

NextGen: HN unit specification

Agriculture: Professional Development (SCQF level 8)

Unit code: JBG6 48

SCQF level: 8 (16 SCQF credit points)

Valid from: August 2026

This unit specification provides detailed information about the unit to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year. It is for lecturers and assessors, and contains all the mandatory information you need to deliver and assess the unit.

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Unit purpose

This unit gives learners an overview of the skills they need to work on a farm and/or in a rural business at a supervisory level. They learn and develop skills in resource auditing and personal development. Learners take part in a work placement where they can apply their learning and skills in a real industry setting.

Learners who complete the unit as part of HND Agriculture may be able to progress to a degree course in agriculture or rural business management. Alternatively, they could go directly into employment on a farm or rural business at a supervisory or junior management level.

Entry requirements

Entry to the unit is at your centre's discretion. Before starting the unit, learners should have completed the Professional Practice and Skills in Agriculture unit at SCQF level 7, which is part of HNC Agriculture. We also strongly recommend that learners have completed one or more of the following:

- HNC Agriculture
- SCQF level 6 qualification in a relevant subject, along with appropriate work experience

Unit outcomes

Learners who complete this unit can:

1. develop a range of administrative, planning, organisational, and technical and/or instructional skills
2. develop meta-skills in a vocational or academic context
3. develop and apply professional resource management skills in a work placement situation

Evidence requirements

Learners must provide the following evidence:

Outcome 1

Learners must produce skills evidence in an agricultural context that demonstrates their abilities in:

- planning and decision management
- scheduling
- project management
- communication
- contingency planning
- digital skills

Outcome 2

Learners must produce evidence to show they can:

- self-assess their meta-skills baseline
- create a plan to develop their own meta-skills
- carry out activities to develop and demonstrate their meta-skills
- use reflective practice to monitor and assess the meta-skills they have improved and developed

For more information about meta-skills, see the educator guide, [Skills 4.0: A skills model to drive Scotland's future](#) and [Qualification Scotland's meta-skills web page](#).

Outcome 3

Learners must produce evidence that shows they can:

- conduct a work placement analysis to include:
 - SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of the resources available to the business
 - an assessment of business sustainability, particularly in relation to the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
 - available alternative business practices
- produce a personal development report based upon successful completion of the work placement to include:
 - evaluation of skills and meta-skills developed
 - influence on career pathways

Knowledge and skills

Knowledge	Skills
Outcome 1 Learners should understand: • administrative and communication skills • planning skills • organisational skills • technical and/or instructional skills • appropriate digital skills and programs	Outcome 1 Learners can: • apply and demonstrate these skills
Outcome 2 Learners should understand: • the meta-skills categories of self-management, social intelligence and innovation, and associated meta-skills, as described in Skills 4.0 • the importance of developing meta-skills, including employability, adaptability and effectiveness • what meta-skills are most relevant to their vocational or academic context • how to develop meta-skills, including these approaches: ○ self-awareness: analysing preferences, strengths and development needs, meta-skills ○ self-assessment ○ goal setting and action planning ○ reflective practice: principles, tools and approaches for effective reflective practice	Outcome 2 Learners can: • create a plan to develop their meta-skills • carry out, review and adapt their meta-skills development plan • assess their meta-skills development

Knowledge	Skills
Outcome 3 Learners should understand: • resource management • SWOT analyses • personal development appraisal and career development planning • how the principles of the UN SDGs apply to agriculture	Outcome 3 Learners can: • demonstrate and apply these skills in a workplace environment

Meta-skills

You must give learners opportunities to develop their meta-skills throughout this unit. We have suggested how to incorporate the most relevant ones into the unit content, but you may find other opportunities.

Self-management

This includes focusing, integrity, adapting and initiative. The most relevant are:

- focusing:
 - managing time effectively
 - developing computer skills by using the multiple software types required for assessment submissions
- adapting:
 - being open to alternative ways of doing things
 - solving performance problems; looking at new marketing opportunities

Social intelligence

This includes communicating, feeling, collaborating and leading. The most relevant are:

- communicating:
 - building communication skills — particularly listening skills — to receive and give information accurately
- collaborating:
 - working constructively with peers to explore new information during both class time and self-study

Innovation

This includes curiosity, creativity, sense-making and critical thinking. The most relevant are:

- curiosity
 - asking questions of peers and agriculture experts
- creativity:
 - developing strategic marketing ideas and making business recommendations
- sense-making:
 - exploring their professional place and role in society
 - demonstrating and developing synthesising and logical thinking skills when analysing information to solve problems

Literacies

This unit provides opportunities to develop the following literacies.

Numeracy

Learners develop numeracy skills as they carry out a resource audit during an appropriate work placement, through project development planning and delivery, and as they build a digital skills portfolio.

Communication

Learners enhance their communication skills as they participate in a work placement, through group project work, as they develop a range of meta-skills, and in using various relevant digital platforms.

Digital

Learners improve their digital skills and computer literacy as they acquire appropriate skills and produce work using various digital mediums.

Learning for Sustainability

Throughout this unit, you should encourage learners to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of sustainability.

This includes:

- a general understanding of social, economic and environmental sustainability
- a general understanding of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- a deeper understanding of subject-specific sustainability
- the confidence to apply the skills, knowledge, understanding and values they develop in the next stage of their life

Delivery of unit

This is a mandatory unit in HND Agriculture.

Learners must take part in a work placement on a farm or in a rural business that allows them to apply as full a range of relevant knowledge and skills as is practicable. We expect these placements to be of sufficient length to allow learners to integrate with the business and develop in their roles. During their placement, learners gather relevant business information and use this to make recommendations based on their increasing knowledge.

You may want to integrate delivery and assessment of the unit with the Principles of Agricultural Business Management unit by utilising information from the placement business.

The unit could also involve a project, researched and delivered as part of a group, dependent on individual learner circumstances and the resources available.

The notional design length for the unit is 80 hours, however the amount of time you allocate to each outcome is at your discretion. We suggest the following distribution of time, including assessment:

Outcome 1 — Develop a range of administrative, planning, organisational, and technical and/or instructional skills (60 hours)

Outcome 2 — Develop meta-skills in a vocational or academic context (10 hours)

Outcome 3 — Develop and apply professional resource management skills in a work placement environment (10 hours)

Additional guidance

The guidance in this section is not mandatory.

Approaches to delivery

Outcome 1

You could cover:

- decision management
- scheduling
- project management
- communication
- contingency planning
- relevant digital skills and how specific software programs function

Learners could embed specific skills by teaching them, in practical or classroom settings, to learners studying relevant National Certificates (NCs) or HNCs.

Outcome 2

You should encourage learners to demonstrate their meta-skills development throughout the unit, and to show they understand how important meta-skills are for their employability, adaptability and effectiveness. Specifically, learners should focus on those meta-skills most relevant for their vocational context from the following categories:

- self-management
- social intelligence
- innovation

[Skills 4.0: A skills model to drive Scotland's future](#) outlines three categories, self-management, social intelligence and innovation, each with four meta-skills and a number of sub-skills. We do not expect learners to develop or reference all of these,

and none is in itself mandatory. There are many interrelationships and dependencies between these skills, and learners should focus on holistic development within the vocational context.

Learners should be able to reflect in depth on the meta-skills they are developing and the relationships between them, and include references to course projects, outputs and experiences that contribute to that development. It is the depth of reflection that is important, not the number of meta-skills referenced.

See the educator guide for more information.

Outcome 3

You should cover:

- resource management (land, infrastructure and equipment)
- practical application of farm and/or rural business experience
- personal development appraisal and career development planning

You should encourage learners to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in a vocational context by asking them to apply the principles of three of the UN SDGs in their work placement.

Approaches to assessment

Outcome 1

You could assess this outcome on a group basis by asking learners to teach a skill to a group of NC learners in a practical environment. You could develop other assessment options depending on resources and individual student situations.

Outcome 2

Learners can present evidence in, for example, a written portfolio or blog, or in a podcast or recorded oral presentation, building on it throughout the programme of

study. Learners could use a portfolio to gather all the various reflections together. Ideally, they would do this online, so they could record their development when working in their own time. You can use any other suitable assessment method that captures the evidence for this outcome.

Outcome 3

You could assess this outcome by asking learners to produce a work placement analysis and personal development report on their experience during their work placement. This should encompass skills and knowledge such as:

- human resource management
- staff recruitment
- applying basic employment law
- resource management:
 - land, infrastructure and equipment
 - personal development appraisal and career development planning

Learners should also show that they focused on and applied the principles of at least three UN SDGs during their work placement enterprise.

Resources

Learners will need access to a work placement on a farm or in a rural business. Centres delivering this qualification must have suitably qualified staff for each of the subject components. Your centre should already have established processes to ensure staff are appropriately qualified to deliver in this subject area.

Assessors and internal verifiers must hold an industry and/or subject-specific qualification equivalent to the qualification. Centre staff should have relevant industry experience and be able to demonstrate industry-relevant CPD to maintain their subject-specific knowledge and skills.

Equality and inclusion

This unit is designed to be as fair and as accessible as possible with no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment.

You must consider the needs of individual learners when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled learners and those with additional support needs is available on the [assessment arrangements web page](#).

Information for learners

Agriculture: Professional Development (SCQF level 8)

This information explains:

- what the unit is about
- what you should know or be able to do before you start
- what you need to do during the unit
- opportunities for further learning and employment

Unit information

This unit gives you an overview of the skills required to work on a farm or rural business at a supervisory level, and the opportunity to develop and apply these skills in a practical context.

You take part in a work placement and produce a work placement analysis and personal development report. You may also be involved in delivering a project as part of a group, or in an equivalent activity, to develop and demonstrate relevant skills.

Throughout the unit, you develop meta-skills covering self-management, social intelligence and innovation.

Prior knowledge and skills

Before you start, you should have completed the Professional Practice and Skills in Agriculture unit at SCQF level 7, which is part of HNC Agriculture. We also strongly recommend that you have completed one or more of the following:

- HNC Agriculture
- SCQF level 6 qualification in a relevant subject, along with appropriate work experience

Assessment

You can be assessed in a variety of ways, including practical and written tasks, completed individually or as part of a group.

Future progression and employment

On completion of the unit, you may be able to progress to degree-level study in agriculture or rural business management. Alternatively, you may want to go directly into employment on a farm or in a rural business at supervisory or junior management level.

Meta-skills

Throughout this unit, you develop meta-skills that are useful for the agriculture sector.

Meta-skills are transferable behaviours and abilities that help you adapt and succeed in life, study and work. There are three categories of meta-skills: self-management, social intelligence and innovation.

Self-management

You develop your self-management skills as you learn to manage your time, use appropriate software, and adapt to new way of working to solve problems and take advantage of opportunities.

Social intelligence

You develop your social intelligence skills as you learn to communicate more effectively — in particular to listen, and work constructively with your peers.

Innovation

You develop your innovation skills as you ask questions of your peers and agriculture experts; take a creative approach to strategic marketing ideas and business recommendations; explore your professional place in society; and demonstrate logical and analytical thinking.

Learning for Sustainability

Throughout this unit, you develop skills, knowledge and understanding of sustainability.

You learn about social, economic and environmental sustainability principles and how they relate to the agriculture sector. You also develop an understanding of the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#).

Administrative information

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Superclass: SM

History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date

Please check [our website](#) to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of this unit.

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