



National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Rural Business Investigation with a Scottish Context
(SCQF level 5)

CODE H6MR 75

SUMMARY

This Unit allows candidates to develop some of the basic knowledge and understanding of the skills and operations in relation to a specific local rural business in Scotland of the candidate's choice. The Unit provides an opportunity for candidates to focus in on a specific enterprise of a local land based business as well as giving consideration to the sustainability of the business and alternative enterprises available to it.

The Unit is suitable for candidates who want to develop or further develop their knowledge in relation to one particular type of rural industry. When this Unit is undertaken as part of the NPA Rural Skills (SCQF level 5) it would be recommended that the delivery and assessment takes place in the context of the candidates chosen specialist option. This unit is also an optional Unit in the Scottish Studies Award at SCQF level 5.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Investigate the nature of a local rural business enterprise.
- 2 Describe and explain the job roles within the rural business enterprise.
- 3 Describe the main sustainable features of the local rural business.
- 4 Investigate an alternative enterprise into which the rural business could diversify.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, it would be beneficial if candidates had previous experience and knowledge of various types of land based industries that exist in the United Kingdom. This may be evidenced by possession of:

Land based Industries: An Introduction (SCQF level 4) or similar qualifications or experience.

Administrative Information

Superclass: AE

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CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at SCQF level 5 (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 5*).

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

CORE SKILLS

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

The Unit provides opportunities for candidates to develop aspects of the following Core Skills:

- ◆ *Communication* (SCQF level 5)
- ◆ *Information Technology* (SCQF level 5)
- ◆ *Problem Solving* (SCQF level 5)
- ◆ *Working with Others* (SCQF level 5)

These opportunities are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit Specification.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

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

OUTCOME 1

Investigate the nature of a local rural business enterprise.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Investigate the production system or service of the enterprise.
- (b) Describe the activities of the enterprise for each of the four seasons.
- (c) Identify the main inputs and outputs of the enterprise.

OUTCOME 2

Describe and explain the job roles within the rural business enterprise.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Identify the key job roles of staff involved in the enterprise.
- (b) Explain health and safety requirements of job roles in the enterprise.
- (c) Describe the general attributes and skills required for job roles in the enterprise.

OUTCOME 3

Describe the main sustainable features of the local rural business enterprise.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe the positive and/or negative environmental impacts of the rural enterprise.
- (b) Describe the positive and/or negative social impacts of the rural enterprise.
- (c) Describe the positive and/or negative economic impacts of the rural enterprise.

OUTCOME 4

Investigate an alternative enterprise into which the rural business could diversify.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Identify the alternative enterprise in terms of systems and inputs.
- (b) Describe the alternative enterprise in terms of outputs (products and/or services).
- (c) Investigate the alternative enterprise in relation to its potential importance to the rural business and the wider impact on the local area.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (CONT)

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EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Evidence is required to demonstrate that candidates have achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

Product evidence and written and /or oral evidence (oral evidence could include recorded creative media formats) will be produced to demonstrate that the candidate has achieved all of the Outcomes and Performance Criteria. Candidates must visit a local rural business (within Scotland) on at least one occasion and will produce an individual folio of work which will include the following:

- ◆ An introduction in terms of the nature of the local rural business under investigation
- ◆ A description of the enterprise within the rural business that has been chosen for investigation
- ◆ A description of the production service or system of the investigated enterprise
- ◆ A brief description of the how and why activities vary through the four seasons of the year
- ◆ Identify the number of people involved in the enterprise and two physical resources required for the enterprise
- ◆ Identify one output for the enterprise (ie nature of product or service)
- ◆ A description of the roles and responsibilities of one staff member involved in this enterprise
- ◆ A description of the personal protective equipment and clothing required for the above staff member and explanation of why the PPE is needed
- ◆ An explanation of the general safety requirements of the job role of the above member of staff
- ◆ A description of at least three general attributes and three skills required to carry out their job role well for the above member of staff
- ◆ A description of two environmental impacts, positive and/or negative of the enterprise from the following; water, land and energy use, waste production and recycling activity
- ◆ A description of two social impacts, positive and /or negative, of the enterprise on the local community.
- ◆ A description of two economic impacts, positive and/or negative of the enterprise on the local community.
- ◆ A brief description of one alternative enterprise that this rural business could consider in terms of inputs, systems, output and the potential effect of this alternative on the local area and community

Centres must be satisfied that the evidence submitted is the work of individual candidates.

The Assessment Support Pack for the Unit Rural Business Investigation provides sample assessment material. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the Assessment Support Pack to ensure a comparable standard.

National Unit Specification: support notes

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

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

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

This Unit is an optional Unit in the National Progression Award (NPA) Rural Skills at SCQF level 5, an optional Unit in the Scottish Studies Award at SCQF level 5 but can also be taken as a free standing Unit. In the context of the National Progression Award Rural Skills, it is advisable that tutors steer candidates towards the investigation of a rural business that relates well to their chosen optional route for this award. For example, a candidate undertaking the equine Units may wish to consider an equine related rural business.

Outcome 1

The possible contexts for this Rural Enterprise Investigation in Scotland are wide ranging. The tutor should be knowledgeable about rural enterprises in the local area and be familiar with both the range of local rural enterprises and the basic activities they carry out. The investigation could be carried out on any rural enterprise. This might include those that are land or water based (for example: beef enterprise, sheep enterprise, dairy enterprise, crop enterprise, fisheries, country parks, forestry enterprises, horticultural contractors, landscape gardeners, farriery, outdoor activity centres, riding schools, livery yards, dog kennels, catteries, dog walking businesses, pet shops etc) and those that provide ancillary services to them, (for example: machinery suppliers, vets, seeds merchants, farm supply companies, livestock marts).

Recognition of the diverse range of enterprises creates opportunities to contrast the different types of enterprises, to examine differences between the 'traditional' rural enterprises such as farming and forestry with the newly emerging service type enterprises including equine centres, dog kennels, catteries and outdoor activity centres. Many rural businesses will already have two enterprises within their business (eg a dairy farmer may have diversified into an equine livery enterprise or a mixed farm may have opened a farm shop).

The scope for investigation activity within any of these contexts is wide ranging. It is important that the tutor is able to narrow down an investigation topic and to ensure that the research undertaken will lead to sufficient information being made available, that can be gathered by the candidates in order to suggest valid conclusions. For example, the tutor must give consideration to the choice of enterprise in terms of the candidate's ability to give consideration to changes through the year and resource requirements and potential for alternatives as required in Outcome 4.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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Outcome 2

The context for the investigation into the nature of job roles should be through a case study approach, with the candidate giving consideration to the actual individual undertaking the role.

In some of the chosen enterprises there may only be one member of staff responsible for the chosen enterprise. However, where there are multiple different job roles, it is important that the candidate is appropriately guided to make a choice about the staff member that they wish to investigate and they should be able to put this role in context of skill requirements and progression opportunities both within the current enterprise and/or alternative enterprise. They should also be able to relate the role to any others who work within the rural business. Candidates should give consideration to the general safety requirements in terms of legislative constraints and requirements, an overview of the level of general level of risk for the role and the personal protective clothing and equipment requirements of this individual's job role.

Outcome 3

The candidate will require an underpinning understanding of the nature of sustainability in terms of environmental, social and economic impacts of the enterprise. This will then allow the candidate to carry out appropriate investigation. For environmental issues the candidate needs to consider the levels of recycling, energy usage, water and land usage, waste production for the enterprise. For social impact the candidate may need to consider such issues as the level of employment that the enterprise provides, whether it brings the local community together, whether it creates problems due to large numbers of people moving in on a seasonal basis etc. For the economic impact, the candidate may need to consider such issues as the amount of jobs generated locally, whether other businesses locally benefit because it brings people to the area etc.

Outcome 4

It is important to recognize that rural enterprises may be part of different forms of businesses, eg private companies, public companies, micro-businesses, SMEs, social enterprises, volunteer organisations and again this range of company form creates further opportunity to investigate the possibilities for alternative enterprises. The candidate should investigate one alternative enterprise that does not already exist as part of the business and should research both locally and more widely as to how. For example, a dairy farm may diversify into a small farm park for children or a riding school may be thinking about an alternative such as a livery yard etc. It should be remembered that this is just one Outcome and a general overview of the alternative enterprise only is required.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

During the initial stages of the Unit the role of the tutor/trainer is as a consultant or facilitator but the candidate(s) should make all decisions and necessary preparations for the investigation activity. However tutor input will be required to create an open-minded and holistic approach to this investigation in the candidates.

The candidate should take responsibility for the organisation and implementation of the rural enterprise investigation. The high level of organisational skills required of candidates in this Unit should be reflected in the investigation activities. The investigation techniques employed must be appropriate to the investigation, and candidates should be encouraged to use a variety of techniques as appropriate to particular contexts or issues. It is anticipated that, in order to investigate a single enterprise effectively, the candidates should visit their chosen enterprise on at least one occasion. It is therefore important that the tutor carries out some prior research with potential businesses to identify those that would be willing to participate. The range of investigation techniques which may also be employed include interviews; questionnaires; photographs; audio and video recordings; appeals for information and opinions via local press; library research; Internet research; map work etc

Individuals or groups, working independently, should carry out basic research to identify a range of possible factors to investigate within a rural enterprise. Through group work the candidate(s) should discuss their investigation topic with others to see if the concept is realistic, in terms of being manageable in the timescale, suitable to capacity of the individual(s), achievable in the time frame and if there are areas of overlap for co-operation.

The choice of investigation topic should be made after examination of a number of possible options and review of information from a range of sources identified by the candidate(s), and being ratified as being realistic and achievable by the tutor/trainer. The investigation's aim and anticipated Outcomes could be set out in a project brief/statement of intent, which outlines the subject for research. This brief should include the topic or subject title, a brief indication of the candidate's previous knowledge, an outline plan indicating general themes to be investigated by the whole group, the location of possible sources of information (eg people who can be contacted) and a brief indication of the research programme. Candidates could then produce a detailed step-by-step plan outlining specific areas to be investigated and indicating a timescale for these. Specific information on sources of information, people to be contacted, methods of investigation, and required resources should be included in the detailed plan.

It is essential to visit a rural enterprise and it may be useful for one or two rural business people to visit the group to discuss the nature of their business, what the important and significant shaping factors were/are, and what factors are creating volatility in the business environment or any other important factors current at the time, eg disease epidemics, commodity prices, energy costs, consumer preferences,

Class discussion and small group work is strongly recommended to focus candidate's attention to the requirements of the Unit and each Outcome, drawing specific attention to the requirement to be self managing and self monitoring during the activities required by the Unit. It is recognised that individuals and groups will work at different rates during their investigations and therefore the role of the tutor will demand a 'hands off' approach, with the tutor role being very much a sounding board and consultant to the individuals and groups. The tutor must be in regular contact with the candidates throughout the Unit.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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If candidates are working in groups it is important that each candidate creates and maintains an individual record of their part of the investigation. It is expected that in the course of the Unit that each candidate will compile a folder of assessment evidence for themselves.

As part of the rural enterprise investigation planning process, it is important that candidates select the method of presentation of the findings early on in the investigation. Where possible, the findings of each investigation should be considered and discussed by the group as a whole. The sharing of knowledge and experience gained is valuable and the presence of an audience for the findings creates a sense of purpose.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

During the delivery of this Unit candidates will be involved a range of practical, written and/or oral tasks which may well involve working as part of a small team. These offer good opportunities for developing aspects of:

- ◆ *Working with Others*
- ◆ *Problem Solving*
- ◆ *Communication* (Oral and Written)
- ◆ *Information Technology*

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

A suitable instrument of assessment for all of the Outcomes would be a portfolio and each candidate is expected to produce their own individual portfolio of evidence as stated above. Where candidates in a group are all pursuing the same business enterprise for study, the assessor/tutor is responsible for ensuring that candidates' develop an individual portfolio of evidence which matches the Evidence Requirements.

However, some of the commonly gathered findings could also be presented in a variety of forms, including video recordings, presentations, wall displays, poster sessions, written reports supported by graphical material, photographs, etc.

Opportunities for e-assessment

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

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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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**