
Environmental Science: Earth's Resources with a Scottish Context

SCQF: level 5 (6 SCQF credit points)

Unit code: J21G 75

Unit outline

The general aim of this Unit is to develop skills of scientific inquiry, investigation and analytical thinking, along with knowledge and understanding of the Earth's resources. Learners will apply these skills when considering the applications of the Earth's resources on our lives, as well as the implications on society/the environment in Scotland. This can be done by using a variety of approaches, including investigation and problem solving.

The Unit covers the key areas of: an overview of Earth systems and their interactions; the geosphere; the hydrosphere; the biosphere and the atmosphere. Learners will research issues, apply scientific skills and communicate information related to their findings, which will develop skills of scientific literacy.

Learners who complete this Unit will be able to:

- 1 Apply skills of scientific inquiry and draw on knowledge and understanding of the key areas of this Unit to carry out an experiment/practical investigation
- 2 Draw on knowledge and understanding of the key areas of this Unit and apply scientific skills

This Unit is an optional Unit in the Scottish Studies Award at SCQF level 5 and is also available as a free-standing Unit. The Unit Specification should be read in conjunction with the *Unit Support Notes*, which provide advice and guidance on delivery, assessment approaches and development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

Recommended entry

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

- ◆ National 4 Environmental Science Course or relevant component Units
- ◆ National 4 Geography Course or relevant component Units
- ◆ National 4 Science Course or relevant component Units

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. For further information, please refer to the *Unit Support Notes*.

Standards

Outcomes and assessment standards

Outcome 1

The learner will:

- 1 Apply skills of scientific inquiry and draw on knowledge and understanding of the key areas of this Unit to carry out an experiment/practical investigation by:**
 - 1.1 Planning an experiment/practical investigation
 - 1.2 Following procedures safely
 - 1.3 Making and recording observations/measurements correctly
 - 1.4 Presenting results in an appropriate format
 - 1.5 Drawing valid conclusions
 - 1.6 Evaluating experimental procedures

Outcome 2

The learner will:

- 2 Draw on knowledge and understanding of the key areas of this Unit and apply scientific skills by:**
 - 2.1 Making accurate statements
 - 2.2 Solving problems

Evidence Requirements for the Unit

Assessors should use their professional judgement, subject knowledge and experience, and understanding of their learners, to determine the most appropriate ways to generate evidence and the conditions and contexts in which they are used.

The key areas covered in this Unit are: an overview of Earth systems and their interactions, the geosphere, the hydrosphere, the biosphere, and the atmosphere.

Evidence can be drawn from a variety of sources and presented in a variety of formats. The table below describes the evidence for the Assessment Standards which require exemplification. Evidence may be presented for individual Outcomes or gathered for the Unit as a whole, through combining assessment holistically in a single activity. If the latter approach is used, it must be clear how the evidence covers each Outcome.

| Assessment Standard | Evidence required |
|---|---|
| Planning an experiment | The plan should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ an aim ◆ a dependent and independent variable ◆ key variables to be kept constant ◆ measurements/observations to be made ◆ the resources ◆ the method including safety considerations |
| Presenting results in an appropriate format | One format from: table, line graph, chart, key, diagram, flow chart, summary or other appropriate format |
| Drawing a valid conclusion | Include reference to the aim |
| Evaluating experimental procedures | Suggest an improvement with justification |
| Making accurate statements | At least half of the statements should be correct across the key areas of this Unit. |
| Describing an environmental science issue in terms of the effect on the environment/society in Scotland | The description should include the environmental science of the issue |
| Solving problems | One from each: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ make generalisation/prediction ◆ select information ◆ process information, including calculations, as appropriate ◆ analyse information |

Transfer of Evidence

Evidence for the achievement of Outcome 1 and Assessment Standards 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 for this Unit can be used as evidence of the achievement of Outcome 1 and Assessment Standards 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 in the other Units of this Course.

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

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

2 Numeracy

- 2.1 Number processes
- 2.2 Money, time and measurement
- 2.3 Information handling

4 Employability, enterprise and citizenship

- 4.6 Citizenship

5 Thinking skills

- 5.3 Applying
- 5.4 Analysing and evaluating

Amplification of these is given in SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*. The level of these skills should be at the same SCQF level of the Unit and be consistent with the SCQF level descriptor. Further information on building in skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work is given in the *Unit Support Notes*.

Administrative information

Published: July 2019 (version 3.0)

Superclass: QA

History of changes to National Unit Specification

| Version | Description of change | Authorised by | Date |
|---------|---|------------------------|-----------|
| 2.0 | Assessment Standards 2.2 and 2.3 removed and numbering updated accordingly. | Qualifications Manager | June 2018 |
| 3.0 | Level changed from National 5 to SCQF level 5. Unit code updated. | Qualifications Manager | July 2019 |
| | | | |
| | | | |

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

Note: readers are advised to check SQA's website: www.sqa.org.uk to ensure they are using the most up-to-date version of the Unit Specification.

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2019