasks of Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 which include: time management skills, reflective logs and an evaluation exercise. The learner should consider tasks and techniques used and provide a summary of their approach and areas for development. As part of their reflective log they should consider how they will adapt the skills they have developed when they study in a new context or environment.

## **Guidance on approaches to delivery of this unit**

If this unit is delivered as part of a group award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the group award to which it contributes. In other words, the choice of research topic should reflect the subject area covered by the group award.

Learners would benefit from the delivery of a combination of face-to-face, tutor-led and independent study. However a practical, hands-on approach to learning should be adopted with the emphasis on learning-by-doing. Terminology and underpinning knowledge should be introduced in a practical context.

Learners will require access to a range of information sources for Outcome 1.

Throughout this unit, learner activities should relate to their personal, vocational or study interests. For example, learners should be permitted to choose topics, which reflect their interests, or agreed curriculum needs, rather than prescribed topics chosen by their assessor. Their search for information and suitable information sources should be genuine (rather than contrived) and provide some relevant information on the subject/topic which the learner can actually use.

The unit has been constructed so that the outcomes should be dealt with in the order they appear as they lead on logically from one to the next. The actual distribution of time between outcomes is at the discretion of the centre.

## National Unit Support Notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Academic Study Skills (SCQF level 6)

### Guidance on approaches to assessment of this unit

The assessment should be contextualised. A holistic approach is recommended for the assessment of this unit and evidence must be generated through open-book conditions. Learners are required to produce a portfolio of evidence covering the performance criteria. Evidence can be generated using different types of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners.

- ◆ Research diary
- ◆ Reports — printed or electronic
- ◆ A PowerPoint/Prezi presentation/video clip
- ◆ Mind Maps
- ◆ Evaluation checklist
- ◆ Question and answer checklist
- ◆ Reflective log

### Opportunities for 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 social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all learner evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the evidence requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at [www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment](http://www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment).

### Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

This Unit has the Critical Thinking and Planning and Organising components of Problem Solving embedded in it. This means that when learners achieve the Unit, their Core Skills profile will also be updated to show they have achieved Critical Thinking at SCQF level 4, and Planning and Organising at SCQF level 4.

There are also opportunities within this unit to develop Learner's core skills in *Communication* at SCQF level 6. Broader skills development in the areas of leadership and personal development may also be included depending on the chosen investigation topic.

## History of changes to unit

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Core Skills Component Critical Thinking at SCQF level 4 and Planning and Organising at SCQF level 4 embedded.	November 2017

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## General information for learners

### Unit title: Academic Study Skills (SCQF level 6)

This section will help you decide whether this is the unit for you by explaining what the unit is about, what you should know or be able to do before you start, what you will need to do during the unit and opportunities for further learning and employment.

This unit is intended to develop the study and research skills you will need in Higher National and/or Degree programmes. It is designed to ensure you are equipped with the appropriate skills required to study at an advanced level and to help you become an effective learner.

The unit will give you the opportunity to:

- ◆ develop skills in time management, note-taking, planning and research.
- ◆ gather and present information in an appropriate format for reports and essays.
- ◆ understand the importance of avoiding plagiarism.
- ◆ demonstrate appropriate referencing and acknowledgement of information sources.
- ◆ learn about and try different approaches to studying.

This Unit has the Critical Thinking and Planning and Organising components of Problem Solving embedded in it. This means that when you achieve the Unit, your Core Skills profile will also be updated to show you have achieved Critical Thinking at SCQF level 4 and Planning and Organising at SCQF level 4.