



Writing National Units:

Guide for writers

Important Note: This guide should only be used for writing National Units. The [‘Handbook for writing Higher National Units and Higher National Graded units’](#) published in March 2019 should be used for any new developments or revisions to HN units.

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Using this guide

This document has been created to provide guidance to individuals involved in writing National Units for SQA. It has four sections:

1 Unit quality: Getting it right first time

This section of the guide provides the information you will need to understand how to write units of the quality and standard required by SQA.

2 Unit specification: Overview

This section provides an overview of the information within the unit specification. It also tells you how to complete the 'General information' section of the unit specifications.

3 Writing National Units: Statement of standards and support notes

This section outlines how to write the statement of standards and support notes. It also provides links to the most up-to-date Unit Specification shell, and examples of well written units that have met our quality standards.

4 Additional information

This section of the guidance contains the additional information you will need to refer to when writing the units. There is a link to the SQA Academy training site, which will complement the writing process. The information available online will include:

- ◆ Unit Quality Checklist
- ◆ SCQF level descriptors
- ◆ Core Skills Framework
- ◆ Essential Skills Toolkit
- ◆ Guidance on equality and inclusion
- ◆ Inclusion of information relating to National Occupational Standards

1 Unit quality: Getting it right first time

Introduction

The main aim of this guide is to provide important advice and guidance on the key aspects of writing a good unit specification.

At the beginning of the writing process you will be provided with a writing brief for the unit specification. This will hold all the essential information you will need to develop the unit specification, including:

- ♦ the purpose of the unit
- ♦ the progression information
- ♦ suggested content of the unit
- ♦ information on related units and related National Occupational Standards

The writing brief will provide you with a basis for the unit specification; it won't hold all of the information, but it will form the starting point for your writing, and this guide will help you take things further. Having read this guide, you should be able to:

- ♦ understand what makes a good unit specification and how to produce it from the writing brief given
- ♦ write units in plain English
- ♦ write units which meet the standards of the subject area to the required level
- ♦ understand your obligations in terms of equality, inclusion and disability legislation
- ♦ include Core Skills and other essential skills
- ♦ understand the various sections of the unit specification and their individual functions
- ♦ produce material that complies with SQA's Copyright Policy

What is a unit specification?

The unit specification is an important document which defines the boundaries within which a learner is assessed, and the standards to which assessment must be made. The unit specification is not primarily concerned with material for learning and teaching: it is a statement of national standards of assessment or achievement.

Unit specifications are made up of three sections:

General information: This section sets out the general and administrative information about the unit. It should summarise what the unit is about and include

the key points, ie the credit value, recommended entry, a summary of the unit and the outcomes, etc.

Statement of standards: This is the mandatory part of the unit specification. This section contains information which tells the reader the outcomes that have to be achieved, the standard of achievement which must be reached and what evidence must be produced to successfully complete the unit.

Support notes: Information provided in the support notes doesn't have any mandatory force — it's provided for guidance on delivering the unit. The support notes section can be the most useful part of the unit specification for users. It is an opportunity to expand on the information given in the statement of standards and give clear advice on all aspects of delivery.

Planning and writing from the brief

Why should you plan?

You should always plan before you write a unit. You need to be clear about the overall purpose of the unit, and must bear in mind that you will need to ensure that the unit is as inclusive as possible.

You should not underestimate the time it takes to write units to the required standard. Planning will help you think about the work you have to do, and will save you time later.

The writing brief

You will be given a writing brief. In most instances, the brief will be written by the Qualifications Development Team (QDT) who are responsible for overseeing the development of the Group Award or units and are therefore best placed to advise on the content of the units you have been asked to develop.

It is important to stick to the content of the brief when you're developing the unit. This will avoid duplication with other units, and ensure the unit is the appropriate level and demand.

Remember, though, that the information in the writing brief serves only as the basis of the unit. In any instances where you feel that there may be issues with the brief that could cause problems with the unit specification, you should raise them with the contact named in the brief.

Getting started

Once you have received the writing brief there is a temptation to start immediately, but this is not always good practice. It could result in a lack of coherence in the unit, with substantial revisions having to be made later.

You will need to think about the balance between:

- ◆ level
- ◆ content
- ◆ delivery
- ◆ assessment
- ◆ notional design length of the unit

The plan you draw up might also provide a basis for writing the support notes for the unit.

Think about the content of the unit and what you want learners to be able to do as a result of having completed it, ie the outcomes of their learning. Even at this early stage, you may be able to begin to get a feel for whether the unit could be assessed holistically, or whether it will need to be assessed sequentially. You will also need to think about what evidence learners will need to demonstrate their competence. Try to work out the sequence of outcomes that is most logical for delivery and assessment.

You should also bear in mind that:

- ◆ outcomes and Performance Criteria (for units that have PCs) should be written in sequence, ie in the order the learner will have to tackle them. This will make the job of writing easier, and will enhance the coherence and logic of the unit as a whole.
- ◆ You will need to check that the evidence requirements cover everything in the outcome/unit, and that they explain clearly exactly what the candidate has to do and to what standard. They should also indicate how much evidence is required to demonstrate this, and the conditions in which assessment should be carried out.
- ◆ The assessment for the unit should promote efficient and effective gathering of evidence.
- ◆ Unit assessment should be accessible for learners, and manageable for learners and centres.
- ◆ Unnecessary duplication of assessment should be avoided.
- ◆ Holistic assessment should be encouraged, where appropriate.
- ◆ Opportunities for e-assessment and ICT supported assessment should be encouraged, where appropriate.

By studying the brief and planning for the unit, you will be clearer about its main objectives and scope, and writing individual parts of the unit may become easier. It is also much easier to sift information, highlight the critical aspects of

performance and keep the original intentions of the unit in perspective at all times.

Reviewing your writing

During the writing process you should review what you have written constantly to enhance coherence. For example, check that the evidence requirements match what is needed and are unambiguous, that the content of the unit links back to the brief, summary statement/Unit purpose and title of the unit, and that no unnecessary barriers to access have been built in.

Re-write outcomes where necessary. Sometimes, after writing other sections of the standards, an outcome may not express what you originally intended it to. It is normally easier to re-write the outcome than to re-write everything else.

It is a good idea to have a network of contacts from whom you can get feedback while writing the unit. Feedback could come, for example, from the design team of the qualification. If you are writing the unit as part of a sequence in which the remaining units are written by other writers, you could ask them for comment — keeping in contact could help resolve any issues of overlap and progression. The network does not have to be large, but it is a good way of testing out the coherence and practicability of units, particularly in relation to assessment and to the balance between content and the timescale for delivery.

The importance of quality

Quality is an extremely important consideration — remember that all SQA unit specifications set out national standards.

There are two main aspects of unit quality that should be uppermost in your mind: quality of the presentation and the quality of content.

Presentation

SQA has a number of different unit specifications, which serve different qualification types. Use the correct template when writing your unit, so that it is presented in the correct format for publishing. Templates change from time to time, so please refer to the correct part of Section 3 and 4 of this guide for the link to the most up to date unit template for your qualification type.

Content

Clarity, coherence and accessibility are important. Above all, the content of the unit must be capable of being understood by others and be interpreted in exactly the same way by all users. For this reason, you should always try to write as simply and clearly as possible.

Once the unit has been written, it should be clear what the learner must be able to do and what evidence they need to provide to demonstrate their competence.

It is important to remember that:

- ◆ The statement of standards must contain clear and unambiguous statements which reflect national standards of achievement and must not impose unnecessary barriers to access or achievement.
- ◆ The aims and objectives of the unit must be appropriate to the target audience and to the level at which the unit is placed in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Further information on the SCQF is given later in this guide.

There is a link to a unit checklist in Section 5 Additional Information. This will help you ensure that you have met the quality criteria. It is important that you review your final unit alongside this checklist before submitting the unit to SQA.

The overall quality of the unit depends on these checks being made. Any ambiguity in the wording of a unit undermines national consistency in approaches to assessment.

Quality assurance

Once a unit has been written and submitted to us, we will put it through a series of quality assurance steps to ensure the final published unit specification meets the standard required.

The quality assurance steps involve a series of checks to ensure that it has been checked for technical accuracy and that it has been approved by an independent subject specialist. It may be necessary for us to contact you to clarify any issues. Normally, though, submitted work should be in final draft.

Once the quality assurance steps have been completed, the unit progresses through our validation process. At the same time, the unit will be audited for any claims for embedded Core Skills.

Core and other essential skills

Core Skills are used as the basis for generic skills development in Higher National and National Qualifications.

About Core Skills

There are five Core Skills: Communication, Numeracy, Information and Communication Technology, Problem Solving and Working with Others. Each Core Skill is available at SCQF levels 2 to 6. The activities and qualities that make up each Core Skill are identified in the Core Skills Framework, which you can find at <http://www.sqa.org.uk/coreskills>.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills should be identified once the subject content of the unit has been established. This will enable you to see which Core Skills areas develop naturally and consider ways to develop other Core Skills through teaching and learning strategies.

Core Skills can be either signposted or embedded in units:

- ◆ Signposted — opportunities to develop Core Skills arise in learning and teaching but are not automatically certificated.
- ◆ Embedded — the assessment evidence for the unit also includes full evidence for complete Core Skill or Core Skill components. In this case, a learner successfully completing the unit will be automatically certificated for the Core Skill. (This depends on the unit having been successfully audited and validated for Core Skills certification.)

Learners will naturally use and develop aspects of some of the Core Skills as they work through the assessment requirements for a unit. Additional opportunities to develop Core Skills could be achieved through the chosen method of learning and teaching for the unit. For example, group work, group discussions, and use of technology. Identifying and recording Core Skills development opportunities is referred to as 'signposting'.

Embedded or naturally occurring Core Skills?

After you have written the unit you may decide that one or more Core Skills is naturally occurring and should therefore be embedded within the unit. Provided that the unit is successfully audited and validated for Core Skill certification, learners who successfully complete the unit will be automatically certificated for the Core Skill or the Core Skill component.

If you are considering embedding a Core Skill in the unit (which would lead to a claim for automatic certification of that Core Skill), the key questions are:

- ◆ Is the Core Skill likely to form a natural part of the unit?

- ◆ Is it consistent with the other outcomes?
- ◆ Can it reasonably be included without distorting the unit, or creating unnecessary barriers to achieving the unit?

Normally, you would aim to embed a Core Skill at the same level as the unit. Sometimes, you may wish to embed a Core Skill which is one or two levels below the level of the unit. This does not affect the level of the unit.

About other essential skills

These are the skills which, although not formally assessed, add value to qualifications and enable learners to develop themselves in broader terms. There are many different essential skills, but the following areas should provide a focus:

- ◆ enterprise
- ◆ employability
- ◆ sustainable development
- ◆ citizenship

Where appropriate, these other skills areas should be considered when writing a unit.

Incorporating other essential skills in units is about looking for opportunities for learners to develop these skills. It's about considering where these skills can be incorporated or developed naturally in the learning, and highlighting these opportunities.

For further information, it is useful to refer to our document *Using the Curriculum Tools for Enterprise, Employability, Sustainable Development and Citizenship: A Guide for unit Writers* (May 2009). Also see *Introducing essential skills: adding value to qualifications* (June 2010). Both these documents are available as links in Section 5: Additional Information.

Equality and inclusion

The Equality Act (2010) places clear duties on SQA not to discriminate against people who wish to be or who are learners for SQA's qualifications because of their disability, race, age, religion or belief, sex, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity or sexual orientation (known as the protected characteristics).

This means that none of SQA's qualifications can be unlawfully discriminatory, and that SQA must make reasonable adjustments for disabled learners consistent with maintaining the integrity of SQA's qualifications.

To ensure that SQA meets these legal duties in a robust and transparent way, a new process and supporting guidance have been developed. See the link in Section 5: Additional Information of this guide for details.

SQA credit values and SCQF levels

SQA Units are expressed in both SQA credit values and SCQF credit points and level. The writing brief will already have determined the SQA credit value and the SCQF credit points and level of the unit you are writing.

It is important that you are aware of the notional hours of learning involved, so you can write units that meet the required level of challenge.

About SQA credit values and SCQF credit points

The credit value allocated to a unit gives an indication of the contribution the unit makes to an SQA Group Award. An SQA credit value of 1 given to an SQA Unit represents approximately 40 hours of programmed learning, teaching and assessment.

SQA credit values are allocated as follows:

10 hours: 0.25 credits

20 hours: 0.5 credits

40 hours: 1.0 credit

60 hours: 1.5 credits

80 hours: 2 credits

120 hours: 3 credits

The norm for units is one credit with a notional design length of 40 hours.

All SQA qualifications also carry SCQF credit points. The SCQF brings all Scottish qualifications into a single framework ranging from Access 1 to doctorates. It includes degrees, HNC/Ds, National Qualifications, and SVQs.

In the SCQF, every 10 hours of learning equates to 1 SCQF credit point. Most National Units at SCQF levels 1 to 6 are made up of 6 SCQF credit points, or a notional 60 hours of learning. Of these 60 hours, 40 involve programmed learning, such as class contact and assessment. The other 20 hours includes the expected time that an individual learner will be expected to contribute to his/her learning through independent study, such as reading and revision for assessment. For National Units at these levels, it is expected that learners require an additional half of the time required for programmed learning in order to prepare them to undertake a successful learning experience.

National Units at SCQF level 7, however, are made up of 8 SCQF credit points, or a notional 80 hours of learning. This reflects the fact that SCQF level 7 is the start point for higher education in the framework, and this involves a higher and often deeper level of learning than that undertaken at the lower levels. As such, learning at SCQF level 7 and above places more demands on the learner,

including the need for a higher proportion of independent study, which is reflected in the overall learning time.

SCQF levels

Information about SCQF levels may be found in the *SCQF Handbook: User Guide* (published 2009). This is an extract from the Handbook:

The SCQF Level Descriptors, which have five characteristics, provide a reference point for determining the level of a qualification, learning programme, module or unit of learning or for the recognition of prior learning. They are not intended to give precise or comprehensive statements of required learning for individual qualifications. The SCQF Level Descriptors allow broad comparisons to be made between qualifications and learning programmes achieved in different contexts. They apply to learning based on learning outcomes that is subject to reliable and valid methods of quality-assured assessment.

SCQF Level Descriptors are generic statements that describe the characteristics and expected performance at each level of the Framework and relate to learning outcomes. The five characteristics are:

- ◆ Knowledge and understanding
- ◆ Practice (applied knowledge and understanding)
- ◆ Generic cognitive skills, such as evaluation and critical analysis
- ◆ Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills
- ◆ Autonomy, accountability and working with others.

As some characteristics may not be relevant for particular qualifications or learning programmes they should not be regarded as a required 'checklist'. There is no expectation that learning outcomes in qualifications and learning programmes will cover all of the characteristics of an SCQF level as described in the Level Descriptors.

All units should be written in language that is consistent with the language of the SCQF Level Descriptors for the level of the unit. In addition, the level of demand of the unit should comply with the implied level of demand of the appropriate level descriptors.

Throughout the writing of the unit specification you need to be aware of the SCQF level you are writing for.

Generally, the writing brief will outline the SCQF level required. When you are proposing the allocation of SCQF levels to units, you must refer to the SCQF level descriptors as reference.

2 Unit specification: Overview

This section follows the headings within the unit specification. The guidance given under each heading explains what you should include in each section.

General information section of the unit specification

This section sets out the general and administrative information about the unit. It should summarise what the unit is about including the key points, the credit value, recommended entry, a summary of the unit and the outcomes.

The unit title

The writing brief will contain a unit title. In most cases, this will be a working title. If this does not reflect the content of the unit, you may suggest alternative titles.

The most important feature of a good unit title is that it gives a clear indication of what the unit is about. A good title should reflect what learners are doing or the skills or knowledge they will have demonstrated on achieving the unit.

Remember that the title is often the first (and perhaps only) thing that some people will read before deciding whether to use the unit. You should try to ensure that the title indicates clearly the area of skills and/or knowledge covered.

Some key tips:

- ◆ Don't use 'the' at the start of the title. This will help with alphabetical listings. For example, 'Using Accounting Information' would be better than 'The Use of Accounting Information'.
- ◆ Where the unit is 'An introduction...' or 'Introduction to...' the main part of the title should be first. Then use a colon, followed by 'An Introduction'. For example, you could title a unit 'Working in a Business Enterprise: An Introduction'.
- ◆ Where a unit is part of a Course and the title relates clearly to the subject area, there is no need for the Course stem to be part of the title. For example, 'Geography: Geographical Study (Advanced Higher)' would be better as 'Geographical Study (Advanced Higher)'.
- ◆ Where the title of a unit could relate to a number of different subjects and it is not clear from the unit title which subject area the unit belongs to, the Course title should be inserted as a stem (followed by a colon). For example French: Language (Higher).
- ◆ Where unit titles have sub-divisions of the title within them, the subdivision should be introduced by a colon. For example, Manufacturing Systems: Characteristics.
- ◆ Don't use brackets in unit titles — this is because the level will appear in brackets at the end of each title.

- ◆ You should not use numbers in a title to indicate progression through different levels. Progression will be shown by the level of the unit.

Unit code

The unit code is allocated by SQA.

Writing the unit purpose

This part of the unit specification should be written to give the reader a clear idea of the content and objectives of the unit. It will be based on the writing brief for the unit.

The text that appears here may be used for different purposes, so it should be able to be separated from the remainder of the unit specification — eg for school or college handbooks/prospectuses, guidance databases, providing summary information for admissions to higher education and further education courses, or information for employers.

The unit purpose should be as comprehensive as possible, but must avoid claims that go beyond what is covered in the unit. It should give an overview of the content, indicate the level/depth/complexity of knowledge and skills to be achieved and the learner target group for the unit. (The information about the knowledge and skills could be shown by cross-referencing to other standards, eg what the unit might prepare the learner for in future.) The summary should also place the unit clearly in its context. Examples are given in the relevant areas of Section 3 and 4 of this guide.

Credit points and level

You should specify the SQA credit value and SCQF credit points and level in this section: For example:

Credit value: 1 HN Credit at SCQF level 7 (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7*)

Recommended entry to the unit

Under this heading you will give guidance on the level of knowledge, skills, experience or the qualifications that learners should have achieved before they start the unit, if they are to be able to achieve the unit within the time allotted.

Entry is always at the discretion of the centre, and you should only recommend prior knowledge and experience if it is appropriate because some learners may not have the same access to prior learning as other learners and may then be denied access to a qualification. It is helpful to give examples of the type and level of qualification that might demonstrate prior knowledge and skills, and examples of other kinds of experience that might also indicate this.

For example, you might write a statement like this:

‘While entry is at the discretion of the centre, learners would normally be expected to have attained one of the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ Standard Grade History at Credit level
- ◆ Intermediate 2 History’

Or like this:

‘While entry is at the discretion of the centres, learners would normally be expected to have attained one of the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ Music and Image — Graphics (SCQF level 7)
- ◆ Music and Image: Video (SCQF level 7)’

Where no prior knowledge or experience is required, you should insert this statement:

‘Entry is at the discretion of the centre.’

You can supplement this with additional information about any useful skills which might be helpful:

‘Entry is at the discretion of the centre. Learners doing this unit do not need prior knowledge or experience of Sociology. However, good skills in research and analysis would be an advantage.’

Any examples of qualifications required will normally be at no more than one SCQF level below the unit you have written. Where the unit is a direct progression from another unit, the precursor unit should always be indicated.

The recommended entry is not a mandatory requirement for the learner. However it does reflect your intentions about the starting point for delivery of the unit and the estimated time needed for achievement by the learner. It should be taken in to account by the people delivering the unit.

Core Skills

Under this heading in the General information section, you should indicate clearly which Core Skills are signposted or embedded (automatically certificated). If you feel that there should be automatic certification of Core Skills, inform the Qualification Manager. He or she will arrange to have this information inserted after Core Skills validation.

Where no Core Skill or Core Skill component is embedded in a unit, you should use the default statement:

‘There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill component in this unit.’

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the support notes of this unit specification.

You should write the detail of how Core Skills can be developed into the support notes. Any assessment evidence required for embedded Core Skills should be stated in the evidence requirements.

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.

Statement of standards and support notes sections of the unit specification

Our guidance on writing the statement of standards and support notes sections for each qualification family is in Section 3 and 4. Please refer to these areas during the writing process.

3 Writing National Units: Statement of standards and support notes

This section outlines:

- ◆ Writing the statement of standards section of the National Unit specification
- ◆ Writing support notes section of the National Unit specification
- ◆ National Unit specification shell
- ◆ National Unit exemplar

Writing the statement of standards section of the National Unit specification

The statement of standards section is the mandatory part of a National Unit specification. It tells the reader the outcomes that have to be achieved, the standard of achievement that is expected, and what evidence must be produced. Learners must produce sufficient evidence to demonstrate achievement of everything in the standards.

In SQA National Units, the statement of standards comprises:

- ◆ outcomes
- ◆ Performance criteria
- ◆ Evidence requirements

The outcomes in a unit specification tell the reader precisely what a learner will be able to do. The main feature of an outcome is that it is written in terms of final output or achievement. It should always be possible to preface the wording with the phrase 'The learner will be able to ...' For example:

- ◆ Identify a strategy for solving a non-routine problem.
- ◆ Provide oral translations of complex texts.
- ◆ Portray ideas and emotions through movement.
- ◆ Investigate ways in which equal opportunities are promoted in society.

As a guide, a unit will probably have between two and five outcomes. This is not a hard-and-fast rule, but a recommendation drawn from experience. A large number of outcomes leads to fragmentation and may reduce opportunities for holistic assessment. (Holistic assessment is encouraged, not least because it provides the best experience for learners.)

The number of outcomes is less important than whether the outcomes are necessary and whether or not they state the competence or achievement they set out to express.

Generally, it is better to have fewer outcomes — this makes it easier to deliver the unit and helps keep assessment and workload within reasonable boundaries.

outcomes should clearly state the skills or knowledge that must be demonstrated by learners; there should be a clear link between different outcomes in the unit specification; and there should be a clear link between the outcomes and the summary and title.

When writing outcomes it is useful to ask yourself:

- ◆ What has to be done, and why is it necessary?
- ◆ What evidence will need to be presented?
- ◆ How will it be produced?

This will help you to ensure that the outcome is clear and precise.

Outcomes must be capable of being assessed. This is why it's important to select a suitable verb. Some verbs whose meaning is ambiguous should be avoided, for example:

Assess: This has connotations of formal assessment.

Know: But how do learners show that they know something, and what kind of knowledge is required? Do you mean explain? Would it be clearer to say 'use knowledge to evaluate'? State exactly what you mean so that there can be no doubt.

Understand: The same questions arise as for 'know'. It's better to use a verb that tells learners exactly what they should be able to do to demonstrate their understanding.

Demonstrate: Whether this verb works depends on what is being demonstrated. For example, if learners are required to demonstrate their knowledge, they can do so by answering questions on specific topics or giving a practical demonstration. If, however, a learner is asked to demonstrate understanding, what would you be asking them to do? If you're asking them to analyse, evaluate, etc, it would be better to say this.

Illustrate: This word should only be used where graphical illustration is required, for example in the context of art and design units.

An outcome should not specify reference to a particular means of communication, eg written or oral, unless it is essential to demonstrating the competence.

Performance criteria (PCs)

The Performance criteria set the standard of achievement expected and give more information about what a learner must do to achieve the outcome.

There is no rule for how many PCs an outcome should have, though there are often three to six. If there are only one or two, then you could question the validity of the outcome. If the number rises to, say, eight or nine, have you tried to squash into one outcome content that should really be divided into two?

The number of PCs will depend on the nature of the outcome and the kinds of demands being made of learners. The PCs should all be essential and should 'add up' to the outcome. They should not contain anything more than is suggested by the outcome, or include content that goes beyond it.

Performance criteria should:

- ◆ Always derive directly from the outcome, and relate only to what is essential to demonstrate competence.
- ◆ Contribute to the holistic assessment of the outcome or unit and not be written in a way that requires a separate assessment instrument for each performance criterion.
- ◆ Set out the aspects of a learner's performance that are required to demonstrate achievement and meet the outcome (critical aspects). Any information that is critical to achieving competence in the outcome should be written into the PC.
- ◆ Describe either the way the learner carries out the activity described in the outcome (process), or whatever is produced as a result of that activity (product).
- ◆ Give a clear indication of the standard or quality of performance that is expected. For this reason, each PC may have an evaluative word or phrase, making clear that a certain standard of achievement must be demonstrated. Where a single word is used to indicate the standard (eg correct, where an answer can only be right or wrong) the meaning must be clear to others and not open to subjective interpretation.

Examples of performance criteria

- ◆ Describe the main theoretical perspectives in Sociology clearly and accurately.
- ◆ The main stylistic features of the selected music are identified correctly.
- ◆ Explain how customer relationships are established and maintained.
- ◆ Identify action points for future development of own skills.

Performance criteria can be written in a number of ways but, above all, they must be clear and unambiguous — it is more important to give clear and unambiguous information than to worry about the number of words. You should, though, be consistent in the way you express performance criteria throughout the unit.

When you are writing performance criteria, you should consider:

- ◆ What are the critical aspects of the activity defined in the outcome?
- ◆ How can you measure whether an acceptable standard of performance has been achieved?

Remember the limitations placed on the time that can be spent on unit assessment. Too many PC could mean a heavier workload for both learners and staff. If your PC greatly increase the time needed for assessment, this may result in the unit not being validated. Each PC must therefore be critical to the outcome (ie it must be an essential part of the definition of what it is to be competent in that outcome).

Evidence requirements for this unit

This section must state clearly and unambiguously exactly what learners have to do, and to what standard, to demonstrate that they have achieved the unit or outcome, and how much evidence is required.

Evidence requirements should:

- ◆ Give information about the types and standard of evidence that learners must provide.
- ◆ Detail the amount of evidence/quality of evidence.
- ◆ Detail the number of assessment occasions (ie is assessment appropriate at different points throughout in the unit or on one assessment occasion?)
- ◆ Detail the conditions of assessment — the mode of assessment should not be prescriptive and should be left as open and flexible as possible. For example, the evidence requirements should be written in such a way as to allow for e-assessment and electronic evidence, where appropriate.
- ◆ Specify any restrictions on how evidence can be generated to ensure that a valid and reliable assessment of a learner's achievement can be made. For example, some evidence may have to be generated in a real or simulated work environment.

It is important to remember in your planning that unit assessments must be manageable for learners and centres.

Sampling of content in unit assessment

The production of evidence, direct or inferred, for all outcomes and PC is required for unit assessment. outcomes and PC cannot be sampled: all outcomes and PC must be covered on each assessment occasion. However, sampling of content can be considered when designing unit assessments. Particularly in knowledge-based units, you may be using some kind of sampling of content in order to be able to infer that a candidate would be competent in those parts of the unit content not assessed on that particular occasion.

Where sampling is used it is normally carried out in supervised conditions and a different sample chosen on each assessment occasion so that learners are not able to predict what they will be asked. If though, there are certain knowledge and skills which must not be sampled then this should be stated in the evidence requirements. In relation to sampling, the evidence requirements should specify clearly:

- ◆ whether any items should be included on each assessment occasion and which they are — this will apply if the unit contains items which are considered crucial to the achievement of the competence for the unit or if the unit has an embedded Core Skill
- ◆ that a different sample of questions — where the same areas are covered in each assessment — should be chosen on each assessment occasion (apart from those items which must be assessed on every occasion)

The conditions of assessment

The conditions of assessment may include one or more of the following:

- ◆ Closed-book. This means no materials are allowed in the assessment.
- ◆ Open-book. This means learners are allowed access to materials. Details of prescribed materials could be given if appropriate. This includes the type (eg books, notes), the amount (eg one A4 side, two text books), any named text (eg a French dictionary), or any other sources of information (eg a cached internet site).
- ◆ Unseen. This normally means the learner will not have seen the assessment in advance. There might be instances where part of the assessment is seen and part unseen. For example, learners might be asked to look at a case study in advance and then answer unseen questions on it later. Unseen or partially unseen assessments are required when sampling is used to assess knowledge.
- ◆ Supervised/invigilated. This should be stipulated when authentication of the learners' work is necessary. Supervised conditions may be required for open or closed-book assessment. When sampling is used, the assessment must be under supervised conditions.
- ◆ Timed. This means that learners must complete the assessment in a given time. If using this condition, you (and validation panel members) must be satisfied that it is necessary to meeting the standard required. For example, in a travel Unit, learners might have to find information on a travel package quickly, as this would be a requirement in the workplace; or in a Word Processing unit learners might have to demonstrate their ability to word-process documents at a particular speed. However, if a learner had to save a file and send it electronically, demonstrating competence in this task might be more important than completing it in a set time. If a timed assessment is not necessary to meeting the standard required, you can give guidance on timing in the assessment guidelines.

Types of evidence

The evidence requirements should be of the following types (as appropriate) and may sometimes require more than one type of evidence:

Written and/or oral evidence

Use if: evidence has to show that the learner has appropriate knowledge and understanding of something. This type of evidence could be electronic, eg word-processed documents, audio or video recordings, or scanned documents, if appropriate.

Product evidence

Use if the learner has to make or produce something. If so, what is it? Give a clear indication of any specific product that must be presented, and of the numbers or amount of these (eg one completed operational plan; two sculptures; three repaired musical instruments, etc.) If the product is an artefact, but electronic evidence of it (eg digital photographs, slide shows, video recordings) is acceptable for practical reasons, you should specify this.

Performance evidence

Use if the learner is expected to carry out a task, follow specific procedures, or behave in a particular manner. You should also use performance evidence if the learner's ability to carry out a process is the critical aspect of performance. Performance evidence may in some cases be supplemented by the learner's answers to questions. This allows the teacher/lecturer to verify that the learner can also apply his or her competence to other parts of a unit. This is known as additional evidence. If it is acceptable to submit electronic evidence eg slide shows, videos, digital photographs as evidence, or in support of performance evidence, this should be specified along with the conditions of assessment.

Additional evidence

Use if evidence is required to ensure that performance could be repeated in different situations/with different equipment to allow an assessor to infer competence without observing actual performance. For example:

- ♦ outcome: Drive a car in different weather conditions

Additional evidence might be used in this example for the requirement to demonstrate knowledge of how to drive a car in foggy conditions. It could also be used where evidence is needed of underpinning knowledge that is not demonstrated in performance.

Additional evidence may be written and/or oral.

You should not specify the instrument of assessment (eg report, extended response questions) in the evidence requirements unless this is essential to meeting the standard required. Evidence can often be generated using different instruments of assessment, and recommendations on which ones to use should be made in the assessment guidelines.

This is very important because, while you must ensure that standards are clear, evidence requirements should be written to allow centres to construct assessments that are relevant to particular cultural contexts and/or types of assessment. So, for example, the evidence requirements should not be restrictive in referring to particular cultural contexts (unless this is necessary to the standard, eg the Scottish legal system). Likewise, you should write the evidence requirements to allow the possibility of constructing instruments of assessment conducive to e-assessment.

Specifying standards of achievement

The way you write the evidence requirements is also important. They must contain meaningful information about the standard of achievement or performance that the evidence must meet. Evaluative statements such as 'correctly' or 'accurately' should only be used where it is meaningful in conveying the standard required. Using terms like this in cases where there is no one right or wrong answer, or method of carrying out an action, is meaningless to an assessor who isn't being given a clear idea of what they should be looking for when they are assessing the unit.

You need to be sure that you are telling learners very clearly exactly what level of performance will be expected from them. The same words must also tell assessors and verifiers what standard of performance to look for in coming to a valid and reliable judgement about whether an outcome/unit has been achieved.

Always be as specific as possible, and make certain that everything in the evidence requirements is critical to the achievement of the outcome/unit, ie is an essential part of what it is to be competent in that outcome or unit.

You must also make sure that your evidence requirements cover the full breadth of achievement of skill, knowledge, or understanding required by the outcome or unit. Anyone reading the unit specification should have no doubt about what the national standard of performance is for each outcome and for the unit as a whole.

To encourage holistic assessment, evidence requirements should normally be written for the unit as a whole. They should follow the last outcome in the unit and appear under the heading evidence requirements for the unit.

Accessibility and barriers to achievement

evidence requirements should not place any restrictions on centres or learners that are not justified by the outcomes and performance criteria. For example, the

phrase 'written and/or oral evidence' is commonly used in evidence requirements. This indicates that learners may provide oral evidence either as an alternative to written evidence or to supplement written evidence.

You should not normally insist on written evidence only — this is a potential barrier to achievement. Oral evidence can be recorded in a variety of ways, for example, through audio or video recordings, or by use of question and answer checklists.

Evidence requirements should not state or imply that a particular assessment approach is mandatory unless the approach is already implicit in the outcome(s) or performance criteria.

Instruments of assessment should not be suggested in the evidence requirements (eg 'This might/could be assessed using an assignment/questions'). This type of advice is best suited to being included in the support notes section under the heading 'Guidance on approaches to assessment' for this unit.

NABs and ASPs

Where a unit is supported by a National Assessment Bank (NAB) item or Assessment Support Pack (ASP) this should be noted at the end of the section headed evidence requirements for the unit.

Units that contribute to National Courses are currently supported by NABs which include assessment instruments, marking schemes and, where appropriate, suggested cut-off scores. The use of these NABs is not compulsory — centres not wishing to use the NABs should be able to create appropriate instruments of assessment. You should refer to this in the evidence requirements, eg:

'The standard to be applied and the breadth of coverage are illustrated in the National Assessment Bank items available for this unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this unit they should be of a comparable standard.'

Similarly, in National Certificates and National Progression Awards, if assessment exemplars or Assessment Support Packs have been produced for the unit, you should refer to these in evidence requirements, eg:

'The Assessment Support Pack for this unit provides sample assessment material. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the Assessment Support Pack to ensure a comparable standard.'

Holistic assessment

Although a holistic approach to assessment is encouraged, sometimes more than one piece of evidence may be needed for a particular unit, ie it should not be assumed that a single piece of evidence will always be sufficient. For example, if

a unit is about building a wall, we would expect evidence requirements to specify evidence of actual performance (ie the correct procedures and processes to be used when building the wall) and product evidence in the form of a completed wall.

Sometimes very specific information must be given to make the precise standard clear. In the wall example, for instance, we might need to indicate the specification for the final product: eg size of wall; accuracy of height, width, breadth; permissible wastage of materials; straightness. You can write this information into the outcomes, performance criteria, or evidence requirements. Wherever it appears, it should be included in the mandatory part of the unit specification. If it only appears in the support notes, it is guidance and not mandatory.

Evidence requirements: Summary

Evidence requirements should:

- ◆ link clearly to the unit outcomes and performance criteria
- ◆ meet the standards set out in the outcomes and performance criteria
- ◆ state the requirements for all learners
- ◆ not go beyond the requirements of the outcomes and performance criteria
- ◆ state the conditions of assessment

Writing the support notes section of the National Unit specification

The support notes section is often the most useful part of the unit specification for users. It is an opportunity to expand on the information given in the statement of standards and give clear advice on all aspects of delivery. This benefits all users and helps to share best practice in the area being covered.

Guidance on the content and context for this unit

This section can be used to give information that helps to contextualise and expand the statement of standards. This might include the purpose of the unit, the nature of practical activities, more detail relating to each of the outcomes, and other information that would be useful to someone using the unit for the first time. It may have information on content that could be included but is not necessarily assessed.

Under this heading, you can include information about the prior knowledge and/or skills a learner should have and any other general information.

It can also include guidance on:

- ◆ the practical skills, knowledge and understanding which will be delivered through the outcomes
- ◆ possible topics to be covered
- ◆ alternative approaches that might be used by some learners with disabilities
- ◆ the relationship of this unit to any relevant National Occupational Standards
- ◆ health and safety issues
- ◆ legislation
- ◆ definitions or explanations of terms
- ◆ contexts in which learning may take place, for example real or simulated work settings

Although it may contain information which is general to the unit as a whole, it is important to ensure that this section also relates clearly to the outcomes and performance criteria. It may include information in relation to specific outcomes or groups of outcomes.

Guidance on approaches to delivery of this unit

This section should give the reader a good understanding of how teaching or delivery might be organised — for example, there might be a preferred order of teaching (and assessing) certain topics.

You should include any information that you feel is helpful to someone using the unit for the first time. You can include ideas about classroom activities, field trips, visits and group work. In suggesting delivery methods, the aim should be to encourage the use of learning and teaching approaches that are varied and

appropriate to the aims of the unit — so your advice might be to encourage a learner-centred, participative and practical approach.

In this section, you could also encourage the use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) to support delivery where appropriate — eg using e-learning to suit the individual learning styles and pace of the learners; using software to facilitate group work and collaborative working between learners.

Remember, though, that you are writing a summary here, and not a complete teaching package.

Guidance on approaches to assessment of this unit

This section should tell readers about how the outcomes could be assessed, expanding on the evidence requirements. Suggestions on approaches to assessment might cover the whole unit, be integrated across outcomes, or, more rarely, relate to an individual outcome.

You can suggest specific instruments of assessment and, if appropriate, provide outline exemplars. When you're suggesting suitable assessment procedures, consider these questions:

- ◆ Are the outcomes based on practical or cognitive competences?
- ◆ Can evidence be generated through the ongoing work in delivering the unit, or is a specially designed assessment/test necessary?
- ◆ If the outcome or unit is about knowledge and understanding, is advice given on how learners might provide oral evidence and how this might be recorded?
- ◆ Can evidence for the unit be provided by means of a written and/or oral test, or does it require practical performance or a product?
- ◆ If practical performance is required, should assessment be based on judging processes or on processes and products?
- ◆ If evidence has to be gathered using questions, what form should they take? (Short answer? Extended response? Completion?)

Where possible, you should suggest holistic assessment, or make suggestions for integration of assessment — this will help keep assessment manageable. For example, in knowledge-based units, it may be legitimate to sample the content and set a cut-off score that allows a reasonable inference to be drawn that all performance criteria for a unit have been met. In these cases, the instruments of assessment must be designed and the cut-off score set in such a way that inference of competence is reasonable. You should not, however, specify a cut-off score in the unit specification. In this case, you should make a reference to the exemplars in the Assessment Support Pack.

Note: It is not acceptable to sample PCs.

Bear in mind that you are not being asked to provide a complete assessment package. If Assessment Support Packages or assessment exemplars are available for the unit, these should be referred to in this section.

Opportunities for e-assessment

This section should direct centres to the most up to date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment.

All units will fall into one of the following three categories:

- ◆ Units that are ideally suited to e-assessment:
In this situation you should provide encouragement and examples of ways to do this, eg:

- The evidence for outcomes 1 and 2 could be held in an e-portfolio (or portfolio) and sent to the assessor.
- The oral presentation required for outcome 3 could be recorded on video and sent to the assessor, or made using video conferencing facilities and observed by the assessor.

- ◆ Units for which e-assessment would technically be possible, but complicated to arrange.

In these cases you should advise centres accordingly. For example:

Although this unit could be delivered by e-assessment, it would require a considerable degree of planning by the centre to ensure the sufficiency and authenticity of learner evidence. Arrangements would have to be made to ensure that:

- the practical activity in outcome 1 is supervised by a responsible person and clearly recorded (using an assessment checklist, or on video) for the assessor
- the assessor is, at some point, able to question the learner on that performance (face-to-face, by telephone, online)
- the closed-book test for outcomes 2 and 3 is delivered in a supervised environment

- ◆ Units which may not be feasible to use e-assessment.
Where this is the case, please say so and explain why. For example:

'This unit is not suited to delivery by e-assessment because it requires learners to be observed and questioned by a qualified practitioner to meet:

- health and safety requirements

and/or

- statutory/professional body requirements'

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

You will also use this section to signpost any opportunities to develop Core Skills or Core Skill components. You should give details of the Core Skills that might be developed, their SCQF levels, the outcomes they relate to, and details of the ways in which they might be developed (eg through particular teaching or learning strategies, learner self-study, or formative assessment). You could give this information in text form and/or in a grid.

Example of signposting in the support notes of a subject unit from a Psychology unit

The Core Skill of Working with Others at SCQF 6 could be developed in this unit in the work for outcome 3. Working with Others involves the ability to work with others to plan, agree, and take responsibility for tasks; to support co-operative working in appropriate ways; and to review the effectiveness of one's own contribution. This would fit with a group task to carry out research suitable for outcome 3. The general skill at SCQF 6 is 'Work with others in a group to analyse, plan, and complete a complex activity'. A group could carry out the task for outcome 3, as it is a complex activity, although the report should then be written up individually for summative assessment of outcome 3 of this unit.

Learners can be encouraged to analyse the task and negotiate goals, roles, and responsibilities, anticipating and responding to needs of others, supporting co-operative working, and evaluating and drawing conclusions about the effectiveness of one's own contribution. This Core Skill could be developed without formal certification.

The Component 'Using Number' of the Core Skill of Numeracy at SCQF 5 could be developed in the teaching and learning contributing to outcome 3. The specific skills required for the component at SCQF 5 include: working confidently with a numerical concept; deciding on the numerical operations to be carried out; and carrying out complex calculations or a number of sustained calculations. This is likely to fit in to the treatment and presentation of findings required in the production of the research report, in particular in the use of descriptive statistics. It is also likely that the component 'Using Graphical Information' from Numeracy at SCQF 5 could also be developed in this context. The specific skills of: interpreting information from tables, graphs, charts, or diagrams; selecting an appropriate form of tables, graphs, charts, or diagrams; and communicating information in that form would also be found in the research report. This Core Skill could be developed here without formal certification.

National Unit specification: Shell

For the most up to date National Unit shell, please visit the materials section within: <http://www.sqaacademy.com>

Examples from National Unit specifications

Examples of unit Purpose statements

The following are examples of unit summary statements which give the user a reasonable amount of information about a unit.

Example 1

Unit Purpose: Financial Accounting (Intermediate 1)

The unit is a mandatory unit in the Intermediate 1 Accounting Course, but is also available for learners wishing to study the unit on its own.

The unit is designed to enable learners to develop the skills and techniques which will allow them to record financial information in ledger accounts and petty cash statements; check records using trial balances and bank reconciliation statements; prepare (with adjustments) and analyse simple accounting statements for a sole trader, a partnership and a public limited company (plc) and use information technology. It will also develop a knowledge and understanding of the theory relating to financial accounting.

This unit is suitable for learners who:

- ◆ are undertaking the study of this subject for the first time
- ◆ wish to obtain a basic knowledge of accounting as an interest subject
- ◆ are considering starting their own business and wish to develop a basic understanding of accounting principles and procedures

Example 2

Unit Purpose: Developing Design Proposals (Intermediate 2)

This unit is a mandatory unit in the Intermediate 2 Product Design Course but it is also suitable as an introduction for learners studying product design for the first time.

In this unit learners will generate and develop ideas to satisfy a specification and work toward a solution through design activity. Learners will apply design knowledge to develop ideas and will communicate decisions taken in reaching a potential solution. Learners will use written, graphical and modelling techniques to convey their ideas and produce a potential solution. The unit is suitable for learners with previous experience in related subjects (such as Craft and Design, Graphic Communication or Art and Design).

Examples of outcomes, performance criteria, and evidence requirements

The following are examples of outcomes, performance criteria and evidence requirements which are in keeping with the guidance for writing National Units.

Example 1

This example shows outcomes which are the same at Higher (SCQF level 6) and

Intermediate 1 (SCQF level 4), but the PC and evidence requirements establish the difference in standard.

Unit Acting (Higher)

outcome 1

Develop an acting role from a specified text.

Performance criteria

- a) Participates in group discussions on the interpretation of the text, contributing ideas and demonstrating engagement with the text.
- b) Makes a full contribution to group discussions on the interpretation of the specified role.
- c) Prepares for rehearsals by learning lines by the specified date.
- d) Follows director's instructions at rehearsals on movement, voice, pace and overall interpretation of role.
- e) Co-operates positively with others in the development of the performance.

Outcome 2

Perform an acting role from a specified text.

Performance criteria

- a) Interpretation of the character is true to the author's intention, showing use of textual clues.
- b) Movement and body language are consistent with the interpretation of the character and the director's guidance.
- c) Speeches are communicated clearly, conveying character's feelings and ideas effectively.
- d) Role is sustained confidently, communicating the text accurately.
- e) Interaction with other characters is convincing and establishes the intended relationships.

Evidence requirements for the unit

Performance evidence is required which demonstrates that the learner has developed and performed an acting role to the standard described in the

outcomes and performance criteria. The role must be from a specified text which has a cast of a minimum of three characters. The performance should be presented to an audience, which may comprise other learners in the teaching group. The learner should sustain the role for a minimum of ten minutes.

The National Assessment Bank (NAB) item for this unit illustrates the standard, lists texts of an appropriate level of demand for this unit and includes an assessor record/checklist. Centres wishing to select their own texts and devise their own instruments of assessment should refer to the NAB to ensure that standards are comparable.

Unit Acting (Intermediate 1)

Outcome 1

Develop an acting role from a specified text.

- a) Participates in group discussions about the text, showing some understanding of meaning.
- b) Contributes to group discussions on the interpretation of the specified role.
- c) Prepares for rehearsals by learning lines by the specified date.
- d) Follows director's instructions at rehearsals on movement, voice, pace and overall interpretation of role.
- e) Co-operates positively with others in the development of the performance.

Outcome 2

Perform an acting role from a prescribed text.

- a) Interpretation of the character is broadly in line with the author's intention.
- b) Movement and body language help to convey the character.
- c) Speeches are communicated clearly and convey the character's main feelings and ideas.
- d) Role is sustained with occasional prompts.
- e) Interaction with others characters communicates the intended relationships.

Evidence requirements for the unit

Evidence is required to demonstrate that learners have achieved all outcomes and performance criteria.

Performance evidence is required which demonstrates that the learner has developed and performed an acting role to the standard described in the outcomes and performance criteria. The role must be from a specified text which has a cast of a minimum of three characters. The performance should be presented to an audience, which may comprise other learners in the teaching group. The learner should sustain the role for a minimum of five minutes.

The National Assessment Bank (NAB) item for this unit illustrates the standard, lists texts of an appropriate level of demand for this unit and includes an assessor record/checklist. Centres wishing to select their own texts and devise their own instruments of assessment should refer to the NAB to ensure that standards are comparable.

Example 2

This is an example where knowledge and understanding of the process involved in a group production is assessed holistically

Unit Media Production (Higher)

Outcome 1

Contribute to planning a media production from a brief.

Performance criteria

- a) Contributes effectively to an analysis of the brief, expressing useful ideas and allocating roles and tasks through negotiation.
- b) Carries out relevant research effectively.
- c) Contributes effectively to devising the production schedule.
- d) Uses technical terms accurately.

Outcome 2

Contribute to implementing a group production from a brief.

Performance criteria

- a) Contributes effectively to the organisation of the production, including negotiating working methods and rules for managing the group production.
- b) Communicates ideas and information effectively.
- c) Contributes effectively in terms of technical and non-technical skills in accordance with the brief, allocated role and production schedule.
- d) Uses technical terms accurately.

Outcome 3

Review and evaluate a group production.

Performance criteria

- a) Analyses the strengths and weaknesses of production in relation to the brief.
- b) Analyses the strengths and weaknesses of his/her own performance.
- c) Recommends and justifies appropriate improved or alternative strategies.
- d) Uses technical terms accurately.

Evidence requirements for the unit

Evidence is required to demonstrate that learners have achieved all outcomes and performance criteria.

Written and/or recorded oral evidence and performance evidence is required to demonstrate that the learner has participated in and evaluated a media group production to the standard specified in the outcomes and performance criteria.

Written/recorded oral evidence should be produced to demonstrate that the learner has evaluated the process. The evaluation should be completed by each learner under supervised, controlled conditions within one hour. This assessment will be open-book with learners having access to production notes.

The National Assessment Bank (NAB) item for this unit illustrates the standard and provides exemplification of the type of brief suitable for this level. An assessor observation checklist is also included in the NAB. Centres wishing to design their own instruments of assessment should refer to the NAB to ensure a comparable standard.

Example 3

This is an example where knowledge and understanding and practical skills are assessed.

Unit Multi-media Applications (Intermediate 1)

Outcome 1

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of multimedia applications software.

Performance criteria

- a) Explains clearly the main uses of multi-media authoring software, presentation software and desktop publishing software.
- b) Describes accurately and clearly the main features of presentation software.
- c) Describes accurately and clearly the main features of desk top publishing software.
- d) Uses correct terminology where appropriate in describing features and uses of multi-media applications software.

Outcome 2

Produce documents using multi-media hardware and software.

- a) Captures short text, graphics, sound and video extracts using multi-media hardware.
- b) Produces short documents which combine text, graphics, sound and video in accordance with a given brief.

- c) Uses multi-media hardware and software independently to produce simple multi-media documents.

Evidence requirements for the unit

Evidence is required to demonstrate that learners have achieved all outcomes and performance criteria.

Written and/or oral evidence is required which demonstrates that the learner has achieved outcome 1 to the standard specified in the outcome and performance criteria. The evidence for this outcome should be obtained under controlled, supervised conditions. The assessment will be closed-book and should last no more than 45 minutes.

Product evidence is required which demonstrates that the learner has achieved outcome 2 to the standard specified in the outcome and performance criteria. Each learner will produce two documents for this assessment. The assessment will be carried out under supervised conditions and will last no more than 45 minutes. Learners will have access to notes and reference books and online help for this assessment.

Assessments for this unit may be conducted on one assessment occasion lasting 1 hour 30 minutes or on two separate occasions lasting 45 minutes each.

The national assessment for this unit illustrates the standard for assessments in this unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this unit, they should be of a comparable standard.

Further examples of evidence requirements

Example 1

Unit Creative Photography (Intermediate 2)

Evidence requirements for the unit

Evidence is required to demonstrate that learners have achieved all outcomes and performance criteria.

Written and/or recorded oral evidence and product evidence should be produced to demonstrate that the learner has achieved all of the outcomes and performance criteria. The evidence should be produced under supervised conditions to a given brief. Learners should produce a folio of work which will include:

- ♦ an outline plan in response to the given brief, which sets out a theme, objectives expressed in terms of end result, and details of camera equipment and settings which will be used

- ◆ three completed digital prints to the standard specified in the performance criteria
- ◆ an evaluation of the prints submitted

The evidence may be produced on one assessment occasion or on more than one occasion. The final write-up/presentation of the project outline, the practical task and the final evaluation should take place under supervised conditions and should take no more than 1 hour and 30 minutes to complete. Learners may have access to notes and books.

Centres must be satisfied that the evidence submitted is the work of individual learners. Assessors should maintain a record of discussions with each learner of the draft plan prior to the submission of final folio.

The standard to be applied is exemplified in the National Assessment Bank item available for the unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this unit, they should be of a comparable standard.

Example 2

Unit: Consumer Law: An Introduction (Intermediate 1)

Evidence requirements for the unit

Evidence is required to demonstrate that learners have achieved all outcomes and performance criteria.

To demonstrate satisfactory attainment of all outcomes of the unit, learners must produce written/and or recorded oral responses to items that cover all outcomes and performance criteria.

The assessment will be conducted under closed-book, supervised conditions within a time limit of one hour.

The standard to be applied and the breadth of coverage are illustrated in the National Assessment Bank items available for this unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this unit, they should be of a comparable standard. Appendix 1 details the content and context for this unit.

5 Additional information

This section of the guidance is the additional information you will need to refer to when writing the units. All of this additional information is available on the SQA Academy Guide to unit Writing site:

- ◆ Unit Quality Checklists
- ◆ HN and NQ
- ◆ SCQF level descriptors
- ◆ Equality and Inclusion guidance
- ◆ Core Skills Framework
- ◆ Essential Skills Toolkit
- ◆ Use of an qualifications appendix

Select this link to view the SQA Academy course:

<http://www.sqaacademy.org.uk/course/view.php?id=296>

History of changes to unit

| Version | Description of change | Date |
|---------|--|-------------|
| 2 | Changes made to the headings within the Support Notes section, to align with SQA's interim Product Architecture. | August 2012 |
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