



# **Assessment Exemplar for Higher National Units**

**Guidance note: Introduction and How to Generate Evidence**

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## 1 Introduction

This pack must be used in conjunction with a copy of the Unit specification which details the standard of performance expected of the candidate. A copy of the Unit specification can be obtained from SQA.

This pack supplements the assessment guidelines and support notes of the Unit specification. It aims to provide an example of assessment that is valid, reliable and practicable. The assessment task(s) detailed in this pack correspond to the assessment guidelines outlined in the Unit specification.

Whilst the example provided is intended for guidance, it may also be used as an assessment instrument, as long as the centre ensures the integrity and confidentiality of the assessment in the first and subsequent years of use and between centres. It may be used in a variety of ways including, for example:

- ◆ as an assessment instrument, in whole or in part
- ◆ to exemplify the standard of performance expected of candidates achieving the Unit, ie as a benchmark
- ◆ to help you develop your own assessment for the Unit
- ◆ to help you develop valid and practicable assessments for other Units within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes
- ◆ to give you new ideas
- ◆ as a staff development tool

It is important that you make sure that the assessment exemplar is used in a context appropriate to the delivery of the Unit and to the Group Award of which it forms a part. Although the content of this exemplar has been prior verified as a suitable instrument of assessment, you should note that using this assessment exemplar does not automatically guarantee successful external verification. It is still your responsibility to make sure that all the appropriate internal quality assurance procedures are satisfactorily completed. For example, a valid, effective and approved internal verification system must be in use at your centre.

### Recommended reading

Before using this material you might find it useful to look at some of our other publications, in particular:

- ◆ *Guide to Assessment*
- ◆ *Introduction to Assessment Arrangements for Schools and Colleges*
- ◆ *SQA's Quality Framework: a guide for centres*

Details of these and other SQA publications are available on our website. Most publications can be downloaded free of charge from our website at: **www.sqa.org.uk** on the 'Publications, Sales and Downloads' section. If you require a publication to be sent to you, please telephone our Business Development and Customer Support Team on 0303 333 0330 quoting the product code and, where a charge is applicable, have a purchase order number or credit card details available.

Details of all HN assessment exemplars published after April 2004 are listed on our website on the HN subject-specific pages. Your centre's SQA or HN Co-ordinator will have access to these HN assessment exemplars on SQA's secure website. Please approach them for copies. However, if you require a paper copy you can obtain one from SQA's Business Development and Customer Support Team, Scottish Qualifications Authority, The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow, G2 8DQ (telephone: 0303 333 0330 or fax: 0845 213 5000).

## 2 How to generate evidence

### Introduction

The Scottish Qualifications Authority's system of assessment measures the evidence of a candidate's attainment of knowledge, understanding and skills against defined criteria. The assessment process must allow for evidence of each candidate's performance to be generated and collected. This evidence must then be judged against the standards set out in the Unit specification. To achieve the Unit the candidate must successfully meet the standards and there must be evidence to prove this.

The Unit specification defines the criteria you need to use to judge whether or not the candidate has met the standards. All Units have the following:

### Outcomes

These tell you what the candidate actually has to do.

### Knowledge and/or skills

This section details the essential knowledge and skills which the candidate must attain in order to achieve each Outcome, combination of Outcomes or for the Unit as a whole.

### Evidence Requirements

Evidence Requirements can be written for each Outcome, for a combination of Outcomes, or for the Unit as a whole. There is no standard format for writing Evidence Requirements. Provided that they state clearly and unambiguously the type, standard and amount of evidence which candidates have to produce in order to be judged competent, the Evidence Requirements can be written in the format which will be most easily understood by users of the Unit.

**Note:** The national standard of achievement expected, which was previously specified as Performance Criteria, is now stated in the Evidence Requirements.

Where it is not possible to cover all the items listed under knowledge and/or skills through holistic assessment, sampling can be used as a method of gaining additional evidence. Sampling may also sometimes be an appropriate method of assessing very knowledge-based Units. This type of assessment must always be carried out in supervised conditions.

Where sampling is used, the Evidence Requirements must clearly state:

- ◆ The standard of evidence required for each knowledge and/or skills item so that satisfactory performance can be judged whichever items are sampled on any one occasion.
- ◆ The proportion of knowledge and/or skills which can be sampled.

- ◆ Whether any item(s) must be included in each assessment, ie if it is crucial to the achievement of the Outcome(s) or to an embedded Core Skill.
- ◆ The fact that a different sample should be chosen on each assessment occasion to prevent candidates being able to foresee what they will be asked.
- ◆ The conditions of assessment.

## Assessment guidelines

This section should give guidance on how best to conduct the assessment to generate the evidence required, eg recommending the use of a particular assessment instrument. It should include guidance on how to integrate the assessment of the whole Outcome or, if appropriate, how to link assessment holistically with other Outcomes in the Unit. Like Evidence Requirements, assessment guidelines can be written for each Outcome, a combination of Outcomes, or for the Unit as a whole.

It is important to realise that it is up to the assessor to judge when and if the candidate has satisfactorily met the standards. This decision should be based on the quality and correct quantity of evidence collected, set against the standards in the Unit.

The assessment instrument in this pack should not create any unnecessary barriers to achievement for open/distance learning delivery and the additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account. You may need to adapt it so that you can assess candidates with additional support needs or candidates who are undertaking the Unit on an open/distance learning basis. However, whilst taking into account the needs of the candidate concerned, the methods of assessment you choose must still be valid, reliable and practicable. If you have any questions or problems, or if you are in any doubt as to whether or not the alternative assessment you have chosen is still valid, please telephone the Business Development and Customer Support Team at the Scottish Qualifications Authority on: 0303 333 0330.

## Core Skills

The Unit specification will detail the Core Skills covered within the Unit. Where Core Skills have been embedded in a Unit specification and an assessor wishes to use an alternative method of assessment, she/he must ensure that the assessment generates the Evidence Requirements specified in the Unit specification. It is recommended that the centre seek prior verification for the alternative method to ensure that the Core Skill is still covered.