

National Unit Specification: General Information

UNIT Local Investigations (Access 3)

NUMBER D36J 09

COURSE

SUMMARY

Developing planning, organisational, investigative, interpersonal skills and self-awareness through investigation activities into aspects of the local area with a high degree of tutor/trainer support.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Contribute to the planning of investigation tasks in the local area with tutor/trainer support.
- 2 Carry out allocated tasks in an investigation of the local area under supervision.
- 3 Relate effectively to others in the analysis, planning and undertaking investigation tasks in the local area.
- 4 Identify the contribution of the knowledge and skills gained through a local investigation to own personal and social development.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

No formal entry requirements.

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

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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 the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

OUTCOME 1

Contribute to the planning of investigation tasks in the local area with tutor/trainer support.

Performance Criteria

- a) An initial self-assessment clearly identifies some qualities and skills.
- b) Identification of topics for investigation in the local area is accurate.
- c) The nature of a local topic selected for investigation is outlined clearly.
- d) Information provided by the tutor/trainer is used effectively to aid planning of an investigation.
- e) A step-by-step plan for the investigation is feasible, detailed and clear.
- f) Resources required for investigation are correctly selected.
- g) The feasibility of the plan is reviewed and the plan is adjusted as required.
- h) Tasks are allocated according to the pre-prepared plan, and is based on self-assessment, and others' preferences.

Evidence Requirements

PC(a) An initial self-assessment.

PC(b) Written and/or oral evidence that the candidate can identify a minimum of four topics.

PCs (c)–(h) An investigation plan for one local investigation topic.

OUTCOME 2

Carry out allocated tasks in an investigation of the local area under supervision.

Performance Criteria

- a) Activities are carried out according to the pre-prepared plan.
- b) Tasks are completed correctly and according to the pre-prepared plan.
- c) Results of investigations are recorded clearly and accurately.
- d) Tasks are reviewed thoroughly in order to establish whether their purpose has been achieved.
- e) The pre-prepared plan is reviewed to identify its strengths and weaknesses.

National unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

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Evidence Requirements

Written and/or oral evidence which records the progress of the investigation, the results obtained and which relates progress to the plan.

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

OUTCOME 3

Relate effectively to others in the analysis, planning and undertaking investigation tasks in the local area.

Performance Criteria

- a) Instructions are listened to attentively and accepted in a positive manner.
- b) Advice is sought when required.
- c) Advice and assistance offered to others is appropriate.
- d) Contact is made effectively with sources identified by tutor/trainer.
- e) Behaviour is modified appropriately to meet the needs of different situations.

Evidence Requirements

PCs (a)–(e) Performance evidence for one local investigation topic.

OUTCOME 4

Identify 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 updated as appropriate.
- b) Feelings and reactions to the investigation tasks are expressed clearly.
- c) Learning gained is identified clearly and related to future personal, social and vocational goals.

Evidence Requirements

PC (a) An updated self assessment.

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

National unit specification: support notes

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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, investigative and interpersonal skills.

Within a chosen context each group of candidates should make use of information provided by the tutor/trainer to agree on the definition of a topic to be investigated. These investigations should be limited in scope, clearly defined and explained to candidates. Examples of topics within the context of local economy might include:

- investigation of local shopping facilities
- investigation of unemployment rates in the locality
- investigation of the historical development of a particular industry in the locality.

- 2 Candidates may undertake a range of tasks associated with the investigation. These may include:

- gathering information from books and other printed sources
- investigative visits within the locality
- interviewing those with particular knowledge or experience of the topic under investigation
- survey by oral or written questionnaire.

The form in which results of the investigation are recorded may vary. Tutors/trainers should provide guidance to candidates on appropriate methods which may include some or all of written notes, questionnaires, photographs, audio or video recordings, posters, newspaper cuttings.

Emphasis should be placed on 'real' investigation activity which may be used to produce an end product such as a community news sheet or an information file.

National unit specification: support notes (cont)

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- 3 Candidates should practise and develop skills in working cooperatively with others in both the formal and informal learning situation, ie. by accepting instructions positively, seeking advice and help from peers and tutor/trainer when required, offering assistance to peers as necessary, making arrangements, making contact with sources identified by tutor/trainer, meeting and talking to people in out of centre activity, presenting oneself in a manner consistent with the impression he or she wishes to create.
- 4 Towards the end of the unit each candidate should review the investigation tasks which he or she has undertaken in order to identify personal strengths and weaknesses and to express personal feelings and reactions towards both the process of carrying out the investigation and to the knowledge gained during the investigative activities. 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 the tutor/trainer plays an important part in providing information and advice and in creating an appropriate framework within which planning, decision making and organising can take place. The level of support in relation to this is anticipated to be substantial and it is likely that, especially in the initial stages, candidates will not be working for long periods without supervision and that they will seek advice and information from the tutor/trainer at regular intervals.

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 records 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.

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 provide appropriate support at this early stage, particularly in relation to setting the scene, exploring a variety of contexts for local investigation and defining of the topics to be investigated.

National unit specification: support notes (cont)

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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.

Appropriate tutor/trainer input would involve preliminary instruction in methodology in relation to investigation activities. Preparation for learning through investigation prior to the fieldwork activity, library visit, interview, survey etc is important.

Additionally tutor/trainer support will take the form of assistance with planning, methods of investigation and recording of results.

- 2 Briefing and debriefing sessions at regular intervals, group discussion on successful task completion, difficulties encountered etc, discussions as to optimum methods of recording results may be appropriate. Guidance on handling, categorising and understanding of resources may be appropriate.

Working within small groups the candidates should undertake a series of mini-investigations. The number of investigations will be determined by the composition of the group, the complexity of tasks undertaken and the progress made during the course of the unit. This form of organisation is preferred as it permits the achievement of effective learning through repeated investigations, each with a decreasing level of tutor/trainer input. Improvement of performance will take place as a result of tasks undertaken and a constructive review of group activities after each mini-investigation.

- 3 All learning activities should be designed to develop personal and social development skills. Initially the role of the tutor/trainer is to offer support and active guidance to the investigation groups. However candidates must have the opportunity to do things for themselves, to make choices and decisions, to ask for assistance from the tutor/trainer and others when this is felt to be necessary, to interact with others and to try out new activities and new roles in a climate which feels safe.
- 4 In a short interview with each individual the tutor/trainer will discuss the initial planning process and the 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.

National unit specification: support notes (cont)

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GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT

During the unit the candidate is required to contribute to the planning and completion of investigation tasks in 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

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).