



**Arrangements for:  
National Certificate (NC) in  
Agriculture at SCQF level 6**

**Group Award Code: GG00 46**

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## **Acknowledgement**

SQA acknowledges the valuable contribution that Scotland's colleges have made to the development of National Qualification Group Awards.



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# 1 Introduction

This is the Arrangements Document for the National Certificate in Agriculture at SCQF level 6, which was validated in August 2012. This document includes background information on the development of the Group Award, its aims, guidance on access, details of the Group Award structure, and guidance on delivery.

## 2 Rationale for the development of the Group Award

Several specialist land based colleges in Scotland had successfully offered various different college certificated courses in agriculture for a number of years, with no nationally recognised qualification available. The specialist land based colleges identified there was a need for a National Qualification at SCQF level 6 to complete the progression pathway for candidates studying agriculture. The development of the National Certificate also afforded the QDT the opportunity to ensure that the Unit provision for the industry at this level was updated to reflect changes to practice and advances in technology. This NC compliments the range of agriculture-related awards currently offered by SQA including the Rural Skills awards at SCQF level 4 and 5, the suite of agriculture related Higher National (HN) Qualifications at SCQF level 7 and 8 and the Level 2 and 3 Agriculture Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs).

Candidates will attain a nationally recognised agricultural qualification widely valued by Scottish employers and industry as providing candidates a strong foundation to build technical and vocational skills and knowledge for future employment and/or study.

## 3 Aims of the Group Award

The qualification is aimed at meeting the needs of two distinct potential groups of applicants. This qualification will cater for school leavers who have a strong and genuine interest in agriculture, and it is anticipated that such candidates will have achieved formal school qualifications and consider further education as a route toward full time employment, or progression to higher level or work based qualifications in agriculture. The qualification will also cater for those who are in employment who wish to develop a broader range of agricultural skills for the purposes of Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

### 3.1 Principal aims of the Group Award

The principal aims of the Group Award are to:

- 1 Develop candidates' knowledge of modern agricultural principles and systems.
- 2 Develop candidates' practical livestock skills.
- 3 Develop candidates' practical crop skills.
- 4 Develop candidates' practical agricultural machinery skills.
- 5 Develop candidates knowledge of environmental, legislative and health and safety issues relating to agricultural activities.

- 6 Prepare candidates for progression to further, higher or work based programmes in agriculture.
- 7 Develop candidates' employability skills.
- 8 Develop candidates' understanding of the different agricultural enterprises.

### 3.2 General aims of the Group Award

The general aims of the Group Award are to:

- ◆ provide the opportunity to develop candidates' core and other transferable skills
- ◆ provide academic stimulus and challenge, and to foster an enjoyment of agriculture
- ◆ encourage candidates to develop a positive attitude to their own learning
- ◆ raise awareness of opportunities for employment in the land-based sector
- ◆ develop candidates' transferable skills

### 3.3 Target groups

This programme is open to all prospective candidates and whilst entry is at the discretion of the centre, a strong genuine interest in agriculture would be highly beneficial for candidates.

There is no formal entry requirement for this Group Award however it would be beneficial if candidates have:

- ◆ Standard Grades at general level (SCQF level 4 or above)

or

- ◆ NC in Rural Skills (GF3D 44)

or

- ◆ NPA in Rural Skills (G9CD 45)

Alternatively other relevant qualifications at SCQF level 4 or 5 would be considered.

The recommended Core Skills entry profile is:

Core Skill	SCQF level
Communication	SCQF level 4
Numeracy	SCQF level 4
Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	SCQF level 4
Problem Solving	SCQF level 4
Working with Others	SCQF level 4

Throughout the Group Award, opportunities exist for all candidates to work towards developing all five Core Skills, dependent on delivery and/or Units chosen by centres.

It is recommended that prospective candidates undertaking this award will be suitably selected for study by the centre through an interview process. This will ensure that in addition to academic achievement, consideration of prior learning and experience is taken into account. All candidates will also have an equal and fair opportunity to study the award at the centre. For example, a centre may undertake a candidate entrance assessment including agricultural knowledge and Core Skill assessment and consider these responses alongside academic achievement and agricultural interests and experiences prior to offering a study place at an interview.

### **3.4 Employment opportunities**

A range of employment opportunities are available to you on completion of the NC in Agriculture, including:

- ◆ General farm worker
- ◆ Assistant stock person
- ◆ Assistant dairy person
- ◆ Tractor operator
- ◆ Trainee auctioneer
- ◆ Trainee sales representative
- ◆ Livestock technician

Alternatively, if you complete the NC in Agriculture you may be able to progress to HNC/HND or an apprenticeship programme of study.

## **4 Access to the Group Award**

This new award provides a progression route to the suite of higher level qualifications in agriculture. The award has been designed to enable candidates to develop a broad understanding of the sector and explore agriculture activity through hands-on experience including taking part in farm related activities, investigating enterprises and industry practice, whilst helping to deliver personal agricultural skills development. The award will engage candidates through a hands-on approach and facilitate experiential learning through both delivery and assessment.

As a programme designed to link school leavers to further, higher and vocational education in agriculture, this award is expected to significantly contribute to the employability of candidates on its completion. The broad range of core and transferable skills which candidates have the opportunity to develop, coupled with the vocational hands on practical experience offered throughout this award will improve future job prospects.



## 5 Group Award structure

Candidates will be awarded the NC in Agriculture at SCQF level 6 on successful completion and achievement of all six mandatory credits (36 SCQF points), plus a further six credits (36 SCQF points). Of these, a minimum of four must come from Optional Section 1, ensuring that all candidates will achieve a minimum of 42 SCQF Credit Points at SCQF level 6, the overall level of the award.

The whole award equates to 72 SCQF credit points (12 SQA Unit credits) of learning.

### 5.1 Framework

Qualifications Framework for National Certificate in Agriculture at SCQF level 6.

Unit title	Code	SQA credit value	SCQF level	SCQF credit points
<b>Mandatory Section — All 6 credits required</b>				
Livestock Husbandry, Health and Welfare	H2N4 12	1	6	6
Combinable Crop Production	H28D 12	1	6	6
Tractor Operations and Attachments	H28R 11	1	5	6
Farm Maintenance Skills	H2MV 11	1	5	6
Soils and Fertility	H2N2 12	1	6	6
Grassland Production	H285 12	1	6	6
<b>Optional Section 1 — From 4 to 6 credits required</b>				
Beef and Suckled Calf Production	H2N0 12	1	6	6
Sheep Production	H2N3 12	1	6	6
Dairy Production	H2MY 12	1	6	6
Pig Production	H2MW 12	1	6	6
Calf Rearing Systems	H2MX 12	1	6	6
Milking	H286 12	1	6	6
Poultry Production	H288 12	1	6	6
*Livestock Reproductive and Digestive Systems	HA4T 46	1.5	6	6
Forage Crop Production	H2N8 12	1	6	6
Specialist Crop Production	H28A 12	1	6	6
Crop Production Equipment	H28E 12	1	6	6

Unit title	Code	SQA credit value	SCQF level	SCQF credit points
<b>Optional Section 2 — From 0 to 2 credits required</b>				
Agriculture: Environmental Awareness	H28C 12	1	6	6
Forklift Truck Operation: An Introduction	H28P 11	0.5	5	3
Sheep Shearing	H289 11	0.5	5	3
Tractor Driving	H28B 10	0.5	4	3
Farm Records	H28M 11	0.5	5	3
ATV Operations	FN5A 11	0.5	5	3
Livestock Production	F6AJ 11	1	5	6
Crop Production	F6AK 11	1	5	6
Pesticide Application: An Introduction	H287 11	1	5	6
Accident and Emergency Procedures	F5FK 10	1	4	6
Numeracy Or Numeracy	F3GF 11 H225 75	1 1	5 5	6 6
Numeracy Or Numeracy	F3GF10 H225 74	1 1	5 5	6 6
Communication Or Literacy	F3GB 11 H23W 75	1 1	5 5	6 6
Information and Communication Technology	F3GC 11	1	5	6
<b>Options Section 3 — From 0 to 1 credit required</b>				
Work Placement or Virtual Work Placement	HF88 44* J581 44*	1	4	6
Work Placement or Virtual Work Placement	HF88 45* J581 45*	1	5	6

## 5.2 Mapping information

The content of the Units within the Agriculture Group Award have been mapped against the relevant National Occupational Standards (NOS) produced by Lantra, the Sector Skills Council. These standards are in Livestock Production (2009) and Agricultural Crop Production (2007).

## 5.3 Articulation, professional recognition and credit transfer

A table is provided in Appendix 1 which details where the SCQF level 6 NC in Agriculture sits in relation to other agriculture provision.

There is no professional recognition conferred by the achievement of this award.

Given the level of the NC and the types of candidates most likely to undertake it, it is anticipated that there will be limited situations in which credit transfer would be necessary. However Credit Transfer through

Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) or Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) is possible and centres should consider all such requests on their individual merits. Centres should seek additional guidance from their External Verifier(s) on what evidence would be acceptable for the purposes of Credit Transfer.

## 6 Content and context

The NC in Agriculture at SCQF level 6 is intended for candidates who want to gain further knowledge and practical experience in a range of agriculture systems and areas within the industry and sector. This includes school leavers and mature candidates who wish to gain knowledge and practical experience of agriculture. The NC is designed with the emphasis placed upon developing candidates' personal knowledge, understanding and vocational skills and competencies for prospective employment in the agriculture sector, and/or to allow for progression to further study. The focus is over a broad range of agriculture topics and systems across the seasons of the year with knowledge building and practical skills development intended to be delivered through tasks and activities related to agricultural activity on-farm, farm visits and practical work experience.

The main topics of study, as covered in the mandatory section, include:

- ◆ Livestock Husbandry, Health and Welfare
- ◆ Tractor Operations and Attachments
- ◆ Farm Maintenance Skills
- ◆ Soils and Fertility
- ◆ Crop Production Systems
- ◆ Grassland Production

Important topics covered within the options sections include:

- ◆ Livestock Production System
- ◆ Livestock Reproductive and Digestive Systems
- ◆ Farm Records
- ◆ Agricultural Environmental Awareness

The content reflects the needs of learners, allowing them to gain a wide range of technical knowledge and practical skills required to look after animals, crops and equipment and also to improve their employment prospects in the industry. Health and safety elements are fully embedded in each of the respective Units where appropriate. This programme of study gives the candidate the opportunity to begin developing these essential skills and to gain the underpinning knowledge necessary for employment or to allow for progression to further study at higher levels or work based training.

Candidates who undertake this NC will not only gain understanding, knowledge and skills specific to the agriculture industry, but also have the opportunity to develop transferable skills and qualities such as confidence and personal awareness, that will enable them to undertake further study.

## 6.2 Approaches to delivery and assessment

This Group Award has been developed to facilitate flexible delivery and assessment, which is intended to be of a practical nature wherever possible, reflecting the practical nature of the agriculture industry.

Delivery models will be dependent on the centre and the candidate group. For example, the NC could be offered as a full-time course over one academic year or on a part-time basis for adult returners in a college environment or as stand-alone Units as part of a candidate's individual CPD need. There is flexibility in the Group Award for centres to use an approach which is best suited to their own situation and that of their learners.

Delivery of Units within the Group Award should not be done in isolation as the knowledge, skills and experiences developed in many of the Units can be transferred to others. There are opportunities for integrating learning and assessment across the Units, and where possible a holistic approach should be taken. For example, the Tractor Operations and Attachment Unit could be integrated with the Crop Production Equipment Unit for delivery and assessment purposes. That is, driving and operation of a tractor with a range of attachments could include the attachment of a plough and set up for field operation. Also, the core principles and teaching relating to animal health and welfare in the Livestock Husbandry, Health and Welfare Unit could be easily integrated to any of the livestock production systems Units. For example, monitoring signs of animal health and maintaining healthy livestock in practical tasks and activities.

A student centred, practical and interactive approach to delivery and learning should be adopted throughout. It is important that during delivery, candidates understand the breadth of the agricultural industry including, livestock, soils, cropping, farm machinery and equipment, farm maintenance as well as environmental considerations and legislative requirements.

Seasonality could be a factor in influencing opportunities for candidates to participate in practical activities at any given time and therefore flexibility in delivery and assessment should be considered.

Formative assessment should be developed and widely used through the delivery of the Group Award to gain Unit feedback, reinforce candidates' learning and build their confidence and prepare them for summative assessment. The design of summative assessment should include a range of different approaches.

Although the NC in Agriculture is primarily intended to be practically-focussed, there are opportunities for e-learning which centres could consider. Centres may also consider using e-assessment. Centres wishing to use e-assessment must ensure the national standards is applied to all candidate evidence and that conditions of assessment, including authenticity of candidates work, as specified in the Evidence Requirements of Units are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. Opportunities for e-learning and assessment relate to the delivery and assessment of the knowledge elements of each of the respective Units. For example, within the Livestock Reproductive and Digestive Systems Unit, the digestive and reproductive tracts could be assessed on-line using a drag and drop assessment, or matching/labelling exercise on an appropriate diagram.

The development of on-line underpinning knowledge lessons could also be undertaken in the main livestock and crop production systems Units to allow flexibility in delivery or to complement teaching to candidates.

The NC also contributes to the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence; where the broad aim is to ensure that all learners in Scotland develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they will need if they are to flourish in life, learning and work, now and in the future. This Group Award will enable candidates to become more successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. The range of Units allows for the wider social, moral and environmental issues to be discussed in the context of agriculture and with regard to candidates' personal responsibilities. Examples include animal health and welfare, treatment and disposal of farm waste, pollution control and respect for the countryside and the wider environment.

### Sequence of delivery

Below is a suggested possible schedule of delivery for the NC showing 12 credits delivery across three teaching blocks. The specific sequence and Unit options chosen will depend on the delivering centre.

Unit title	Mandatory Unit/ Optional Unit	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3
Livestock Reproductive and Digestive Systems	O	✓		
Livestock Husbandry, Health and Welfare	M	✓	✓	✓
Tractor Operations and Attachments	M	✓	✓	✓
Farm Maintenance Skills	M	✓	✓	
Soils and Fertility	M	✓		✓
Sheep Production	O		✓	✓
Sheep Shearing	O			✓
Milking	O	✓	✓	
Combinable Crop Production	M	✓	✓	
Grassland Production	M		✓	✓
Work Experience	O		✓	✓
Accident and Emergency Procedures	O	✓		

## 7 General information for centres

### Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website [www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements).

### Internal and external verification

All instruments of assessment used within this/these Group Award(s) should be internally verified, using the appropriate policy within the centre and the guidelines set by SQA.

External verification will be carried out by SQA to ensure that internal assessment is within the national guidelines for these qualifications.

Further information on internal and external verification can be found in *SQA's Guide to Assessment* ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)).

## 8 General information for candidates

The National Certificate (NC) in Agriculture has been designed to provide you with a well-rounded broad foundation in agriculture which meets the demands of the agricultural industry. You will develop relevant hands-on practical skills, and build your competence and understanding in a number of areas. These will include caring for livestock, growing crops, operating farm machines and equipment, maintaining farm structures with respect to the environment and with due regard to farm recording and legislative requirements. The NC in Agriculture allows you to develop a wide range of specialist skills and knowledge which will enhance your potential for employment in the industry and provide you with a strong foundation to progress onto higher education, work based study or employment.

The main aims of the NC are to:

- 1 Develop your knowledge of modern agricultural principles and systems.
- 2 Develop your practical livestock skills.
- 3 Develop your practical crop skills.
- 4 Develop your practical agricultural machinery skills.
- 5 Develop your knowledge of environmental, legislative and health and safety issues relating to agricultural activities.
- 6 Prepare you for progression to further, higher or work based programmes in agriculture.
- 7 Develop your employability skills.
- 8 Develop your understanding of the different agricultural enterprises.

A variety of learning approaches may be used during the delivery of the NC, for example, lectures, group and project work, farm visits and practical activities with farm livestock, equipment both in the field and workshop. These teaching methods are usually supported with supporting notes, directed study, flexible online learning materials and by assignment and project work. You will also be given the opportunity to develop the Core Skills of *Communication, Numeracy, Information and Communication Technology, Problem Solving* and *Working with Others* during the delivery and assessment of the NC.

The NC in Agriculture consists of 12 National Unit credits (72 SCQF credit points). You may be assessed through the use of projects, tests and assignments, some of which may be online. Your practical skills will be assessed through exercises in which you demonstrate competence in the practical activity involved. To successfully achieve the National Certificate you must achieve 12 Unit credits. There are six mandatory Unit credits, with a further six Unit credits required, with subjects dependent on what is offered by your centre.

## 9 Glossary of terms

**SCQF:** This stands for the Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework, which is a new way of speaking about qualifications and how they inter-relate. We use SCQF terminology throughout this guide to refer to credits and levels. For further information on the SCQF visit the SCQF website at [www.scqf.org.uk](http://www.scqf.org.uk)

**SCQF credit points:** One SCQF credit point equates to 10 hours of learning. NQ Units at SCQF levels 2–6 are worth 6 SCQF credit points, NQ Units at level 7 are worth 8 SCQF points.

**SCQF levels:** The SCQF covers 12 levels of learning. National Qualification Group Awards are available at SCQF levels 2-6 and will normally be made up of National Units which are available from SCQF levels 2–7.

**Dedicated Unit to cover Core Skills:** This is a non-subject Unit that is written to cover one or more particular Core Skills.

**Embedded Core Skills:** This is where the development of a Core Skill is incorporated into the Unit and where the Unit assessment also covers the requirements of Core Skill assessment at a particular level.

**Signposted Core Skills:** This refers to the opportunities to develop a particular Core Skill at a specified level that lie outwith automatic certification.

**Qualification Design Team:** The QDT works in conjunction with a Qualification Manager/Development Manager to steer the development of the National Certificate/National Progression Award from its inception/revision through to validation. The group is made up of key stakeholders representing the interests of centres, employers, universities and other relevant organisations.



**Consortium-devised National Certificates/National Progression Awards** are those developments or revisions undertaken by a group of centres in partnership with SQA.

## **10 Appendices**

Appendix 1: Progression Table

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