



## National Unit specification: general information

**Unit title:** Rural Species Identification and Habitats - Scotland

**Unit code:** H6MH 74

**Superclass:** SL

**Publication date:** September 2014

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 01

### Summary

This Unit provides an introduction to the identification of living things and the investigation of habitats in Scotland. The Unit is primarily aimed at the rural environment but could be applied to sub-urban or urban situations.

The Unit is designed to enable candidates to identify species, varieties or breeds typically found in a selected area. Candidates will participate in the investigation of the site and its habitats and the identification of some of the organisms that are associated with the habitats of the area. Candidates will record their observations, gather information and present their findings of the investigation. This is an alternative mandatory Unit in the National Certificate in Rural Skills (SCQF level 4) and is also an optional Unit in the Scottish Studies Award at SCQF level 4 it is also available for candidates as a free standing Unit

This Unit is suitable for candidates who:

- ◆ are undertaking the study of this subject for the first time.
- ◆ wish to develop their understanding of habitats, investigation and identification skills.
- ◆ wish to prepare for a career or develop their knowledge and skills within land based industries.

### Outcomes

- 1 Investigate sites and habitats in a selected area.
- 2 Identify a range of species or varieties of organisms and the main groups they belong to for the selected area.

### Recommended entry

Entry is at the discretion of the centre. Candidates do not need any prior knowledge or experience of identifying organisms or investigating habitats. However, an interest in animals and plants, wildlife, the countryside or the rural environment would be an advantage.

## **General information (cont)**

### **Credit points and level**

1 National Unit credit at SCQF level 4: (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 4\*)

*\*SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

### **Core Skills**

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit specification.

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this Unit.

## **National Unit specification: statement of standards**

### **Unit title:** Rural Species Identification and Habitats - Scotland

Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

#### **Outcome 1**

Investigate sites and habitats in a selected area.

##### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) Gather information by active participation in the investigation of a selected site.
- (b) Identify and describe the habitats within the selected area.
- (c) Describe positive and negative human impacts on wildlife in the selected area.
- (d) Record all findings from the investigation.
- (e) Present the information.

#### **Outcome 2**

Identify a range of species or varieties of organisms and the main groups they belong to for the selected area.

##### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) Gather information by actively investigating a site for species or varieties of organisms.
- (b) Identify the species or variety of living organisms associated with the selected area and habitats present.
- (c) Describe the main group to which each species or variety of organism belongs and a key taxonomic group feature that helped in the identification of each organism.
- (d) Record all findings from the investigation.
- (e) Present the information.

#### **Evidence Requirements for this Unit**

Performance, product as well as written and/or oral evidence, gathered under supervised open-book conditions, is required to demonstrate that candidates have achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

In both Outcomes candidates must participate in gathering, recording and presenting information and observations made in the investigation of the habitats and identification of living organisms in the selected area of Scotland. Candidates will use appropriate methods to carry out their observations, identifications, and keep a record of their investigation and findings.

## National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

### Unit title: Rural Species Identification and Habitats - Scotland

**Outcome 1** — Performance, product and written/oral evidence must include:

- ◆ Active participation in an investigation to identify a minimum of three habitats found within the area.
- ◆ A simple description of the key characteristics such as appearance, topography, type of vegetation and environmental conditions of each habitat.
- ◆ For each habitat candidates should describe one positive and one negative impact resulting from human activities or resource use that has affected the habitat and wildlife of the area.
- ◆ A record of all findings.
- ◆ A brief presentation of findings.

The assessment will be carried out under open-book supervised conditions.

**Outcome 2** — Performance, product and written/oral evidence must include:

- ◆ The identification of the species or variety of living organisms associated with the selected area and habitats present.
- ◆ A description of the main group to which each species or variety of organism belongs and a key taxonomic group feature that helped in the identification of each species/organism.
- ◆ A record all findings from the investigation.
- ◆ Presentation of the information.

Active participation in the study of an area which will include:

- ◆ The observation and identification of a range of individual organisms (species, variety, breed), typical of the habitats in the area. A minimum of 15 different organisms should be identified, at least three from each of three habitats.
- ◆ A record of the type of habitat each organism was found in, including the key features noticed during observation that were used to identify it, including a key feature typical of its taxonomic group that aids identification (eg an insect has three pairs of legs; a bird has feathers/wings/beak). The organisms identified may include a mix of indigenous, naturalised, introduced, or domestic species, varieties or breeds as appropriate to the situation. For example breeds of sheep and cattle on a farm as well as wild plants and animals found there.
- ◆ A brief presentation of findings.

The assessment will be carried out under open-book supervised conditions.

## **National Unit specification: support notes**

### **Unit title: Rural Species Identification and Habitats - Scotland**

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

### **Guidance on the content and context for this Unit**

The Unit is designed to provide candidates with the skills to investigate habitats and identify species, varieties or breeds of living organisms typically found in a selected area. The organisms may be indigenous, naturalised, introduced, or domestic and the selected site may be managed/domestic; semi-natural or wild. The site and organisms investigated will reflect the level of the Unit and candidate ability as well as the local situation.

The area selected may be any suitable site that can provide several habitats that are easily distinguished and provide easily recognisable organisms for identification and investigation that are typical of the habitats present. The Unit is primarily aimed at the rural environment but could be applied to sub-urban or urban situations. The area chosen could be generally representative of a rural environment or could be more typical of a particular rural skills industry or context eg an arable farm, upland estate, woodland, or a wildlife reserve.

It is suggested that 3–5 habitats should be investigated and this will include the observation and identification of a range of individual organisms (species, variety, breed), typical of the habitats in the area. A minimum of 15 different organisms should be identified, at least three from each habitat.

The type of habitat each organism was found in, the key features observed and used to identify it, including a key feature typical of its taxonomic group that aids identification will be recorded. It is important for candidates to cover a range of living things from plant, invertebrate and vertebrate groups that are common or typically found in the area and are simple to identify. The organisms identified may include a mix of indigenous, naturalised, introduced, or domestic species, varieties or breeds as appropriate to the situation. For example breeds of sheep and cattle on a farm as well as wild plants & animals found there.

The emphasis of the Unit should be on enjoyment of learning through candidates experiencing easy to recognise habitats and a variety of easily identifiable plants and animals from a range of taxonomic groups at first hand. While It is important that candidates learn to use a variety of identification aids and field guides the focus should be to develop their skills of observation and recording in the field: a quick note, audio message or mark on a simple outline drawing and further observation is more useful than hunting through a book to find the bird has flown. It is preferable to look at the book with the benefit of field notes once the observation is complete. This will enable candidates to appreciate the key features that separate different habitats and their characteristics and allow them to recognise the main taxonomic group an organism belongs to or the markings that help our identification of one species or breed from another.

## **National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

**Unit title:** Rural Species Identification and Habitats - Scotland

### **Guidance on learning and teaching approaches for this Unit**

Within the Unit there should be an emphasis on field work in which skills in observation, description and identification are developed. There should also be some supplementary work in the classroom to confirm identifications made and discuss background information on the habitats and species and to organise how field notes, species lists and other findings and information should be presented for assessment.

A candidate-centred approach should be adopted wherever possible during fieldwork and class-based investigation and research activities. The emphasis should be placed on first hand experience, site visits, observations and investigation. Evidence should be accumulated on an ongoing basis and use should be made of relevant references, identification guides and records to supplement information that candidates gain by first hand investigation. Significant use should be made of project work with the candidates working individually or in small groups. Group discussions should also make an important contribution in the development of the work.

Team working activities during investigations, research, group discussions and recording and presenting information will play an important part in the Unit and will provide opportunities for candidates to develop their skills in communication and working with others.

### **Guidance on approaches to assessment for this Unit**

Centres may use instruments of assessment which are considered to be the most appropriate to the candidates and situation. Examples of instruments of assessment which could be used to cover all Outcomes would be open-book written and/or oral project work in the form of a candidate's paper-based or electronic field observation note book/log or possibly a separate portfolio or electronic presentation recording all relevant information to meet the Unit requirements. This could be supplemented by tutor observation of activity recorded by appropriate checklists/notes.

### **Opportunities for the use of e-assessment**

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all learner evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at [www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment](http://www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment)

## **National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

**Unit title:** Rural Species Identification and Habitats - Scotland

### **Opportunities for developing Core Skills**

In this Unit candidates will investigate a range of habitats and identify the wildlife within.

Candidates will:

- ◆ participate in a fieldwork based investigation.
- ◆ describe a selection of habitats and a variety of rural species.
- ◆ communicate ideas and observations.
- ◆ carry out research using computers.

As they are doing this Unit candidates will develop aspects of the Core Skills in *Communication, Working with Others, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT)*.

### **Equality and inclusion**

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

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

## History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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