

# Next Generation Higher National Unit Specification

## Botanic and Historic Garden Horticulture (SCQF level 8)

**Unit code:** J7A6 48  
**SCQF level:** 8 (24 SCQF credit points)  
**Valid from:** session 2024–25

### **Prototype unit specification for use in pilot delivery only (version 2.0) August 2024**

This unit specification provides detailed information about the unit to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year.

This unit specification is for teachers and lecturers and contains all the mandatory information required to deliver and assess the unit.

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## **Unit purpose**

This unit provides learners with knowledge and experience of the history, current roles, and management of botanic and historic gardens. They use case studies to develop their knowledge of the evolution of the gardens through time and how they are currently used and managed as landscapes, places for research and learning, and visitor attractions.

Learners explore the diversity of botanic and historic gardens, looking at their individual histories and their wider position as part of geopolitical and colonial legacies, as well as their part in the development of horticulture as a discipline. They consider gardens in their contexts as holders of important collections of plants, community spaces, and agencies of change in the face of global biodiversity loss and climate change.

## Unit outcomes

Learners who complete this unit can:

- 1 appraise the history and development of botanic and historic gardens
- 2 examine the users and roles of botanic and historic gardens
- 3 appraise issues of management in botanic and historic gardens at supervisory level
- 4 apply knowledge and skills in the management of plant displays and collections in botanic and historic gardens

## Evidence requirements

Learners can evidence their knowledge and skills in one or more ways, such as individual assessments for each outcome, or one or more integrated projects. The degree of integration in the project is at your centre's discretion, and should be appropriate to learners' resources and access to suitable case studies.

Learners must provide the following evidence:

### Outcome 1

Learners must demonstrate that they can:

- ◆ compare and contrast two forms of historic garden styles
- ◆ analyse the evolution of a garden of historical importance

Learner evidence should include two outputs. Examples could include a:

- ◆ presentation
- ◆ video
- ◆ written report
- ◆ poster
- ◆ public interpretation piece

### Outcome 2

Learners must demonstrate that they can:

- ◆ appraise the roles of botanic and historic gardens
- ◆ identify botanic and historic garden user groups and their needs
- ◆ conduct an accessibility review of a site, using appropriate legislation, such as General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and laws on equality and diversity, and health and safety
- ◆ design resources for an identified user group of a botanic or historic garden

### **Outcomes 3 and 4**

Learners should gather evidence that demonstrates that they can:

- ◆ review, research, evaluate, and make recommendations on one or more curatorial, development or management projects for a botanic or historic garden property
- ◆ use findings of the user group and roles review project to form part of their management and curatorial review, if appropriate
- ◆ produce a management plan for the project

Examples of learner evidence could include:

- ◆ curation: review and recommendations for existing plant collections and heritage national collections
- ◆ thematic collection development: research, teaching, conservation, children's area
- ◆ display: curating and developing for teaching, research or conservation
- ◆ collection: developing a thematic display area for the public or a collection policy for a botanic garden

## Knowledge and skills

The following table shows the knowledge and skills covered by the unit outcomes:

Knowledge	Skills
<p><b>Outcome 1</b> Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ how the history of gardens has evolved, and how it influences their roles and purposes today</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome 1</b> Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ assess the importance of a garden's history in informing its management today</li> <li>◆ competently use a range of historical sources in research</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome 2</b> Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ the range and needs of various botanic and historic garden user groups</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome 2</b> Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ assess the needs of botanic and historic garden user groups</li> <li>◆ devise appropriate policy or interpretation material for these groups</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome 3</b> Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ the opportunities and challenges facing botanic and historic gardens</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome 3</b> Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ characterise the funding and staffing structures of botanic and historic gardens</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome 4</b> Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ how to curate and develop a plant collection</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome 4</b> Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ characterise a plant collection, producing a baseline assessment</li> <li>◆ devise a development plan for the collection</li> </ul>

## Meta-skills

Throughout the unit, learners develop meta-skills to enhance their employability in the horticulture sector.

### Self-management

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ focusing: reviewing, researching, evaluating, and making recommendations on a curatorial, development or management project
- ◆ adapting: making recommendations for existing plant collections and heritage national collections after review
- ◆ initiative: identify botanic and historic garden user groups and their needs

### Social intelligence

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ communicating: receiving and giving information
- ◆ collaborating: working in groups with peers

### Innovation

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ curiosity: analysing the evolution of a garden of historical importance
- ◆ critical thinking: designing and implementing a management plan

## Literacies

Learners develop core skills in the following literacies:

### Numeracy

Learners develop numeracy skills by considering best financial practice in management planning.

### Communication

Learners develop communication skills by working in groups, developing projects and discussing related topics.

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## **Digital**

Learners develop digital skills and computer literacy by using digital software to design a management plan for a project.

## Delivery of unit

We recommend that you deliver the unit according to your centre's facilities and resources. You should make use of industry contacts and, where possible, organise site visits to help learners to contextualise their understanding.

You can integrate the development of a management plan in outcomes 3 and 4 with Horticulture: Professional Practice at SCQF level 8.

The notional design length for the unit is 120 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** — appraise the history and development of botanic and historic gardens  
(20 hours)

**Outcome 2** — examine the users and roles of botanic and historic gardens  
(30 hours)

**Outcome 3** — appraise issues of management in botanic and historic gardens at supervisory level  
(30 hours)

**Outcome 4** — apply knowledge and skills in the management of plant displays and collections in botanic and historic gardens  
(40 hours)



## Additional guidance

The guidance in this section is not mandatory.

### Content and context for this unit

#### Outcome 1

##### Evolution of a designed landscape

Learners' evidence should have two outputs, such as a presentation, a video, a report, a poster or a public interpretation piece (at your centre's discretion):

- ◆ Element 1: Compare and contrast two forms of historical garden style. This can be global, in the abstract, or local, using case studies as key examples, particularly if integrated with element 2 below. For example, a local garden planted in the natural style could be the starting point to explore the natural style in greater depth and contrast with formal Japanese gardens.
- ◆ Element 2: Analyse the evolution of a case-study garden of historical importance. This may be local and accessible, or anywhere globally if resources are available to provide an appropriately thorough appraisal of the garden.

For both elements, learners should address the modern significance of the styles and the chosen sites. They can combine the elements in a single submission, or they can use element 1 as both a summative piece on its own and as part of a formative submission for element 2, the evolution of garden styles.

#### Outcome 2

##### Garden roles and users

Learners appraise the roles of botanic and historic gardens, identifying the user groups and their needs and designing a resource for an identified user group of a garden, gardens, or garden organisation. It is acceptable to apply this to a volunteer group or professional organisation, rather than a physical garden. The resource could be theoretical or, if appropriate, a real-world project.

Learners' choice of output would depend on the situation, for example:

- ◆ an accessibility review or assessment: user groups would be those with accessibility challenges or those responsible for accessibility in the garden
- ◆ a health and safety review: for staff, students or visitors, depending on the area or areas of focus
- ◆ an interpretation piece, such as a leaflet or information sign: user groups would be public visitors and could include particular subgroups, thematic messaging or similar depending on the situation
- ◆ a lesson plan: user groups would be teachers, other educators and learners
- ◆ marketing literature or a product range: user groups could be customers in the shop or cafe
- ◆ a podcast, blog, vlog or other video resource: user groups could be online visitors

- ◆ a visitor review: user groups would be management and other staff. This could include a questionnaire or interview element, if appropriate ethical and GDPR support can be provided, and specific focus areas could be chosen depending on the situation

Learners' outputs should incorporate planning and reflection elements to evidence the choices made in its production. It should include appropriate consideration of ethics, GDPR, accessibility and equality, as well as health and safety considerations.

This project is well-suited to group work, with each group tackling a different management project. It is also well-suited to learners at this level who are supervising learners at SCQF levels 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Learners can combine the evidence for outcomes 1 and 2 to create a comprehensive review and make management recommendations for a project in a garden context if the projects are appropriate. However, this structure and degree of integration should be standardised across a given cohort to allow for better tracking (even if there are a number of project groups working on different projects).

### **Outcome 3**

#### **Garden management**

Learners review a site's operations, strengths and challenges, characterise funding and staffing structures, and discuss recent or upcoming large projects at the site or sites. In particularly large or complex cases, they can focus on a subsection within the garden or site, such as a glasshouse department.

One part of the process should incorporate a planning element. This might look at a broad calendar of activities for a typical year, incorporating key horticultural elements and, if appropriate, planned public-facing events. The main focus of this planning element should be on the horticultural operations and resources required.

Learners can present their evidence in any appropriate format — a presentation, a poster, a series of participatory discussions, a written report, factsheets or a combination of several of these. It should incorporate the planning element, typically in the form of a calendar (digital or written).

It may be useful to incorporate Gantt charts; strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analyses; and similar time-management and planning tools. Learners can gather information from corporate planning documents, online research and, if appropriate ethics procedures are followed, through interviews and discussions with staff.

One other option is for learners to produce a comparative overview of several sites they have visited, with one investigated in greater depth. However, learners should be able to produce the outputs for any site and need not have visited it. A degree of reflection on how easy it is to access sources of information is useful.

Being aware political and professional sensitivities will be particularly important in this activity.

## Outcome 4

### Collections management

This involves project development on a specific collection, and can be theoretical or developed as a plan to be implemented by the learner group. They can develop an existing collection or introduce a new one, using similar research skills in both scenarios.

Learners' evidence might typically be a curatorial review in the form of a document with a current baseline assessment and plans for the development of the project and maintenance once established. It should:

- ◆ determine the purpose of the collection
- ◆ identify resources and use them to characterise the collections:
  - for existing collections, a 'baseline' survey is necessary — learners should investigate existing records (if any) to determine what is held in the collections, and/or use ground-truthing or inventorying to establish the baseline. This is an excellent opportunity to hone identification skills using appropriate resources
  - for both existing and new collections, an assessment of the key challenges and the resources required and available to implement the project are necessary. For example, will new plants be required and, if so, what can be recommended and why, where would they be sourced from, how, and at what cost?
  - include a maintenance plan for the collection

This curatorial review could optionally incorporate, or be replaced by, a presentation to stakeholders.

Examples of collections could be:

- ◆ horticultural and/or taxonomic: a plant heritage national collection, a garden's woody plant or trees, aquatic plants, or Rhododendron collections
- ◆ a thematic collection: research, teaching, conservation, a community or children's area; or a thematic display area for the public based around, for example, geography or medicinal plants

## **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 should take into account the needs of individual learners when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled learners and/or those with additional support needs is available on the assessment arrangements web page:

[www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements).

## Information for learners

### Botanic and Historic Garden Horticulture (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 provides you with knowledge and experience of the history, current roles and management of botanic and historic gardens. You use case studies to develop your knowledge of the evolution of the gardens through time and how they are currently used and managed as landscapes, places for research and learning, and visitor attractions.

On completion of the unit, you can:

- 1 appraise the history and development of botanic and historic gardens
- 2 examine the users and roles of botanic and historic gardens
- 3 appraise issues of management in botanic and historic gardens at supervisory level
- 4 apply knowledge and skills in the management of plant displays and collections in botanic and historic gardens

Your knowledge and skills can be assessed in various ways, such as individual assessments for each outcome, or one or more integrated projects.

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

On completion of the unit, and on achievement of the Higher National Diploma (HND), you can progress to the BSc in Horticulture. Alternatively, you may wish to apply directly to the horticulture industry and related work placements.

# Administrative information

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**Superclass:** SF

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## History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date
2.0	Changed unit title to reflect content and amended evidence requirements for outcome 1.	July 2024

Note: please check [SQA's website](#) to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of this document.