

# Next Generation Higher National Unit Specification

## Professional Development (SCQF level 8)

**Unit code:** J7B0 48  
**SCQF level:** 8 (16 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 an overview of the skills needed 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.

Before starting the unit, learners should have completed the Professional Practice Skills unit at SCQF level 7, which is part of the Higher National Certification (HNC) in Agriculture.

Learners who complete the unit as part of the Higher National Diploma (HND) in 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.

## Unit outcomes

Learners who complete this unit can:

- 1 develop a range of administrative, planning, organisational, and technical and/or instructional skills
- 2 develop own meta-skills in a vocational 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

In this unit, you assess a learner's meta-skills development as an outcome, following the evidence requirements set out below.

Learners must produce evidence that shows they have:

- ◆ self-assessed their meta-skills baseline
- ◆ created a plan for their own meta-skills development
- ◆ carried out activities to develop and demonstrate their meta-skills
- ◆ used reflective practice to monitor and assess the meta-skills they have improved and developed

### **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

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>◆ administrative and communication skills</li> <li>◆ planning skills</li> <li>◆ organisational skills</li> <li>◆ technical and/or instructional skills</li> <li>◆ appropriate digital skills and programs</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome 1</b> Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ apply and demonstrate these skills</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome 2</b> Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ meta-skills, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— the categories of self-management, social intelligence and innovation, and associated meta-skills, as described in Skills 4.0: A skills model to drive Scotland’s future</li> <li>— the importance of developing meta-skills, including employability, adaptability, and effectiveness</li> <li>— what meta-skills are most relevant to the learner’s vocational context</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ approaches to developing meta-skills, in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— self-awareness: analysing preferences, strengths and weaknesses; meta-skills self-assessment</li> <li>— goal setting and action planning</li> <li>— reflective practice: principles of reflective practice; tools and approaches for effective reflective practice</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome 2</b> Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ plan a strategy for meta-skills development</li> <li>◆ implement and review plans for their meta-skills development</li> <li>◆ assess their meta-skills development</li> </ul>

Knowledge	Skills
<p><b>Outcome 3</b>                      Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ human resource management, staff recruitment, and how to apply basic employment law</li> <li>◆ resource management:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— land</li> <li>— infrastructure</li> <li>— equipment</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ personal development appraisal and career development planning</li> <li>◆ the principles of the UN SDGs</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome 3</b>                      Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ demonstrate and apply these skills in a workplace environment</li> </ul>

## Meta-skills

Throughout the unit, learners develop meta-skills to enhance their employability in the agricultural sector. The structure of the unit encourages you to apply a holistic approach to content delivery and assessment, in line with the integrated nature of agriculture, and for learners to develop meta-skills intrinsically.

### Self-management

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ 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 meta-skill includes:

- ◆ 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 meta-skill includes:

- ◆ curiosity and 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

### Numeracy

Learners develop numeracy skills by carrying out a resource audit during an appropriate work placement, through project development planning and delivery, and by building a digital skills portfolio.

## **Communication**

Learners develop communication skills by participating 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 develop digital skills and computer literacy as they develop appropriate skills and produce work using various digital mediums.



## Delivery of unit

This is a mandatory unit in the HND Agriculture.

This unit involves learners taking 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 own meta-skills in a vocational 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 doing relevant National Certificates (NCs) or Higher National Certificates (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 helping learners' 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 are in themselves 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:

- ◆ human resource management, recruitment of staff, and application of basic employment law
- ◆ 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 National Certificate (NC) learners in a practical environment. You could develop other options for assessment 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 choose to 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 in the enterprise in which they complete 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.

## **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

### 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

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.

Before you start the unit, you should have completed the Higher National Certificate (HNC) Agriculture Professional Practice and Skills unit at SCQF level 7, or equivalent.

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.

On completion of the unit, you may be able to progress to a degree in agriculture or rural business management. Alternatively, you could find employment on a farm or in a rural business at supervisory or junior management level.

# Administrative information

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**Superclass:** AF

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## History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date
2.0	Changes to evidence requirements of outcome 3.	June 2024

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