

Higher Geography Course Support Notes



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

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Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the Higher Geography Course. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering the Course and its Units. They should be read in conjunction with the *Course Specification*, the *Course Assessment Specification*, the *Unit Specifications* for the Units in the Course and associated Course and Unit assessment support materials.

General guidance on the Course

Aims

The purpose of Geography is to develop the learner's 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.

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

In the 21st century, with growing awareness of the impact of human activity on 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 skills, knowledge and understanding to enable them to contribute effectively to their local communities and wider society.

Teachers and lecturers should refer to the *Course Assessment Specification* for mandatory information about the skills, knowledge and understanding to be covered in this Course, as the Course assessment will be based on this.

Progression into this Course

Entry to this Course is at the discretion of the centre. Many learners will benefit from having completed this Course at the level below. Others will draw on comparable learning or experience. Learners will require appropriate literacy and numeracy skills in order to overtake the requirements of this Course.

When considering whether this Course is appropriate for a particular learner, you should refer to the skills, knowledge and understanding described below, and the Outcomes and Assessment Standards. Taken together these provide an overall picture of the level of demand.

Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Course

This section provides further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding that could be included in the Course.

Teachers and lecturers should refer to the Higher Geography *Course Specification* and *Course Assessment Specification* for mandatory information about the skills, knowledge and understanding to be covered in this Course, as the Course assessment will be based on this.

Within this mandatory specification, Course planners have considerable flexibility to select coherent contexts which will stimulate and challenge their learners, offering both breadth and depth.

Full skills and knowledge for the Course are provided in the *Course Specification* and *Course Assessment Specification*. A broad overview of the mandatory subject skills, knowledge and understanding that will be assessed in the Course includes:

Added value

- ◆ researching and evaluating information about complex geographical issues

Skills

- ◆ using a wide range of mapping, research and information handling skills in geographical contexts

Knowledge and understanding

- ◆ developing and applying factual and theoretical knowledge and understanding and giving detailed explanations of the processes and interactions at work within physical and human environments in a wide range of contexts

Progression from this Course

This Course may provide progression to Units or Courses in related social subjects or sciences in school, university and further education contexts as well as a range of careers. In particular this Course provides progression to Advanced Higher Geography.

Hierarchies

Hierarchy is the term used to describe Courses and Units which form a structured sequence involving two or more SCQF levels.

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 and science suites of Courses.

The Units have been written in a hierarchical format, to facilitate multi-level delivery; allow for learners to achieve at their highest level; and allow for achievement at a lower level, if necessary. This has been accompanied with considerable flexibility in topics and contexts for learning, to facilitate personalisation and choice for learners and centres. Through all of the Units of the Course there are options and choices of contexts for learning to allow for new and stimulating contexts for learning to be built into Courses.

Learning should be progressive and not repetitive as learners progress through the levels. While Course planning may involve returning to concepts or themes developed at a lower level in order to develop knowledge and understanding and skills in greater depth it is important that any content in a Course at one particular SCQF level is not repeated excessively as a learner progresses to the next level of the hierarchy. The skills and knowledge should be able to be applied to new content and contexts to enrich the learning experience. This is for centres to manage.

The hierarchical nature of Geography Courses and Units allows the delivery of National 5 and Higher together. The degree of choice within the Course allows for new areas of study for learners who progress from one level to another and ensures that learners are not required to repeat content from one level to the next. Differentiation can be achieved through the use of more complex and sources of evidence and greater depth of treatment of common issues or topic.

Different learners develop at different speeds. Hence, it is important that the learner is given the possibility to achieve at the highest level. The hierarchical nature of the Units and Course means that individual learners can be assessed, within the same context, at the appropriate level for them at that time. Learners should be given the opportunity to be assessed at the highest level they are capable of. The profile of an individual learner may consist of Units achieved at more than one level, with some at a level higher than the overall Course.

The Geography assignment provides the opportunity to apply skills and develop knowledge and understanding in a range of activities in preparation for the production of evidence, in a controlled assessment, which will be externally assessed.

Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment

Detailed advice and exemplification of approaches to generating evidence through teaching and learning approaches can be found in the following *Unit Support Notes* for Higher Geography:

- ◆ Geography: Physical Environments
- ◆ Geography: Human Environments
- ◆ Geography: Global Issues

The Geography Course should provide opportunities to reinforce and deepen learning by making links between aspects of knowledge and understanding across Units, depending on the particular topics and issues studied. For example:

- ◆ The development of geographical knowledge and understanding within the *Physical Environments* Unit and the *Human Environments* Unit can be drawn together appropriately in order to provide a basis for the development of knowledge and understanding in the *Global Issues* Unit depending on the topics studied.
- ◆ Understanding of global climate change within the *Global Issues* Unit will be enhanced by prior learning undertaken in the *Physical Environments* Unit when learners study aspects of atmosphere. Centres may choose to organise teaching and learning in order that these topics are taught consecutively or concurrently in order that learners are made aware of the links between them.

Learning about Scotland and Scottish culture will enrich the learner's learning experience and help them to develop the skills for learning, life and work they need to prepare them for taking their place in a diverse, inclusive and participative Scotland and beyond. Where there are opportunities to contextualise approaches to learning and teaching to Scottish contexts, teachers and lecturers should do this.

Each Unit has a specific skills focus for assessment purposes:

Geography: Physical Environments	Use of mapping skills and techniques including the use of Ordnance Survey maps
Geography: Human Environments	Use of research skills and techniques which should include the use of fieldwork
Geography: Global Issues	Use of numerical and graphical information

It is important to stress that particular skills have been allocated to individual Units for assessment purposes only. This is to avoid over-assessment. The skills, however should be developed and practiced across all the Units and are transferable to all three Units and can be assessed in any section of the question paper component of the Course assessment. The Course overall is intended to develop all the skills outlined in the *Course Specification*.

If Units are being taken as part of a Course, then the evidence for 'mapping skills and techniques', 'research skills and techniques' and 'numerical and graphical information' may be presented in the context of any Unit.

This flexibility is provided in order to allow centres to develop geographical skills and techniques in the most productive context where rich opportunities for fieldwork may exist and to encourage learners to make maximum use of their own environment.

There is no recommended teaching order for the Units in this Course. Course planners may wish to consider the how best to introduce the Geography assignment. For example, centres may wish to wait until learners have covered a range of topics before making a decision about the topic or issue to be studied. However the development of skills should be a part of teaching and learning from the outset and learners will progressively build up the skills and retain evidence of these skills throughout the Course.

There are likely to be opportunities in the day-to-day delivery of the Units in a Course to generate evidence which satisfies completely or partially a Unit or Units. This is naturally occurring evidence and may be recorded as evidence for the Units or parts of the Units.

While at Higher, teachers and lecturers may wish to design assessments which prepare learners for the Course assessment, considerable flexibility exists in the method and form of Unit assessment. For Unit assessment purposes, a variety of methods of assessment could be used to gather evidence such as extended writing, source evaluation, learner presentations, case studies, role play, research activities and creation of various media that will allow learners and teachers to establish their next steps.

Assessment is an integral part of learning and teaching in Curriculum for Excellence. This Course should encourage and support independent learning. Learners should have a clear understanding of the requirements of the Course. Learners should be encouraged to set their own learning objectives, assess the extent of their existing knowledge and be encouraged to review their own progress.

Learners learn best when they: understand clearly what they are trying to learn, and what is expected of them; are given feedback about the quality of their work, and what they can do to make it better; are given advice about how to make improvements; and are fully involved in deciding what needs to be done next, and know who can give them help if they need it. To this end:

- ◆ Teachers and lecturers should share learning/assessment criteria.
- ◆ Teachers and lecturers should deliver effective feedback.
- ◆ Teachers and lecturers should encourage peer and self-assessment.
- ◆ Teachers and lecturers should question effectively using higher order questioning when appropriate.

The use of assessment for formative purposes can provide an important role in raising attainment by:

- ◆ giving feedback
- ◆ detailing progress
- ◆ identifying learner strengths and areas for development

Group work approaches can be used within Units and across Courses where it is helpful to simulate real life situations, share tasks and promote team working skills. However, there must be clear evidence for each learner to show that the learner has met the required assessment standards for the Unit or Course.

Flexibility in the method of assessment within Unit assessments provides opportunities for learners to demonstrate attainment in a variety of ways and reduce barriers to achievement.

Understanding the assessment standards and making assessment judgements

The following guidance aims to support centres when developing activities which may be used to generate evidence that learners have achieved the Outcomes and Assessment Standards for the Units. These activities may be ones which allow the identification of naturally occurring evidence as part of teaching and learning to determine whether the learner has achieved the Outcome or more formal occasions when centres use a specific assessment item.

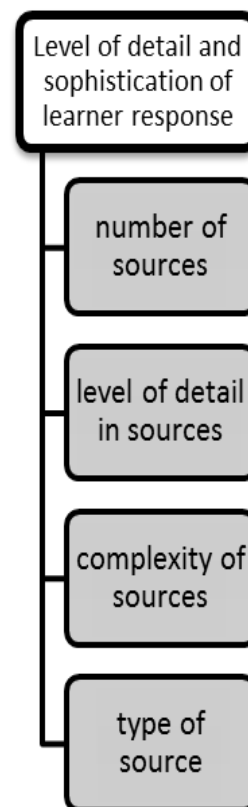
It is expected that learners will often generate evidence for more than one Assessment Standard, or even a whole Outcome as part of one task or response. If this is the case, assessors should note where evidence of each Assessment Standard occurs. Learners are not required to complete separate tasks for each Assessment Standard within an Outcome, providing they can meet the requirements. In many cases Assessment Standards have been designed to work together.

An example of where Assessment Standards work logically in one task is Outcome 1 in *Human Environments*. Learners could naturally achieve the Assessment Standards as steps in a small project or fieldwork exercise.

The terminology used in the Outcomes and Assessment Standards are based on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Centres should note that the Unit Outcomes and Assessment Standards describe a minimum level of competence for the achievement of the Unit and that learners will demonstrate a range of levels of ability within a particular SCQF level.

Centres should also note that flexibility exists in creating assessment items and that a range of factors need to be considered in determining the level of demand. For example, while in general, increasing the number of sources used in a question may increase the level of demand on the learner; increasing the complexity of a single source will also have the effect of increasing the level of demand.

Greater complexity within a source may be achieved by increasing the amount of information, the level of detail, the method of presentation etc. It should also be noted that a relatively straightforward source may be capable of generating a range of responses.



A learner operating at a lower SCQF level may be able to draw broad, general, relatively simple conclusions from a given source while another learner is capable of a more sophisticated level of analysis and be able to draw more insightful and detailed conclusions from the same source thereby demonstrating achievement of a higher SCQF level.

Examples of appropriate tasks which allow learners to generate evidence for Assessment standards are detailed in the Unit assessment support packs.

In addition, Unit assessment support packs provide guidance about the qualitative expectations for a learner response for each Assessment Standard. This information can be found in the judging evidence table in the packs.

Unit assessment support packs also provide exemplification of a possible response to a task which overtakes the Assessment Standards. It should be noted that learner responses will vary with, for example, different evidence, examples and data being used. However, assessors should follow the qualitative guidance set out in the judging evidence table. Learners should become aware that achieving at least minimum competence in the Assessment Standards will prepare them for Course assessment and also give them a solid grounding in the core elements of Geography as a subject.

Further guidance on Course assessment

Further information on Course assessment is provided in the following documents:

- ◆ Specimen Question Paper and Marking Instructions
- ◆ general assessment information and Coursework assessment task documents and accompanying Marking Instructions
- ◆ guidance on the use of past papers
- ◆ Higher Exemplar Question Paper

These materials are available on SQA's website, and should be referred to when planning for Course assessment.

Developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

Through the successful completion of this Course, the following important skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work are developed. A full list of these is contained in the *Course Specification*. Further advice of how these skills may be developed is included in the *Unit Support Notes*.

The skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work will not be formally assessed within the Course assessment. However Course planners should identify opportunities to enhance these skills throughout the Course. Learners should be aware of the skills they are building and teachers/lecturers can provide advice on opportunities to practice and improve them.

These skills will be developed across all the Units of the Course. The *Unit Support Notes* for each Unit will provide further advice on how Units within the Course may provide opportunities to develop particular skills.

There may also be opportunities for other, additional skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work to be developed in the Course. However, this could vary across centres depending on approaches being used to deliver the Course in a centre and this is for centres to manage.

The Geography assignment will also provide opportunities for developing skills for learning, life and work. Learners will have the opportunity to develop reading as they research the assignment topic. They will have opportunities to develop a range of research skills in particular the use of fieldwork. They will develop information handling skills as they process a range of statistical, numerical and graphical information. They will also develop citizenship by deepening their understanding of issues facing contemporary society, particularly issues concerning sustainable development.

They will apply their knowledge to the issue studied, and use analytical and evaluation skills, both in the research process and in preparing their findings for the write-up of their assignment.

Added value and gathering evidence

At Higher, the added value will be assessed in the Course assessment.

Information given in the *Course Specification* and the *Course Assessment Specification* about the assessment of added value is mandatory.

The learner will draw on, extend and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding they have learned during the Course. This will be assessed by a question paper and a Geography assignment. Over the Course assessment there will be broad parity between the assessment of skills and knowledge and understanding.

The question paper will require the learner to demonstrate breadth of skills, knowledge and understanding from across the Units of the Course.

The question paper will sample knowledge and understanding from across all three Units of the Course and will require application of skills in any context

drawn from across all three Units of the Course. Teachers and lecturers should refer to the *Course Assessment Specification* and the specimen question paper for further information.

Level	Possible learner responses	Possible question types
Higher	Extended response Explanation and analysis required Clear and structured expression of complex points Extensive and relevant use of evidence Able to consider different perspectives on an issue Able to make judgements	Explain Analyse Evaluate Account for Discuss To what extent
National 5	Detailed response Description and explanation required with some analysis Clarity in expression of ideas Insightful use of evidence Use of appropriate exemplification	Describe, in detail, ... Explain, in detail, ... To what extent ... How important ...
National 4	Limited response Brief descriptions and brief explanations Some clarity and structure in response Limited use of evidence Use of obvious exemplification	Describe ... Give reasons ...
National 3	Short response/outline Short descriptions Able to give an obvious reason Ability to make limited use of simple evidence	Outline Give two reasons

The Geography assignment will require the learner to demonstrate challenge and application related to an appropriate Geography topic or issue. It will be sufficiently open and flexible to allow for personalisation and choice. The learner will research a geographical issue or topic. Where possible, learners should use fieldwork skills, amongst others, in order to gather information. The learner will be required to process the information collected and communicate their findings within broad parameters set by SQA. The learner should use the information collected in order to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the issue. Teachers and lecturers should refer to the *Course Assessment Specification* for further information.

The learner will 'write up' the results of their research on the topic or issue under controlled assessment conditions. Learners will communicate their findings in a form that shows evidence of the skills they have used and their knowledge and understanding of the geographical issue or topic studied. The aim of the presentation of findings is to assess the quality of the learner's research into, analysis and knowledge and understanding of the issue or topic.

Further advice on possible issues drawn from individual Units is given in the *Unit Support Notes*. Learners may wish to choose an issue or topic which draws on knowledge and understanding and skills from across more than one Unit. For example, an assignment which focuses on issues concerning population change will draw on knowledge and understanding from the *Human Environments* Unit and skills of interpreting and evaluation numerical, statistical and graphical information which may also have been developed within the *Global Issues* Unit.

Preparation for Course assessment

Each Course has 6 SCQF credit points to allow additional time for preparation for assessment. This time may be used throughout the Course for consolidation and support, preparation for Unit assessment, for further integration, revision and preparation for Course assessment.

Activities which it may be appropriate to include within this notional time are described below.

- ◆ Preparation for the assignment. This time could be used by learners for identifying and agreeing a question or scope for the assignment, within the overall guidelines provided by SQA; gathering information and carrying out the research which should include fieldwork where possible and may include using books, the internet, interviews; processing information and analysing and evaluating their findings; preparing their conclusion and revising before the write-up. Where research is conducted as a group it is important the learners are able to show their individual contribution to the task and evidence of their individual research.
- ◆ Revising for the question paper. This may be done individually, in small groups or within the class or group as a whole, at the discretion of the teacher or lecturer.
- ◆ Revising and preparing for Unit assessment. This may be done individually, in small groups or within the class or group as a whole, at the discretion of the teacher or lecturer.

Combining assessment across Units

If an integrated or thematic approach to course delivery is used then there may be opportunities for combining assessment across Units.

This can:

- ◆ enrich the assessment process for the learner by linking assessment more closely to teaching and learning
- ◆ make more sense to the learner and avoid duplication of assessment
- ◆ allow for evidence for particular Units to be drawn from a range of activities
- ◆ allow more time for time for learning

Within Geography, combined assessment could bring together aspects of content from across two or more Units. For example a thematic approach focussing on sustainability could allow centres to combine content from across Units.

Mapping skills can be developed in contexts which link both the Physical Environments Unit and the Human Environments Unit.

Care should be taken when using combined assessment that those aspects of the assessment standard not achieved by the combined assessment are covered by a further assessment. Therefore, when designing an assessment to cover multiple Units, deliverers must ensure that they track and record where evidence of individual Units appears.

Equality and inclusion

The high degree of flexibility within this Course in terms of possible approaches to Unit assessment means that Course and Unit planners can consider and remove potential barriers to learning and assessment. Alternative assessment arrangements and reasonable adjustments can be made to Course Assessment requirements in order that this Course is accessible to all learners.

It is recognised that centres have their own duties under equality and other legislation and policy initiatives. The guidance given in these Course Support Notes is designed to sit alongside these duties but is specific to the delivery and assessment of the Course.

It is important that centres are aware of and understand SQA's assessment arrangements for disabled learners, and those with additional support needs, when making requests for adjustments to published assessment arrangements. Centres will find more guidance on this in the series of publications on Assessment Arrangements on SQA's website: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa//14977.html.

Appendix 1: Reference documents

The following reference documents will provide useful information and background.

- ◆ Assessment Arrangements (for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs) — various publications are available on SQA's website at: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa//14977.html.
- ◆ [*Building the Curriculum 4: Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work*](#)
- ◆ [*Building the Curriculum 5: A framework for assessment*](#)
- ◆ [*Course Specifications*](#)
- ◆ [*Design Principles for National Courses*](#)
- ◆ [*Guide to Assessment*](#)
- ◆ Principles and practice papers for curriculum areas
- ◆ [*SCQF Handbook: User Guide*](#) and [*SCQF level descriptors*](#)
- ◆ [*SQA Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*](#)
- ◆ [*Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work: Using the Curriculum Tool*](#)
- ◆ [*Coursework Authenticity: A Guide for Teachers and Lecturers*](#)

Administrative information

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History of changes to Course Support Notes

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
1.1	'Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment' section updated.	Qualifications Manager	May 2015

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Unit Support Notes — Geography: Physical Environments (Higher)



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Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the *Geography: Physical Environments* (Higher) Unit. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering this Unit. They should be read in conjunction with:

- ◆ the *Unit Specification*
- ◆ the *Course Specification*
- ◆ the *Course Assessment Specification*
- ◆ the *Course Support Notes*
- ◆ the *Specimen Question Paper*
- ◆ the *Higher Exemplar Question Paper*
- ◆ the Unit assessment support packs

General guidance on the Unit

Aims

The general aim of this Unit is to develop learner's geographical skills in a range of physical environment contexts; however the specific skills focus for assessment purposes is the development of mapping skills and techniques. Learners will develop and apply knowledge and understanding of the processes and interactions at work within physical environments on a local, regional and global scale.

Progression into this Unit

Entry to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. Many learners will benefit from having completed this Unit at the level below. Others will draw on comparable learning or experience. Learners will require appropriate literacy and numeracy skills in order to overtake the requirements of this Unit.

When considering whether this Unit is appropriate for a particular learner, you should refer to the skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course, and the Outcomes and Assessment Standards. Taken together these provide an overall picture of the level of demand.

Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Unit

Information about skills, knowledge and understanding is given in the Higher Geography *Course Specification and Course Assessment Specification*.

If this Unit is being delivered on a free-standing basis, teachers and lecturers are free to select the knowledge, understanding and contexts which are most appropriate for delivery in their centres.

Progression from this Unit

This Unit may provide progression to a range of qualifications in related social subjects and sciences and in particular to Advanced Higher Geography.

Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment

The aim of this section is to provide advice and guidance to centres on:

- ◆ opportunities to generate naturally occurring evidence through a range of teaching and learning approaches
- ◆ approaches to added value
- ◆ approaches to developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

The following extract from the *Course Assessment Specification* shows the mandatory Course content which will be sampled in the *Physical Environments* section of question papers:

Geography: Physical Environments	
Learners will develop and apply geographical skills and knowledge and understanding of physical environments. Learners will develop and apply knowledge and understanding of the processes and interactions at work within physical environments on a local, regional and global scale.	
Atmosphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ global heat budget ◆ redistribution of energy by atmospheric and oceanic circulation ◆ cause, characteristics and impact of the Intertropical Convergence Zone
Hydrosphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ hydrological cycle within a drainage basin ◆ interpretation of hydrographs
Lithosphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ formation of erosion and depositional features in glaciated and coastal landscapes ◆ rural land use conflicts and their management related to glaciated and coastal landscapes
Biosphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ properties and formation processes of podzol, brown earth and gley soils

Learning and teaching approaches should be learner focussed. The following examples are illustrative of approaches which may be adopted and which will allow opportunities to gather evidence that learners have achieved one or more of the Unit Outcomes.

Example 1 — Taking living graphs further to incorporate the Atmosphere learning

Using annotated living graphs as an assessment tool for the hydrosphere topic can be developed to incorporate assessment of the understanding of the Intertropical Convergence Zone (part of the Atmosphere topic). As the ITCZ is responsible for the delivery of precipitation to tropical West Africa, using river flow data from this area in a storm hydrograph, learners can be assessed in their understanding of the cause and impact of the atmospheric system.

The teacher/lecturer may want to develop statements relating to the geographical location of air masses, the zone of maximum precipitation, and the relative position of the thermal equator. By adding these to a storm hydrograph, and

justifying their location of the graph, learners can demonstrate their understanding of what causes the ITCZ to migrate as well as the resulting impact on river flow. A further write-up section where learners discuss impacts, other than the impact on river flow, would allow able learners to show their greater depth of understanding.

The overall burden of assessment for the learner may be reduced by using such opportunities to combine assessments within and across Units.

Example 2 — Interpretation of hydrographs: supporting learning with living graphs

Through a teaching and learning approach that is rooted in the thinking skills strategies of David Leat, learners can gain knowledge and understanding of hydrographs as well exhibiting aptitude in several skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

After some time given over to teacher-led explanation, learners could be given data (preferably real-life data) gathered on a rainfall event and subsequent response by a river system. Learners would plot the data and annotate the hydrograph with the necessary labels, such as rising limb, recessional limb, peak flow, basin lag etc on suitable, large graph paper.

Learners could then write an accompanying paragraph to describe the hydrograph, including some suggestions as to why it exhibits the form it does.

This standard approach to interpreting hydrographs could then be developed by giving learners a series of descriptive statements (similar to those found in the *Thinking through Geography* approach – see [‘geoworld’](#) website) outlining observations and decisions made by individuals living in the river catchment. The nature of these statements should be broad enough that there may be more than one possible time period that they refer to.

Learners would add these statements to their annotated hydrographs and add a further section to their write-up justifying why the statements occur when they do. This activity could be individual, but it is often more effective when done in pairs or small groups as learners must justify their decisions to others before attempting the write-up.

Taking this standard approach to hydrograph analysis and adding the Thinking Skills element would allow centres to generate assessment evidence that covers a substantial part of the Hydrosphere topic in this Unit, as well as covering skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work as follows:

- 1.1 Literacy: Reading
- 2.3 Numeracy: Information handling
- 5.3 Thinking skills: Applying
- 5.4 Thinking skills: Analysing and evaluating

If centres are undertaking the River Basin Management Global Issue then there is the potential that this exercise could be undertaken in relation to the selected river basin, so covering some of the physical characteristics of the basin and the possible needs for water management. In doing so, the centre would generate assessment evidence that would combine aspects of this Unit and *Global Issues* Unit.

The overall burden of assessment for the learner may be greatly reduced by using such opportunities to combine assessments across Units.

Example 3 — Building in challenge and progression through glaciated and coastal landscapes

Learners study the formation of erosional and depositional features in glaciated and coastal landscapes. These are topics which learners may well have covered previously at Third and Fourth curriculum level and/or National 4 and 5. It would therefore be appropriate to ensure that at Higher level learners are challenged and that progression in knowledge and understanding is achieved.

An understanding of Earth science would allow learners to gain a greater understanding of the factors responsible for glacial and coastal erosion.

To do this teachers/lectures might like to consider some of the following:

Quaternary climate change	Learners could better understand the cyclical nature of climate changes over the last 2 million years. This would allow learners to appreciate that features such as U-shaped valleys can take several glacial periods to form. Understanding the different extent of different glacial periods would also allow learners to appreciate why glacial deposits might be found on the edge of corries as well as in the lowlands.
Role of rock type in erosional processes	By understanding the differences in erosional susceptibility in different rock types, learners will appreciate why some landscapes appear 'fresher' than others. It would also allow learners to appreciate different rates of coastal erosion associated with different geologies.
Role of Quaternary sea level change	By having an understanding of eustatic and isostatic sea level change, learners can better appreciate the rate of change and future potential changes due to predicted sea level/climate changes.

Coverage of these topics would also aid learning in many of the possible topics in the *Global Issues* Unit.

Learners may also benefit from being challenged to use greater specialised vocabulary when describing and explaining processes that result in landforms of erosion and deposition.

The overall burden of assessment for the learner may be reduced by using the opportunity to assess holistically within the Unit, allowing achievement of both Outcomes at once. Activities which could be used to generate assessment evidence from this teaching and learning could include annotated diagrams, a write up their findings, digital presentation to a group involving the use of simple GIS (such as Google Earth-based approaches), the design of trail packs for tourist markets (similar to the public understanding of science materials used in National Parks and Geoparks).

Example 4 — Using outdoor learning to reinforce understanding of soils

The biosphere topic now concerns only the properties and formation of three soil types. The teaching and learning of this is often achieved through annotated diagrams of soil profiles. However, there is great potential to generate

assessment evidence by combining this classroom learning with simple-to-achieve outdoor learning experience.

The majority of centres will have some kind of grass area within their grounds. A shallow soil pit could easily be created, then either filled in or covered after use. If this is not practical, then coring equipment (such as a soil auger, or better still, a side sampling corer, such as a Russian corer) could be used to extract a soil profile.

Learners could then sketch the soil, attempting to identify horizons and processes. Although it is unlikely that school/college grounds will contain model profiles, by asking learners to identify how their profile varies from podzols, brown earths and gley profiles, a powerful assessment tool can be created. By explaining how a real profile varies from a textbook example there is the potential to truly show a learner's understanding of the properties and processes involved in soil formation.

This approach can be achieved in a short period of time at a location close to the centre, or it can be combined with other field activities on a larger scale outdoor learning experience.

If centres are using a holistic approach to assessment of the Unit it is advisable to track where evidence of the achievement of individual Outcomes and/or assessment standards appears so that learners who do not achieve the complete assessment can still have recognition for what they have achieved and do not have to be reassessed on what they have achieved.

Added value — Geography assignment

The content of this Unit will provide many ways for learners to demonstrate added value for the Course assessment in the Geography assignment.

Learners should choose an issue or topic for study which develops greater understanding of the issue through research, including fieldwork where appropriate; and they should evaluate and analyse information from a range of sources in order to reach a conclusion.

This Unit will provide rich opportunities for learners to choose a range of possible titles for their Geography assignment. However, the strong focus on field work may limit the potential to draw on some of the more global topics in the Unit, for example much of the Atmosphere topic would be challenging to include as the principal focus of the assignment.

Here are some suggestions of topics and activities, grounded in the *Physical Environments* Unit that may form a focus of a Geography assignment:

- ◆ how a particular river system responds to meteorological conditions
- ◆ nature and origin of a particular landform of glacial deposition
- ◆ nature and origin of a particular sediment section
- ◆ controls on sediment size and shape along a particular coastline
- ◆ examination of the rate of longshore drift along a particular coastline
- ◆ formation of a soil catena along a particular slope transect
- ◆ an analysis and classification of a particular soil profile

Learners could also combine topics within the *Physical Environments* Unit, for example:

- ◆ do soil properties affect the response rates of a river to a rainfall event?
- ◆ how do soils vary either side of a moraine ridge?

Learners could also aim to combine Physical and Human Environment topics, for example:

- ◆ how soil characteristics vary as a result of human land-use in rural areas
- ◆ how human activities have altered the nature of beach sediment
- ◆ how land-use impacts on the response of a river to a rainfall event
- ◆ how the expansion of an urban area is affected by physical landforms, drainage and soil type

The topics illustrated above are for guidance only and would draw on knowledge and understanding primarily from the *Physical Environments* Unit. Greater challenge and application could be achieved by drawing on knowledge and understanding of topics and issues expressed in the *Global Issues* and *Human Environments* Units.

Developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

Information about developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work across the Course, is given in the relevant *Course Support Notes*. This Unit will provide many opportunities to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. Geography Units will develop the following skills in particular:

- 1.1 Literacy: Reading
- 2.3 Numeracy: Information handling
- 4.6 Employability, enterprise and citizenship: Citizenship
- 5.3 Thinking skills: Applying
- 5.4 Thinking skills: Analysing and evaluating

As the specific skills focus of the Unit is in relation to mapping skills, then it might be assumed that the most relevant skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work are around Information handling and Analysing and evaluating. However it should be remembered that if Units are taken as a part of a Course, then the evidence for 'mapping skills', 'research skills' and 'skills in the use of graphical and numerical information' may be presented in the context of any of the three Units of the Course.

This Unit provides rich and varied opportunities for learners to develop these skills. Examples, such as the interpretation of hydrographs, have been given above. It should also be considered that the development of these skills can be greatly enhanced through the use of outside agencies and speakers as well as by giving learners the maximum opportunity to engage in field work and other forms of outdoor learning.

Combining assessment

Geography is best viewed as a holistic subject, rather than a series of distinct topics of work. The topics covered in this Unit have strong links with topics in both *Human Environments* and *Global Issues* Units. Learners may benefit when centres aim to combine assessment across these common areas. Some of the links include:

<p>Human Environments: Rural Land degradation in a semi-arid or rainforest area</p>	<p>If centres choose the semi-arid option, by the very nature of semi-arid areas there needs to be an understanding of drainage basin issues. It may also be appropriate to select an area at the northern extent of the Intertropical Convergence Zone, to overlap with the Atmosphere topic.</p>
<p>Global Issues: River basin management Physical characteristics of a basin and the need for water management</p>	<p>As outlined in the hydrograph example above, there are clear overlaps with the Hydrosphere topic.</p>
<p>Global climate change</p>	<p>Before our changing climate can be understood learners will need to have an understanding of how the global heat budget operates and how energy is redistributed, so generating clear overlaps with the Atmosphere topic. Furthermore, there are links with the Lithosphere topic when the natural drivers of climate change (throughout the late Quaternary Period) are considered.</p>

Equality and inclusion

The high degree of flexibility within this Unit in terms of possible approaches to assessment means that Course and Unit planners can consider and remove potential barriers to learning and assessment. This Unit should be accessible to all learners.

It is recognised that centres have their own duties under equality and other legislation and policy initiatives. The guidance given in this document is designed to sit alongside these duties but is specific to the delivery and assessment of the Unit.

Alternative approaches to Unit assessment to take account of the specific needs of learners can be used. However, the centre must be satisfied that the integrity of the assessment is maintained and that the alternative approach to assessment will, in fact, generate the necessary evidence of achievement.

Appendix 1: Reference documents

The following reference documents will provide useful information and background.

- ◆ Assessment Arrangements (for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs) — various publications are available on SQA's website at: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa//14977.html.
- ◆ [*Building the Curriculum 4: Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work*](#)
- ◆ [*Building the Curriculum 5: A framework for assessment*](#)
- ◆ [*Course Specifications*](#)
- ◆ [*Design Principles for National Courses*](#)
- ◆ [*Guide to Assessment*](#)
- ◆ Principles and practice papers for curriculum areas
- ◆ [*SCQF Handbook: User Guide*](#) and [*SCQF level descriptors*](#)
- ◆ [*SQA Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*](#)
- ◆ [*Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work: Using the Curriculum Tool*](#)
- ◆ [*Coursework Authenticity: A Guide for Teachers and Lecturers*](#)

Appendix 2: Suggested websites

All websites current March 2015.

Map skills

<http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/education-and-research/index.html>
<http://www.teachnetuk.org.uk/2006%20Projects/Geog-Map%20Skills/index.htm>
http://www.nnas.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4&Itemid=4

Lithosphere

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/topics/z7vkjxs>
<http://www.northwest-highlands-geopark.org.uk/>
<http://www.geography.learnontheinternet.co.uk/topics/glaciation.html>
<http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/>
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/topics/z386n39>
<http://www.geography.learnontheinternet.co.uk/topics/coasts.html>
<http://www.sln.org.uk/geography/schools/blythebridge/AnimationsCoastal.htm>

Atmosphere

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/topics/zqy9wmn>
<http://www.geography-revision.co.uk/pages/climatology/atmospheric-circulation/>

Hydrosphere

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/topics/z7vkjxs>
<http://www.s-cool.co.uk/a-level/geography/river-profiles/revise-it/storm-hydrographs-and-river-discharge>

Biosphere

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/topics/zmbd7ty>
<http://www.hutton.ac.uk/learning/schools-colleges-and-universities/introduction-to-soils>

General

<http://www.gatm.org.uk/>
<http://www.geography.org.uk/>
<http://www.hutton.ac.uk/>
<http://www.snh.gov.uk/>

Administrative information

Published: May 2015 (version 2.0)

History of changes to Unit Support Notes

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
2.0	'Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment' section updated to reflect changes to Outcome and Assessment Standards. Appendix 2: Suggested websites added.	Qualifications Manager	May 2015

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Unit Support Notes — Geography: Human Environments (Higher)



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

Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the *Geography: Human Environments* (Higher) Unit. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering this Unit. They should be read in conjunction with:

- ◆ the *Unit Specification*
- ◆ the *Course Specification*
- ◆ the *Course Assessment Specification*
- ◆ the *Course Support Notes*
- ◆ the *Specimen Question Paper*
- ◆ the *Higher Exemplar Question Paper*
- ◆ the Unit assessment support packs

General guidance on the Unit

Aims

The general aim of this Unit is to develop learner's geographical skills; however the specific skills focus for assessment purposes is the development of a wide range of research skills and techniques in human environment contexts. Learners will develop and apply knowledge and understanding of the processes and interactions at work within human environments on a local, regional and global scale.

Progression into this Unit

Entry to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. Many learners will benefit from having completed this Unit at the level below. Others will draw on comparable learning or experience. Learners will require appropriate literacy and numeracy skills in order to overtake the requirements of this Unit.

When considering whether this Unit is appropriate for a particular learner, you should refer to the skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course, and the Outcomes and Assessment Standards. Taken together these provide an overall picture of the level of demand.

Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Unit

Information about skills, knowledge and understanding is given in the Higher Geography *Course Specification* and *Course Assessment Specification*.

If this Unit is being delivered on a free-standing basis, teachers and lecturers are free to select the skills, knowledge, understanding and contexts which are most appropriate for delivery in their centres.

Progression from this Unit

This Unit may provide progression to a range of qualifications in related social subjects and science and in particular to Advanced Higher Geography.

Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment

The aim of this section is to provide advice and guidance to centres on:

- ◆ opportunities to generate naturally occurring evidence through a range of teaching and learning approaches
- ◆ approaches to added value
- ◆ approaches to developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

The following extract from the *Course Assessment Specification* shows the mandatory Course content which will be sampled in the *Human Environments* section of question papers:

Geography: Human Environments	
Learners will develop and apply geographical skills and knowledge and understanding of human environments. Learners will develop and apply knowledge and understanding of the processes and interactions at work within urban and rural environments in developed and developing countries.	
Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ methods and problems of data collection ◆ consequences of population structure ◆ causes and impacts of forced and voluntary migration
Rural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the impact and management of rural land degradation related to a rainforest or semi-arid area
Urban	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the need for management of recent urban change (housing and transport) in a developed and in a developing world city ◆ the management strategies employed ◆ the impact of the management strategies

Learning and teaching approaches should be learner focussed. The following example is illustrative of approaches which may be adopted and which will allow opportunities to gather evidence that learners have achieved one or more of the Unit Outcomes.

Example — Contrasting approaches to housing redevelopments: decision making exercise

Learners could study the need for management of an aspect of recent urban change in a developed world city and in a developing world city. Redevelopment of housing would be an example of such a development. Learners can use a range of research skills in order to collect information to compare developments in a slum region of the developing world, such as the major cities of India, with the redevelopment of low cost housing in a UK city, such as the Craigmillar area of Edinburgh. Learners will be able to show their knowledge and understanding of the Outcome.

This exercise creates an excellent opportunity to use decision-making learning approaches to assess learner's level of understanding and comprehension, as well as address many of the skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

Teachers/lecturers might like to consider the following approach:

Background Information	Introduce the location of contrasting housing areas in Scotland and India, giving the background to their development. Potential to use atlas skills and OS map skills to support this, so reinforcing key geographic skills.
Address the issues	<p>In many Scottish/UK cities, housing redevelopments have learned from the mistakes of the post-war years and are now upgrading the quality of low-cost housing while trying to retain (and in many case improve) sense of community. There is a drive to improve infrastructure and opportunities in these areas, rather than 're-house and flatten'.</p> <p>This contrasts with recent suggestions from cities such as Mumbai where local authorities are planning to flatten huge areas of slum housing. These areas obviously have huge welfare issues but benefit from a strong community and entrepreneurial spirit.</p>
Create the scenario	<p>Set the learners a clear and manageable aim such as '<i>how can Indian city developers learn from the post-war mistakes of their UK counterparts?</i>'</p> <p>Centres may consider setting this as a research task, giving learners access to the wealth of information available on slum developments and UK housing developments. This might include recent television programmes on slum developments.</p> <p>There is also another option for this to be teacher-led with the learners only completing an appropriate assessment. This would be less skills focused but may suit time constraints.</p>
Assessment	<p>A decision-making task with a clear aim, such as the example given above would require learners to outline the need for urban management of housing both in developed and developing world cities. It would also need critical examination of the strategies used/proposed in each case study. As there is not a clear right or wrong answer, the decision-making would require critical thinking and clear analysis of source materials.</p> <p>Centres may consider a range of different assessment methods to address this, from conventional essay writing, report writing (with clear structure) or a supported oral presentation.</p>

Assessing using a decision-making task similar to the one outlined above would cover the knowledge and understanding of the entire Urban topic, as well as developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work, and further developing literacy skills.

This assessment would therefore cover a significant part of the Outcomes of the *Human Environments* Unit. Centres may also see the potential of building elements of the Population topic into the task through the inclusion of population statistics and rural to urban migration information. Taking this approach limits the amount of assessment required so potentially reducing the burden on learners and centres alike.

There is very clear progression from the National 5 Outcomes in the *Human Environments* Unit. Centres should ensure that this progression is grasped and that learners are expected to show a greater depth of knowledge and understanding. These are key design principles of *Curriculum for Excellence* and should be evident in assessment.

The overall burden of assessment for the learner may be reduced by using the opportunity to assess holistically within the Unit, allowing achievement of both Outcomes at once. Evidence can be gathered in a range of forms.

If centres are using a holistic approach to assessment of the Unit it is advisable to track where evidence of the achievement of individual Outcomes and/or assessment standards appears so that learners who do not achieve the complete assessment can still have recognition for what they have achieved and do not have to be reassessed on what they have achieved.

Approaches to added value — Geography assignment

The content of this Unit will provide many ways for learners to demonstrate added value for the Course assessment through the Geography assignment.

Learners should choose an issue or topic for study which develops greater understanding of the issue through research, including fieldwork where appropriate, and allows them to evaluate and analyse information from a range of sources in order to reach a reasoned conclusion.

This Unit will provide rich opportunities for learners to choose a range of possible titles for their Geography assignment. However, the strong focus on field work may limit the potential to draw on some of the more global topics in the Unit, for example much of the Course content that is rooted in a developing world context.

Centres could however consider using the developing world context as an opportunity to introduce and consolidate research skills using secondary sources.

Here are some suggestions of topics and activities, grounded in the *Human Environments* Unit that may form a focus of a Geography assignment:

- ◆ examination of the population structure within a given locality
- ◆ perceived push and pull factors for young people looking to leave a rural community
- ◆ opportunities and challenges for generating energy in rural Scotland
- ◆ preservation versus conservation: managing environments along dynamic coastlines
- ◆ nature and impact of a particular urban development on the local population
- ◆ identifying urban priorities — what developments local people perceive are needed in their community

Learners could also look to combine topics within the *Human Environments* Unit:

- ◆ distribution of migrant workers within an urban area — implications for housing, transport and community integration,
- ◆ future of greenbelts — protecting rural land or hindering urban development?

Learners could also aim to combine Human and Physical Environment topics:

- ◆ how soil characteristics are affected by human land-use in rural areas
- ◆ how human activities have altered the nature of beach sediment
- ◆ how land-use impacts on the response of a river to a rainfall event
- ◆ how the expansion of an urban area is effected by physical landforms, drainage and soil type

The topics illustrated above are for guidance only and would draw on knowledge and understanding primarily from the *Human Environments* Unit. Greater challenge and application could be achieved by drawing on knowledge and understanding of topics and issues expressed in the *Global Issues* and *Physical Environments* Units.

Developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

Information about developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work across the Course, is given in the relevant *Course Support Notes*. This Unit will provide many opportunities to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. Geography Units will develop the following skills in particular:

- 1.1 Literacy: Reading
- 2.3 Numeracy: Information handling
- 4.6 Employability, enterprise and citizenship: Citizenship
- 5.3 Thinking skills: Applying
- 5.4 Thinking skills: Analysing and evaluating

This Unit provides rich and varied opportunities for learners to develop these skills. The strong element of comparison between developing and developed world case studies means that the skills around citizenship are particularly well developed.

It should also be considered that the development of all these skills can be greatly enhanced through the use of outside agencies and speakers as well as by giving learners the maximum opportunity to engage in field work and other forms of outdoor learning.

Combining assessment within Units

Geography is best viewed as a holistic subject, rather than a series of distinct topics of work. The topics covered in this Unit have strong links with topics in both *Physical Environments* and *Global Issues* Units. Learners may benefit when centres aim to combine assessment across these common areas and it may also limit the burden on the learner and the teacher/lecturer. Some of the links include:

Physical Environments: Hydrosphere and Atmosphere	By the very nature of semi-arid areas there needs to be an understanding of drainage basin issues. It may also be appropriate to select an area at the northern extent of the Intertropical Convergence Zone, to overlap with the Atmosphere topic.
Global Issues: Development and Health	Measurement of development indicators is linked to population data, so creating a clear link with the Population topic. Furthermore, addressing development issues is rooted in the movement of populations (both forced and voluntary) and the growth of urban areas. This creates links with the Urban topic, in relation to developing world cities.
Global Climate Change	Before our changing climate can be understood, learners will need to have an understanding of how population growth is impacting on carbon (and other greenhouse) emissions, so generating clear overlaps with the population topic.

Equality and inclusion

The high degree of flexibility within this Unit in terms of possible approaches to assessment means that Course and Unit planners can consider and remove potential barriers to learning and assessment. This Unit should be accessible to all learners.

It is recognised that centres have their own duties under equality and other legislation and policy initiatives. The guidance given in these *Unit Support Notes* is designed to sit alongside these duties but is specific to the delivery and assessment of the Unit.

Alternative approaches to Unit assessment to take account of the specific needs of learners can be used. However, the centre must be satisfied that the integrity of the assessment is maintained and that the alternative approach to assessment will, in fact, generate the necessary evidence of achievement.

Appendix 1: Reference documents

The following reference documents will provide useful information and background.

- ◆ Assessment Arrangements (for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs) — various publications are available on SQA's website at: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa//14977.html.
- ◆ [*Building the Curriculum 4: Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work*](#)
- ◆ [*Building the Curriculum 5: A framework for assessment*](#)
- ◆ [*Course Specifications*](#)
- ◆ [*Design Principles for National Courses*](#)
- ◆ [*Guide to Assessment*](#)
- ◆ Principles and practice papers for curriculum areas
- ◆ [*SCQF Handbook: User Guide*](#) and [*SCQF level descriptors*](#)
- ◆ [*SQA Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*](#)
- ◆ [*Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work: Using the Curriculum Tool*](#)
- ◆ [*Coursework Authenticity: A Guide for Teachers and Lecturers*](#)

Appendix 2: Suggested websites

All websites current March 2015.

Research skills

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/scotland/landscapes/>

<http://maps.nls.uk/>

<http://www.alangodfreymaps.co.uk/>

<http://www.scottish-places.info/scotland.html>

<http://www.rgs.org/OurWork/Schools/Fieldwork+and+local+learning/Fieldwork+and+local+learning.htm>

<http://www.geography.org.uk/resources/fieldwork/>

Population

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/topics/z6rjmp3>

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

<http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/>

<http://www.geography.learnontheinternet.co.uk/topics/popn.html>

http://www.sln.org.uk/geography/population_and_migration.htm

<http://www.populationmatters.org/resources/materials-schools/>

<http://www.worldof7billion.org/>

Urban

<http://www.sln.org.uk/geography/geoweb/blowmedown/shanty05.swf>

http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/nqcoursematerials/subjects/g/nqresource_tcm4817440.asp

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/topics/zh476sg>

Rural

<http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/>

<http://www.developmenteducation.ie/media/documents/Desertification.pdf>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/topics/ztcqxn>

General

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/subjects/z77pr82>

<http://www.gatm.org.uk/>

<http://www.geography.org.uk/>

<http://www.globaldimension.org.uk/>

Administrative information

Published: May 2015 (version 2.0)

History of changes to Unit Support Notes

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
2.0	'Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment' section updated to reflect changes to Outcome and Assessment Standards. Appendix 2: Suggested websites added.	Qualifications Manager	May 2015

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Unit Support Notes — Geography: Global Issues (Higher)



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

Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the *Geography: Global Issues* (Higher) Unit. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering this Unit. They should be read in conjunction with:

- ◆ the *Unit Specification*
- ◆ the *Course Specification*
- ◆ the *Course Assessment Specification*
- ◆ the *Course Support Notes*
- ◆ the *Specimen Question Paper*
- ◆ the *Higher Exemplar Question Paper*
- ◆ the Unit assessment support packs

General guidance on the Unit

Aims

The general aim of this Unit is to develop learner's geographical skills however the specific skills focus of this Unit for assessment purposes is use of a wide range of graphical and numerical information in the context of a range of global geographic issues. Learners will develop and apply knowledge and understanding of significant geographic global issues.

Progression into this Unit

Entry to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. Many learners will benefit from having completed this Unit at the level below. Others will draw on comparable learning or experience. Learners will require appropriate literacy and numeracy skills in order to overtake the requirements of this Unit.

When considering whether this Unit is appropriate for a particular learner, you should refer to the skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course, and the Outcomes and Assessment Standards. Taken together these provide an overall picture of the level of demand.

Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Unit

Information about skills, knowledge and understanding is given in the Higher Geography *Course Specification and Course Assessment Specification*.

If this Unit is being delivered on a free-standing basis, teachers and lecturers are free to select the skills, knowledge, understanding and contexts which are most appropriate for delivery in their centres.

Progression from this Unit

This Unit may provide progression to a range of qualifications in related social subjects and science and in particular to Advanced Higher Geography.

Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment

The aim of this section is to provide advice and guidance to centres on:

- ◆ opportunities to generate naturally occurring evidence through a range of teaching and learning approaches
- ◆ approaches to added value
- ◆ approaches to developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

The following extract from the *Course Assessment Specification* shows the mandatory Course content which will be sampled in the *Global Issues* section of question papers

Geography: Global Issues	
Learners will develop and apply geographical skills and knowledge and understanding of global geographical issues. Learners will develop and apply knowledge and understanding of significant global geographical issues which demonstrate the interaction of physical and human factors and evaluate strategies adopted in the management of these issues. An appreciation of sustainable development should permeate the global issues studied. Learners should study two out of the five global issues.	
River basin management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ physical characteristics of a selected river basin ◆ need for water management ◆ selection and development of sites ◆ consequences of water control projects
Development and health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ validity of development indicators ◆ differences in levels of development between developing countries ◆ a water-related disease: causes, impact, management ◆ primary healthcare strategies
Global climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ physical and human causes ◆ local and global effects ◆ management strategies and their limitations
Trade, aid and geopolitics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ world trade patterns ◆ causes of inequalities in trade ◆ impact of world trade patterns ◆ aid and other strategies to reduce trade inequalities and their impact
Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ global distribution of energy resources ◆ reasons for increase in demand for energy in both developed and developing countries ◆ effectiveness of renewable and non-renewable approaches to meeting energy demands and their suitability within different countries

Learners would be expected to study two of the topics listed above. Centres should give careful consideration to how they select the two topics for study. Where learners are progressing from National 5 then centres may consider

balancing breadth of learning with progression. There is also the opportunity for learner choice to be embedded with the *Global Issues* Unit.

Learning and teaching approaches should be learner-focused. The following examples are illustrative of approaches which may be adopted and which will allow opportunities to gather evidence that learners have achieved one or more of the Unit Outcomes.

Example 1 — Creating annotated river basin tours

River Basin Management is a topic that will be familiar to many centres. Many will have the materials and resources to support teaching this topic. Centres may like to consider integrating some simple GIS.

River Basin Management is largely case study specific, with learners developing their knowledge and understanding of a selected river basin. The topic requires learners to understand:

- ◆ physical characteristics of a selected river basin
- ◆ need for water management
- ◆ selection and development of sites
- ◆ consequences of water control projects

Teaching and learning of this topic may be mixed between teacher-led sessions and learner-led research time. This in turn builds on several skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

Rather than using conventional essay/report writing as an assessment tool, the spatial nature of the topic lends itself to the use of software such as *Google Earth*. Learners (either individually or in small groups) could be tasked with creating a *Google Earth* tour through their selected river basin. These tours use waypoints within the software which can be added to with text, photographs and other graphics. By saving the tour as a *.kmz* file, it can be retained by the centre for assessment purposes as well as being shared with the rest of the cohort, to support peer assessment and peer teaching.

This approach has potential to be adapted depending on the ability of the cohort and the time constraints of the task. For example, different learners could be tasked with different elements of the Outcome — some looking at physical characteristics while others look at need for management, sites of water management and consequences of water management. This scenario would limit the amount of evidence created by the assessment tool, but it would greatly support peer teaching, with learners accessing each other's tours as a way of developing their knowledge and understanding of the topic.

Alternatively, each learner could be tasked to create a tour that examines all elements of the topic, perhaps with different learners investigating different drainage basins. When the work is shared within the cohort, great breadth of knowledge would be achieved.

Using a simple GIS, such as plotting annotated tours in *Google Earth*, could greatly increase enjoyment and engagement of learners. It is also an approach which produces assessment evidence that is unique to the learner and current in nature. It also provides a great opportunity to develop ICT skills, research skills and map skills in a genuine assessment scenario.

Example 2 — Energy topic: Using outside agencies to support learning and generate assessment evidence

The Energy topic is new to this Course and is one that is relevant to modern Scotland and throughout the world. The topic expects learners to develop an understanding of the following:

- ◆ global distribution of energy resources
- ◆ reasons for increase in demand for energy in both developed and developing countries
- ◆ effectiveness of renewable and non-renewable approaches to meeting energy demands and their suitability within different countries

The first two elements are areas that most centres will be confident in delivering and assessing. The final element, examining the effectiveness of energy resources within contrasting countries, lends itself to centres/departments building links with other curricular areas as well as outside agencies.

Science departments often explore these themes and there may be potential for geography teachers/lecturers to team up with science colleagues to develop a teaching environment that draws on individuals' strengths.

Scotland is home to a range of energy providers, many of them parts of multi-national companies operating in a global context. Representatives from these companies can often be encouraged to either visit centres or host site visits by learners. These representatives can be well placed to inform learners on the nature of energy production around the world and the effectiveness of different approaches in different locations.

Using outside agencies is excellent for school-community partnerships and can contribute to learners developing their citizenship skills, as well as their analytical skills and critical thinking as they question and digest what they have heard.

This form of learning would also lend itself to a discussion/debate-focused assessment tool. Allowing learners to build their own arguments (either in a genuine debate or a role-play focused discussion) will assess their knowledge and understanding of the topic. Being challenged by their peer group will broaden their understanding as well as developing greater depth of understanding.

Centres will have to give careful consideration to how this assessment is recorded. Will the debate be recorded or videoed? Will staff record who has contributed and to what depth? Will there be a set 'write-up' after the debate that will generate the assessment evidence? Centres should bear in mind that gathering assessment evidence must be practicable for both the learner and the centre.

The overall burden of assessment for the learner may be reduced by using the opportunity to assess holistically within the Unit, allowing achievement of both Outcomes at once.

If centres are using a holistic approach to assessment of the Unit it is advisable to track where evidence of the achievement of individual Outcomes and/or assessment standards appears so that learners who do not achieve the complete assessment can still have recognition for what they have achieved and do not have to be reassessed on what they have achieved.

Approaches to added value — Geography assignment

The content of this Unit will provide many ways for learners to demonstrate added value for the Course assessment in the Geography assignment.

Learners should choose an issue or topic for study which develops greater understanding of the issue through research, including fieldwork where possible; and they should evaluate and analyse information from a range of sources in order to reach a reasoned conclusion.

This Unit will provide rich opportunities for learners to choose a range of possible titles for their Geography assignment. However, the strong focus on field work may limit the potential to draw on the global issues as the principal element in the assignment. Rather, this Unit is an excellent vehicle for developing, consolidating and reinforcing research skills associated with secondary sources, including effective library and internet research skills.

This Unit may be better suited to suggesting general themes, rather than actual topics for the assignment. These themes might include:

- ◆ Water management scheme at a particular location.
- ◆ A comparison of water management approaches between a local case study and a global example.
- ◆ Mapping inequality within Scotland.
- ◆ A study on the effectiveness of Scottish/UK international aid initiatives.
- ◆ Local effects of predicted climate change.
- ◆ Risk to local communities of predicted climate change.
- ◆ Impact of globalisation on local/independent shop keepers.
- ◆ Feasibility of initiative to have consumers limit their food miles and 'eat local'.
- ◆ Benefits and problems of a local energy development (such as windfarm, power station, or marine project).
- ◆ Success or failure of government initiatives to drive down energy demand in local communities.

Centres and learners should remember that many of the research skills around interviewing and gaining public viewpoints would be very relevant for assignments that are rooted in the themes of this Unit.

The topics illustrated above are for guidance only and would draw on knowledge and understanding from this Unit as well as the *Human Environments* and *Physical Environments* Units. This drawing of knowledge and understanding from across the Geography Course will facilitate greater challenge and application and has the potential to increase learners' overall performance, as well as enjoyment, of the Course.

Combining assessment within Units

Geography is best viewed as a holistic subject, rather than a series of distinct topics of work. The topics covered in this Unit have strong links with topics in both *Physical Environments* and *Human Environments* Units. Learners may benefit when centres aim to combine assessment across these common areas and this will limit the burden on the learner. Centres should appreciate that much of knowledge and understanding gained in the *Human Environments* and *Physical*

Environments Units forms background understanding for many of the Global Issues themes.

Careful assessment of Global Issues themes have the potential to combine with many of the Human and Physical themes, thus limiting the burden of assessment on centres and learners.

River Basin Management	Clear overlap with the Hydrosphere topic in <i>Physical Environments</i> Unit. Other overlaps with Urban Geography and Atmosphere, depending on river basin/management schemes selected.
Development and Health	Clear links with much of the <i>Human Environments</i> Unit, in particular population movement, rural degradation and urban pressures in the developing world. Links with Atmosphere and Hydrosphere may also apply depending on the choice of water-related disease.
Global Climate Change	Before our changing climate can be understood, learners will need to have an understanding of how the global heat budget operates and how energy is redistributed, so generating clear overlaps with the Atmosphere topic. Furthermore, there are links with the Lithosphere topic when the natural drivers of climate change (throughout the late Quaternary Period) are considered.
Trade, Aid and Geopolitics	The global nature of the topic creates strong links and overlaps with much of the comparison work in <i>Human Environments</i> Unit particularly around rural land degradation, rural land uses and population movements.
Energy	Energy generation by wind and wave power has links with Atmosphere topic in terms of identifying locations with suitable natural conditions. Energy generation is now a major potential rural land use in Scotland and results in conflicts and challenges, forming clear links with the Physical Environments Lithosphere theme.

Developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

Information about developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work across the Course, is given in the relevant *Course Support Notes*. This Unit will provide many opportunities to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. Geography Units will develop the following skills in particular:

- 1.1 Literacy: Reading
- 2.3 Numeracy: Information handling
- 4.6 Employability, enterprise and citizenship: Citizenship
- 5.3 Thinking skills: Applying
- 5.4 Thinking skills: Analysing and evaluating

Centres should be remember that if Units are taken as a part of a Course, then the evidence for 'mapping skills', 'research skills' and 'skills in the use of graphical and numerical information' may be presented in the context of any of the three Units of the Course.

The Global Issues Unit provides rich and varied opportunities for learners to develop these skills, particularly through the use of discussion, debate, partnerships with outside agencies and meaningful contemporary research.

Equality and inclusion

The high degree of flexibility within this Unit in terms of possible approaches to assessment means that Course and Unit planners can consider and remove potential barriers to learning and assessment. This Unit should be accessible to all learners.

It is recognised that centres have their own duties under equality and other legislation and policy initiatives. The guidance given in this document is designed to sit alongside these duties but is specific to the delivery and assessment of the Unit.

Alternative approaches to Unit assessment to take account of the specific needs of learners can be used. However, the centre must be satisfied that the integrity of the assessment is maintained and that the alternative approach to assessment will, in fact, generate the necessary evidence of achievement.

Appendix 1: Reference documents

The following reference documents will provide useful information and background.

- ◆ Assessment Arrangements (for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs) — various publications are available on SQA's website at: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa//14977.html.
- ◆ [*Building the Curriculum 4: Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work*](#)
- ◆ [*Building the Curriculum 5: A framework for assessment*](#)
- ◆ [*Course Specifications*](#)
- ◆ [*Design Principles for National Courses*](#)
- ◆ [*Guide to Assessment*](#)
- ◆ Principles and practice papers for curriculum areas
- ◆ [*SCQF Handbook: User Guide*](#) and [*SCQF level descriptors*](#)
- ◆ [*SQA Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*](#)
- ◆ [*Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work: Using the Curriculum Tool*](#)
- ◆ [*Coursework Authenticity: A Guide for Teachers and Lecturers*](#)

Appendix 2: Suggested websites

All websites current March 2015.

Climate change

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/topics/zfd6n39>

<http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/climate-guide/climate-change>

<http://www.energyville.com/energyville/>

<http://www.greenpeace.org.uk/files/swfs/migrated/MultimediaFiles/Live/Video/3569.swf>

River basin management

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/topics/znmhyc>

<http://www.internationalrivers.org/the-river-educator%E2%80%99s-toolkit-list-of-resources>

Trade and globalisation

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/topics/zywtsbk>

<http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/>

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in_depth/business/2007/globalisation/default.stm

<http://www.globaleducation.edna.edu.au/globaled/go/pid/1807>

<http://globaldimension.org.uk/resources/search/?sub=36>

Energy

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/topics/zvqpyrd>

<http://www.renewableenergycentre.co.uk/educational-resources/>

http://www.solarschools.net/resources/stuff/advantages_and_disadvantages.aspx

Development and health

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/topics/zs8xpv4>

<http://www.who.int/topics/malaria/en/>

<http://teachunicef.org/explore/topic/water-and-environment>

General

<http://www.gatm.org.uk/>

<http://www.geography.org.uk/>

<http://www.globaldimension.org.uk/>

Administrative information

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History of changes to Unit Support Notes

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
2.0	'Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment' section updated to reflect changes to Outcome and Assessment Standards. Appendix 2: Suggested websites added.	Qualifications Manager	May 2015

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