



National 3  
Course  
Specification



---

# National 3 Geography Course Specification (C733 73)

**Valid from August 2013**

First edition: April 2012, version 1.0  
Revised: September 2014, version 1.2

This specification may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged. Additional copies of this Course Specification can be downloaded from SQA's website: [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk).

Please refer to the note of changes at the end of this Course Specification for details of changes from previous version (where applicable).

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2014

## Course outline

**Course title:** National 3 Geography

**SCQF:** level 3 (18 SCQF credit points)

**Course code:** C733 73

### Mandatory Units

**H27G 73 Geography: Physical Environments (National 3) 6 SCQF credit points**

Or

**H6N9 73 Geography: Physical Environments with a Scottish Context (National 3)\* 6 SCQF credit points**

and

**H27H 73 Geography: Human Environments (National 3) 6 SCQF credit points**

and

**H27J 73 Geography: Global Issues (National 3) 6 SCQF credit points**

\*Scottish Studies Award contributing Unit: This Course Specification should be read in conjunction with the relevant Scottish Studies Unit Specification on the [Scottish Studies Award web page](#).

### Recommended entry

Entry to this Course is at the discretion of the centre. However, learners would normally be expected to have attained the skills, knowledge and understanding required by the following or equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

- ◆ National 2 Social Subjects Course or relevant component Units
- ◆ National 2 Science in the Environment Course or relevant component Units

In terms of prior learning and experience, relevant experiences and outcomes may also provide an appropriate basis for doing this Course.

### Progression

This Course or its Units may provide progression to:

- ◆ Geography Course or its component Units at National 4
- ◆ Environmental Science Course or its component Units at National 4
- ◆ further study, employment and/or training

Further details are provided in the Rationale section.

### Equality and inclusion

This Course 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. For further information please refer to the *Course Support Notes*.

## **Rationale**

All new and revised National Courses reflect Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles. They offer flexibility, provide more time for learning, more focus on skills and applying learning, and scope for personalisation and choice.

In this Course, and its component Units, there will be an emphasis on skills development and the application of those skills. Assessment approaches will be proportionate, fit for purpose and will promote best practice, enabling learners to achieve the highest standards they can.

This Course provides learners with opportunities to continue to acquire and develop the attributes and capabilities of the four capacities as well as skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

All Courses provide opportunities for learners to develop breadth, challenge and application, but the focus and balance of the assessment will be appropriate for the subject area.

## **Relationship between the Course and Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles**

The Geography Course builds upon the principles and practices for social studies and will be developed primarily from the 'people, place and environment' organiser within the social studies experiences and outcomes. It also builds on the science principles and practices and on selected experiences and outcomes from the science curriculum area.

This Course will encourage learners to develop important attitudes, including: an open mind and respect for the values, beliefs and cultures of others; openness to new thinking and ideas; and a sense of responsibility and global citizenship.

Through the study of this Course and the acquisition of techniques of geographical analysis, learners develop an understanding of aspects of the contemporary world of concern to all citizens. Learners are enabled to develop the four capacities in many respects. For example, learner's horizons are extended and they are challenged to look at the world in new ways. Their confidence grows as they begin to understand more about their sense of identity and learn about different countries and cultures. Learners will build up a framework of geographical knowledge and understanding with which to understand and respond to global issues which can help them develop a sense of responsible citizenship.

The investigative and critical thinking activities in this Course give learners important experience in contributing to group work and also working on their own. Learners will acquire attributes which will be important for their life and work.

Through the skills and content of this Course, learners will develop an increased understanding of the environment, sustainability and the impact of global issues. They will develop a sense of responsible citizenship and be encouraged to reflect upon the impact of the environment on the health and wellbeing of themselves and others. The emphasis on the use of sources, including maps, will develop thinking skills. Learners will progressively develop skills in literacy and numeracy.

## **Purpose and aims of the Course**

This Course opens up for learners the physical environment around them and the ways in which people interact with this environment.

The purpose of this Course is to develop the learner's knowledge and understanding of our changing world and its human and physical processes. Opportunities for practical activities, including fieldwork, will be encouraged, so that learners can interact with their environment.

In the 21st century, with growing awareness of the impact of human activity upon the environment and scarce resources, the study of Geography fosters positive life-long attitudes of environmental stewardship, sustainability and global citizenship. This qualification will furnish learners with the knowledge and skills to enable them to contribute effectively to their local communities and wider society.

The contexts for study are local, national, international, and global. Geography draws upon the social and natural sciences: interdisciplinary learning is therefore fundamental to geographical study and encourages links with other disciplines.

The main aims of this Course are to enable learners to develop:

- ◆ a range of geographical skills and techniques
- ◆ an appreciation of the ways in which people and the environment interact in response to physical and human processes at local, national, international and global scales
- ◆ awareness of spatial relationships and an understanding of the changing world in a balanced, critical and sympathetic way
- ◆ a geographical perspective on environmental and social issues
- ◆ an interest in, and concern for, the environment and sustainable development

## **Information about typical learners who might do the Course**

This Course is appropriate for a wide range of learners including those who wish to achieve a greater understanding of the environment and their place in it as well as learners who wish to progress to more specialised training or further education or employment.

Entry to this Course is at the discretion of the centre. However, it may be beneficial for a learner to have the skills and knowledge developed by relevant experiences and outcomes from the broad general education or equivalent qualifications.

Through the successful completion of this Course learners will develop a range of important and transferrable skills including: using a limited range of geographical information; interpreting basic geographical phenomena; using a limited range of maps and other data to organise and communicate geographical information; and research skills, including a limited range of fieldwork skills.

Learners will also develop an awareness of a limited range of basic geographical information systems through ICT or alternative means.

Geography Units and Courses are offered from SCQF level 3 to SCQF level 7. Vertical progression is possible through the levels of Geography qualifications and lateral

progression is possible to other qualifications in the social studies suite of Courses and selected Courses in science.

The National 3 Geography Course provides an entry qualification for further study, employment and training, and further education. This Course is a preparation for a diverse range of occupations and careers.

# Course structure and conditions of award

## Course structure

This Course develops a range of cognitive and practical skills. It will encourage active learning, including fieldwork, in the process of developing knowledge and understanding of geographical issues. The theme of sustainability will permeate this Course as appropriate. Learners need to acquire and apply basic knowledge and skills in the collection and use of information, at an appropriate level, in order to understand geographical issues.

By undertaking this Course learners will develop a range of important and transferrable skills including: using a limited range of geographical information; interpreting basic geographical phenomena; using a limited range of maps and other data to organise and communicate geographical information; and research skills, including a limited range of fieldwork skills.

Learners will have the opportunity to develop an awareness of a limited range of basic geographical information systems through ICT or alternative means.

The skills listed above will be developed and applied over a range of physical environment, human environment and global issue contexts in the following Units. Each Unit also offers opportunities for learners to focus on particular skills.

The Geography Course has three mandatory Units. Within each Unit there is a considerable degree of flexibility in themes which can be studied to allow personalisation and choice.

Units are statements of standards for assessment and not programmes of learning and teaching. They can be delivered in a number of ways.

The principles above will be applied in the Units below:

### **Geography: Physical Environments (National 3)**

In this Unit, learners will develop routine mapping skills in geographical contexts. Learners will develop a basic knowledge of key aspects of landscape types and weather in the United Kingdom.

### **Geography: Human Environments (National 3)**

In this Unit, learners will develop routine research skills in geographical contexts. Learners will develop basic knowledge of key aspects of developed and developing countries.

### **Geography: Global Issues (National 3)**

In this Unit, learners will develop routine skills of using sources of numerical and graphical information. Learners will develop basic knowledge of key aspects of global geographical/environmental issues.

## **Conditions of award**

To achieve the National 3 Geography Course, learners must pass all of the required Units. The required Units are shown in the Course outline section.

National 3 Courses are not graded.

## Skills, knowledge and understanding

Further information about skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course will be given in the *Course Support Notes*. A broad overview of the subject skills, knowledge and understanding that will be covered in the Course is given in this section.

This covers:

- ◆ using mapping skills in familiar contexts
- ◆ using research skills in familiar contexts
- ◆ using numerical and graphical information in familiar contexts
- ◆ using knowledge and understanding to give basic, factual descriptions of key aspects of the physical environment of the United Kingdom
- ◆ using knowledge and understanding to give basic, factual descriptions of key aspects of human environments of developed and developing countries
- ◆ using knowledge and understanding to give basic, factual descriptions of key aspects of global geographical/environmental issues

Skills, knowledge and understanding to be included in the Course will be appropriate to the SCQF level of the Course. The SCQF level descriptors give further information on characteristics and expected performance at each SCQF level ([www.sqa.org.uk/scqf](http://www.sqa.org.uk/scqf)).

# Assessment

Further information about assessment for the Course is included in the *Course Support Notes*.

## Unit assessment

All Units are internally assessed against the requirements shown in the *Unit Specifications*.

They can be assessed on an individual Unit basis or by using other approaches which combine the assessment for more than one Unit.

They will be assessed on a pass/fail basis within centres. SQA will provide rigorous external quality assurance, including external verification, to ensure assessment judgments are consistent and meet national standards.

The assessment of the Units in this Course will be as follows:

### **Geography: Physical Environments (National 3)**

The learner will be required to give evidence of:

- ◆ ability to use mapping skills in geographical contexts in the United Kingdom
- ◆ basic knowledge and understanding, of landscape types and weather in the United Kingdom

### **Geography: Human Environments (National 3)**

The learner will be required to give evidence of:

- ◆ ability to use research skills in the context of developed and developing countries
- ◆ basic knowledge and understanding of human environments in developed and developing countries

### **Geography: Global Issues (National 3)**

The learner will be required to provide evidence of:

- ◆ ability to use numerical and graphical information in the context of global geographical/environmental issues
- ◆ basic knowledge and understanding of global geographical/environmental issues

# Development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

It is expected that learners will develop broad, generic skills through this Course. The skills that learners will be expected to improve on and develop through the Course are based on SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work* and drawn from the main skills areas listed below. These must be built into the Course where there are appropriate opportunities.

## **1 Literacy**

1.1 Reading

## **2 Numeracy**

2.3 Information handling

## **4 Employability, enterprise and citizenship**

4.6 Citizenship

## **5 Thinking skills**

5.2 Understanding

5.3 Applying

Amplification of these skills is given in SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*. The level of these skills will be appropriate to the level of the Course. Further information on building in skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work for the Course is given in the *Course Support Notes*.

# Administrative information

---

**Published:** September 2014 (version 1.2)

---

## History of changes to National Course Specification

Course details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
	1.1	Minor rewording to ensure clarity and consistency.	Qualifications Development Manager	June 2013
	1.2	Scottish Studies Award Unit contributing information added. No other changes made to document content.	Qualifications Manager	September 2014

This specification may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged. Additional copies of this specification can be downloaded from SQA's website at [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk).

Note: You are advised to check SQA's website ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)) to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of the Course Specification.

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2014