

NextGen: HN unit specification

Specialist Farming Management (SCQF level 8)

Unit code: JL2G 48

SCQF level: 8 (8 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 knowledge and skills needed to manage specialist farming enterprises not covered in the Crop Management Systems and/or Livestock Management Systems units. As they study this unit, learners have the opportunity to investigate the management of specialist farming systems relevant to their geographical area.

It is an optional unit in HND Agriculture, and can also be studied on a stand-alone basis.

If learners study the unit as part of HND Agriculture, they may be able to progress to degree-level qualifications in agriculture, rural business management, agricultural technology or related areas. Alternatively, they may want to go directly into employment in an agricultural business at a junior management or supervisory level.

Entry requirements

Entry to the unit is at your centre's discretion. Before they start the unit, learners should have completed the Specialist Farming Systems unit at SCQF level 7, or have experience in a range of specialist systems at a similar level.

We also 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. examine the differences in management between two similar specialist farming systems

Evidence requirements

Learners must provide the following evidence.

Outcome 1

Learners must visit four specialist farming enterprises, of which:

- two must be similar livestock enterprises, managed in different ways
- two must be similar arable enterprises, managed in different ways

Learners must compare two (or more) similar farming enterprises that are managed in different ways.

Their comparison must include:

- management approach
- strengths — weaknesses — opportunities — threats (SWOT) analysis
- recommendations of what best practices can be taken from each business

Knowledge and skills

Knowledge	Skills
Outcome 1 Learners should understand: • how similar enterprises can be managed differently to achieve a similar outcome	Outcome 1 Learners can: • identify best practice and use that to improve enterprise performance

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 is:

- focusing:
 - collecting the correct information on the two farm management systems by filtering out non-essential material
 - concentrating on finding the right information to identify differences

Social intelligence

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

- communicating:
 - building communication skills — particularly an ability to listen — to give and receive accurate information

Innovation

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

- curiosity:
 - improving information sourcing and questioning to enhance understanding

- sense-making:
 - demonstrating and developing synthesising and logical thinking skills when analysing information to solve problems
- critical thinking:
 - approaching the farming system in all its complexity; considering the environment, livestock and/or crops, and associated mechanisation

Literacies

This unit provides opportunities to develop the following literacies.

Numeracy

Learners develop their numeracy skills by interpreting performance figures, both technical and financial.

Communication

Learners enhance their communication skills by gathering information for all learning outcomes and communicating their findings through assessments.

Digital

Learners develop their digital skills and computer literacy by producing assessment evidence, and engaging with learning materials and course content.

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 unit is part of HND Agriculture.

You should arrange visits to livestock and arable enterprises to support the delivery. There are opportunities to integrate delivery and/or assessment with the Professional Development and Principles of Agricultural Business Management units. You may be able to cover research for more than one outcome in more than one unit during one well-organised farm visit, if practicable.

The notional design length for the unit is 40 hours. The amount of time you allocate to each outcome is at your centre's discretion.

Additional guidance

The guidance in this section is not mandatory.

Approaches to delivery

During the unit, learners should have the opportunity to visit four specialist farming enterprises, of which:

- two should be similar livestock enterprises managed in different ways. These could involve, for example:
 - farmed deer versus wild deer
 - milking goats versus milking cows and/or sheep
- two should be similar arable enterprises managed in different ways. These could involve, for example:
 - pick-your-own soft fruit versus harvested soft fruit
 - conventional carrots on a supermarket contract versus organic carrots to be sold through a farm shop

Farm visits should provide learners with enough information to:

- compare the management of the pairs of enterprises
- carry out a SWOT analysis
- advise on the best practices of each business

Approaches to assessment

Learners can produce evidence in a variety of ways, including a:

- small group presentation, ideally presented back to the farmers whose enterprises they visited
- short written report comparing the two systems
- poster exhibition
- technical note
- podcast
- Wiki
- short video

Learners could compare, for example:

- a soft fruit farm using polytunnels with one using glasshouses or growing outdoors
- a farm with milking cows with a farm with milking goats

Resources

Learners should have the opportunity to visit four specialist farming enterprises.

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

Managing Specialist Farming Enterprises (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

The unit gives you the knowledge and skills you need to examine the differences in management between two similar specialist farming systems.

The unit complements learning from the Crop Production Management and Livestock Management Systems units in HND Agriculture.

Farms can vary hugely due to many factors, including land type, climate, available resources and access to markets. You visit farming enterprises to compare how two (or more) farms can be producing the same (or very similar) end product, but using different management systems. In many cases, farmers can learn from one another, as practices on different farms may be transferable. You consider what those transferable benefits are and how they could be applied elsewhere.

Prior knowledge and skills

Before you start, you should have completed the Specialist Farming Systems unit at SCQF level 7, or have experience in a range of specialist systems at a similar level. We also 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 examine the contrasting management styles in four different farming enterprises, and can present your evidence in a variety of ways.

Future progression and employment

On completion of this unit, you may wish to progress to further study in degree-level qualifications in agriculture, rural business management, agricultural technology or related areas, or go straight into employment on a farm at a junior management or supervisory 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 focus on collecting and filtering essential information.

Social intelligence

You develop your social intelligence skills as you become more effective at communicating — particularly listening.

Innovation

You improve your innovation skills as you ask questions and look to improve your information sourcing; demonstrate logical and analytical thinking; and consider the farming system in all its complexity and interconnectedness.

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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