

## SCQF level 5 Unit Specification

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### **Geography: Global Issues**

**SCQF:** level 5 (6 SCQF credit points)

**Unit code:** J2EK 75

### **Unit outline**

The general aim of this unit is to develop the learner's geographical skills and techniques in the use of numerical and graphical information in the context of global issues. Learners will draw upon knowledge and understanding of significant global geographical issues.

Learners who complete this unit will be able to:

- 1 Use a range of numerical and graphical information in the context of global geographical issues
- 2 Draw on detailed knowledge and understanding of significant global geographical issues

This unit is available as a free-standing unit. The unit specification should be read in conjunction with the unit support notes which provide advice and guidance on delivery, assessment approaches and development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. Exemplification of the standards in this unit is given in the unit assessment support.

### **Recommended entry**

Entry to this unit is at the discretion of the centre. However, learners would normally be expected to have attained the skills, knowledge and understanding required by one or more of the following or equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

- ◆ National 4 Geography course or relevant component units

## **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. For further information, please refer to the unit support notes.

# Standards

## Outcomes and assessment standards

### Outcome 1

The learner will:

- 1 Use a range of numerical and graphical information in the context of global geographical issues by:**
  - 1.1 Interpreting detailed numerical and graphical information from at least two sources
  - 1.2 Evaluating numerical and graphical information to draw a detailed conclusion based upon evidence

### Outcome 2

The learner will:

- 2 Draw on detailed knowledge and understanding of significant global geographical issues by:**
  - 2.1 Describing, in detail, key features of a significant global geographical issue
  - 2.2 Explaining, in detail, the causes and effects of a global geographical issue
  - 2.3 Explaining, in detail, the strategies adopted in response to a significant global geographical issue

## Evidence requirements for the unit

Assessors should use their professional judgement, subject knowledge and experience, and understanding of their learners, to determine the most appropriate ways to generate evidence and the conditions and contexts in which they are used.

Evidence is required to show that the learner has met the outcomes and assessment standards.

A range of sources of numerical and graphical information may be used in this unit such as maps, diagrams, statistical tables, graphs and charts.

Learners need only be assessed in one global issue context in order to demonstrate achievement of the assessment standards. Good teaching and learning will provide appropriate depth and breadth through the study of at least two global issues.

Assessment evidence can be drawn from a variety of activities and presented in a variety of formats, including, for example, presentations, posters, written responses to questions and participation in group tasks. All of the evidence does not need to be from the one activity, but can be assembled from a variety of tasks and assessments. Evidence may be presented for individual outcomes or gathered for the unit or units by combining assessment holistically.

Exemplification of assessment is provided in the unit assessment support. Advice and guidance on possible approaches to assessment is provided in the unit support notes.

## Assessment standard thresholds

If a candidate successfully meets the requirements of the specified number of assessment standards they will be judged to have passed the unit overall and no further re-assessment will be required.

The specific requirements for this unit is as follows:

- ◆ Assessment standards 1.1, 1.2, 2.2, and 2.3 must be achieved.

It should be noted that there will still be the requirement for candidates to be given the opportunity to meet all assessment standards. The above threshold has been put in place to reduce the volume of re-assessment where that is required.

# Development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

It is expected that learners will also develop broad, generic skills through this unit. The skills that learners will be expected to improve on and develop through unit are based on SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work* and drawn from the main skills areas listed below. These must be built into the unit where there are appropriate opportunities.

## **1 Literacy**

1.1 Reading

## **2 Numeracy**

2.3 Information handling

## **4 Employability, enterprise and citizenship**

4.6 Citizenship

## **5 Thinking skills**

5.3 Applying

5.4 Analysing and evaluating

Amplification of these is given in SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*. The level of these skills should be at the same SCQF level of the unit and be consistent with the SCQF level descriptor. Further information on building in skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work is given in the unit support notes.

# **Appendix: unit support notes**

## **Introduction**

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing this unit. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering this unit. They should be read in conjunction with:

- ◆ the unit specification
- ◆ the unit assessment support packs

## **Developing skills, knowledge and understanding**

Teachers and lecturers are free to select the skills, knowledge, understanding and contexts which are most appropriate for delivery in their centres.

# Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment

The aim of this section is to provide advice and guidance to centres on:

- ◆ opportunities to generate naturally occurring evidence through a range of teaching and learning approaches
- ◆ approaches to added value
- ◆ approaches to developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

This section provides suggestions and examples of how learning and teaching might be approached in the Geography: Global Issues unit.

The Global Issues unit will provide opportunities for the learner to use numerical and graphical information in the context of a global geographical issue and draw on this knowledge and understanding to give detailed explanations about one global issue, selected from the following topics:

- ◆ climate change (exemplified below)
- ◆ the impact of human activity of the natural environment (exemplified in National 4 unit support notes)
- ◆ environmental hazards (exemplified below)
- ◆ trade and globalisation (exemplified below)
- ◆ tourism (exemplified in National 4 unit support notes)
- ◆ health (exemplified in National 4 unit support notes)
- ◆ any other appropriate global issue

The choice of issue is at the discretion of the centre

Learners should be provided with the opportunity to examine a range of sources related to the issue. These could include maps, diagrams, graphs, charts and statistical information, eg a table to show the percentage deforestation over a given time frame, a map to show hurricane tracks in the North Atlantic, a line graph to show tourist numbers in Greece.

Learners would be expected to extract information from these sources and describe what they show. They should also feel confident presenting detailed information using numerical and graphical forms of presentation.

It is intended the learners will draw on these skills to outline the features of the selected issue thus allowing them to briefly explain the causes and effects on people and the environment.

Learners should also consider how the global issue can be managed and give brief explanations of the strategies adopted for the issue selected.

While centres will be expected to direct the decision regarding the selection of the global issue to be covered, within this decision they will have to consider the role the learner will play in selecting the global issue and the degree of personalisation and choice given to the learner.

An enquiry led approach to examining the issue should be encouraged to allow the learner to build up a catalogue of evidence that will allow them to discuss the issue with confidence, essentially producing a case study for each issue. For example:

- ◆ Present the learner with sources of information, presented in a variety of formats, ie numerical and graphical, relating to the selected issue to allow them to become familiar with the issue in the global context. Sources of evidence could include bar graphs/line graphs/pictographs/data tables/census data/choropleth maps/theoretical models/kite diagrams/scatter graphs/flow line maps. Living graphs could be created that encourage higher order thinking skills while at the same time introducing pupils to the issue.
- ◆ Investigate the causes of the global issue giving equal consideration to natural and man-made factors. Having studied the evidence pupils will then begin to examine the causes of the issue. This could be looked at through the eyes of a geographical mystery. The learner is set an enquiry question and presented with evidence that will allow them, through a process of elimination to begin to develop an understanding of the causes of the issue.
- ◆ Identify the immediate and longer term effects of the global issue on people, the economy and the natural environment. In order to understand the differing levels of impact across different scales pupils must begin to learn to classify information, a higher order thinking skill. Information can be classified in a variety of ways including group classification and colour classification. Throughout the issue learners are being asked to identify the impact of the issue on people, on the places they live and on the economy. These themes lend them self naturally to a classification activity. Learners must also give consideration to the temporal scale and classify the evidence further into immediate and longer-term effects.
- ◆ Suggest strategies used to help manage the global issue now and in the future. This stage in the enquiry provides an opportunity for the learner to engage in a variety of decision-making activities that will allow them to consider what has been and what could be done to manage the issue. Ideally learners should be given opportunities to discuss a 'best fit' approach to managing the effects and reducing the future consequences created by each issue. This could be done by setting up class debates and discussions that examine current evidence. Equally, learners should look to the wider geographical community to extend solutions beyond a local level response and give due consideration to national and global responses to managing the issue.
- ◆ Select sources of information that make clear the global issue and encourage learners to present these to display their understanding of the issue. This final stage of the enquiry provides an opportunity to assess each stage of the enquiry and display understanding of the issue. This could be done in a variety of ways including a summative poster presentation, digital presentation, written report, video presentation that essentially tells the story of the issue from beginning to end and provides the learners with a concrete case study resource.

It is intended that this route of enquiry encourages the application of Thinking Skills while promoting the use of a variety of data handling and processing skills. This will allow learners to communicate using a structured route of enquiry while promoting the interpretation and analysis of a range of data and resources to focus on a number of issues in a new context.

Below is a list of suggested learning and teaching approaches that could support each stage of the enquiry as exemplified through the environmental hazards topic.



**Gathering sources of information** — ‘hazards by numbers’ — start by looking at the [International Disaster Database](#) for flood events. Here you can create sources of evidence to show locations, dates, trends and costs for a variety of man-made and natural disasters. These can be used to introduce the issue to the learners.

From this evidence learners should be encouraged to start asking what the sources of information tell them and the type of data being used to communicate this information, ie numerical or graphical.

**Investigating the issue** — causes, effects and management of the issue — this is where the teacher will have to decide on the most suitable strategies for delivery that best suit the needs of the learners.

A more open ended enquiry led approach will promote more independent learning and a clear route of enquiry will support the learner in doing this. The ‘5 Ws’ approach works well with enquiry based learning:

◆ What? When? Why? Where? Who?

This approach encourages learners to start by asking questions about the issue and provides them with a scaffold around which to build their responses. A combination of independent research and providing further sources of evidence will allow the learner to develop their case study about the issue. Resources like ‘GeoActive’ and ‘Geofile’ provide detailed case study material but equally *The Independent* newspaper provides comprehensive reports on a variety of global issues.

**Selecting sources of information** — learners could be asked to recreate these sources as evidence of their handling of the data and interpretation of what they show. Learners could then create ‘living graphs’ that allow them to describe the main features of the sources of evidence and then present their findings. A variety of presentation techniques could be employed to encourage learners to display their understanding of the issue including a written report, poster presentation, slide show presentation.

## Climate change

**Aim 1:** How has the global climate changed since the last ice age and why is this an issue?

**Objective 1:** Learners will examine evidence to extract information to identify how the climate has changed in the last 10,000 years to the present day. A range of temporal evidence could be examined including ice core analysis to show longer term change (1,000s of years), historical records, retreating glaciers and tree ring analysis to show more medium term change (100s of years) and more recent evidence (decades) to show changes in climate data, ice extent, alterations to biodiversity. Learners will identify the evidence to show that climate change is not a new phenomenon and through the interpretation of straightforward numerical and graphical information describe in detail the main features of climate change.

**Aim 2:** What are the causes of global climate change?

**Objective 2:** Learners will give detailed explanations of the causes of climate change across a variety of scales from longer to shorter term change. Causes of long term climate change should be explored in detail, including the variations in the Earth’s orbit, solar output and volcanic emissions. Causes of short term climate change should be

explored in detail looking at enhanced greenhouse gas emissions and the role increased human activity plays in this.

**Aim 3:** What are the potential consequences of the effects of global climate change on people and the environment in contrasting locations?

**Objective 3:** Learners will give detailed explanations of the potential effects, both positive and negative of climate change on people and the environment in the developed and developing world. The following consequences could be explored in more detail to exemplify the potential effects of climate changes; rising sea levels in coastal margins in developing nations like Bangladesh, Philippines, Florida Keys and the Great Barrier Reef, and the impact this could have on the economy and the environment. Likewise, how can the increase in extreme weather events like tropical storms generate unprecedented economic and environmental losses? Equal consideration should be given to the economic environmental and economic benefits that could be created, for example increased tourism in more northerly latitudes, improved crop yields/varieties and the reduced level of dependency on other nations.

**Aim 4:** What can be done to respond to the threat of global climate change?

**Objective 4:** Learners will offer detailed explanations of the strategies that could be used in responding to and reducing the effects of climate change. Learners should be provided with opportunities to explore the difference between prevention and mitigation of global climate change. They will appreciate that there will have to be a united response within and between nations in order to tackle the effects of climate change. Learners should understand what can be done on a local level and by individuals, ie household recycling/reducing food miles and getting involved in local initiatives like cycle to school. On a national level, by showing an appreciation of Government Initiatives like increased road tax on 'gas guzzlers' and incentives for low-emission vehicles and carbon neutral homes. On an international level by showing an understanding of involvement by individual nations with the UNIPPC and the application of science in controlling the climate ie geo-engineering.

**Aim 5:** Identifying and selecting straightforward numerical and graphical information that can be used to show the challenges created by climate change as a global issue facing the world in the 21st Century.

**Objective 5:** Learners will select at least of one piece of numerical and one piece of graphical information that has been produced/reproduced and presented to show the learners understanding of the causes, effects and strategies involved in managing the global issue that is climate change. For example, learners could produce a written report on behalf of the United Nations that explains in detail, using selected evidence, the threats faced by climate change.

## Environmental hazards

**Aim 1:** What are environmental hazards and why are they a global issue?

**Objective 1:** Learners will examine evidence to extract information to identify examples of different types of environmental hazard and where in the world they happen. Examples of geomorphological (earthquakes, volcanoes and landslides) and meteorological (floods, tropical storms, forest fires and droughts) hazards should be introduced. Learners should know the difference between a 'natural hazard' and a

'natural disaster' and subsequently their relationships with people. Using straightforward maps learners could begin to identify the locations where these hazards happen and explore the idea that increased global population is putting more people at risk from natural hazards. Learners could also begin to identify if there is a relationship between the location of natural hazards and the level of development of the country they happen in.

**Aim 2:** What are the causes of environmental hazards that make them a global issue?

**Objective 2:** Learners will appreciate that environmental hazards effect people in different ways and happen at contrasting locations. Learners should show an appreciation of the concept of hazards as a risk and know that the greater the exposure to risk (how vulnerable they are and how this level of vulnerability will affect their capacity to cope) the more likely people are to experience an environmental hazard. Learners will give detailed explanations of the causes of one environmental hazard event that happens in the developed world and one environmental hazard event that happens in the developing world. For each named event the learner should explain in detail the natural causes of the environmental hazard and, where appropriate, investigate how human activity could contribute to these causes.

**Aim 3:** Why do people live in areas at risk from natural hazards and what are the risks they face?

**Objective 3:** Learners will give detailed explanations of the effects a named environmental hazard can have on people, the economy and the environment in contrasting locations. It is important for the learner to know the difference between immediate and longer term effects and to give examples of these in their explanations. It is also important that learners can classify the effects into those that are of direct consequence to people, ie loss of life, injury and homelessness, economic consequences, ie job losses, destruction of business and implications for trade as well as environmental consequences, ie habitat loss and destruction. Learners should also appreciate that different levels of vulnerability between those in the developed and developing world can influence the extent of these effects, ie the more developed world generally experiences greater economic losses, while the developing world generally experiences a higher death toll.

**Aim 4:** What can be done to manage the effects of environmental hazards?

**Objective 4:** Learners will offer detailed explanations of the strategies that could be used in hazard management. Learners should be provided with opportunities to explore the difference between prevention and mitigation of natural hazards. For a named environmental hazard event in the developed and developing world the learner should feel confident giving straightforward strategies used to help manage or prevent the environmental hazard. Consideration should be given to what can be done by individuals to manage the risk of experiencing this environmental hazard as well as what can be done on a national level by the country exposed to this risk. Many of the strategies given will be as a result of an event that has taken place, however learners should also be given an opportunity to consider what can be done to increase a country's capacity to cope with these events in the future.

**Aim 5:** Identifying and selecting numerical and graphical information that can be used to show the challenges created by environmental hazards as a global issue facing the world in the 21st century.

**Objective 5:** Learners will select at least one piece of numerical and one piece of graphical information that has been produced/reproduced and presented to show the learner's understanding of the global issue, its causes, effects and strategies involved in managing named examples of environmental hazard events. For example learners could present a news report on the events of an environmental hazard that explains in detail, using selected evidence, the threats faced by named environmental hazards.

## Trade and globalisation

**Aim 1:** Why is globalisation relevant to life in the 21st century and what are the issues associated with this concept?

**Objective 1:** Learners will examine evidence to extract information to begin to understand the concept of globalisation. Learners should begin to identify trends in the global patterns of trade and it is suggested that an example of a TNC could be introduced to help exemplify the increased level of interdependence between the developed and developing world. For example a telecommunications company that shows the developments in ICT that promote the development of localised industrial regions with global connections. Learners would be expected to show an awareness of their role as global citizens and the increased way in which they rely on a global network to facilitate food, fashion and ICT in the 21st century.

**Aim 2:** What changes are taking place to global economies?

**Objective 2:** Learners will appreciate that global economies are changing. Learners will give detailed explanations of the causes of these changes and the relative importance of these to the developed and developing world. Due consideration should be given to the decline in the primary and secondary sector in the UK that led to deindustrialisation and the reasons for this, including resource depletion, competition from cheap imports, mechanisation and social change. Equal time should be given to the growth of emerging economies in developing nations and the catalysts for growth; access to raw materials, cheap and readily available labour and tax incentives. This could be exemplified by using the Clarke-Fisher model to show changing employment in countries at different levels.

**Aim 3:** Who are the winners and losers when new economies emerge?

**Objective 3:** Learners will give detailed explanations of the effects, positive and negative, that changing global economies can have on people, the economy and the environment in contrasting locations. Learners will examine in detail the growth of one emerging economy, perhaps in SE Asia. They would be expected to look briefly at the reasons for industrial growth as outlined in the previous objective and examine in greater detail the advantages and disadvantages of this growth for the economy, people employed in the industry and wider community and surrounding natural environment. Equal consideration should be given to the advantages (reduced unemployment/increased GDP/global awareness) and the disadvantages (unfair trade/over reliance on developed nations). Learners should also give consideration to the effects felt by those who have experienced industrial decline in the developed nations.

**Aim 4:** What strategies can be adopted to promote fair trade?

**Objective 4:** Learners will offer detailed explanations of the strategies that could be used to manage the economic, social and environmental impacts of changes to the economy. The promotion of growth and fair trade and co-operatives in ensuring emerging economies, those employed in them and the surrounding environments are protected.

**Aim 5:** Identifying and selecting straightforward numerical and graphical information that can be used to show the challenges created by globalisation and trade as a global issue facing the world in the 21st century.

**Objective 5:** Learners will select a minimum of one piece of numerical and one piece of graphical information that has been produced/reproduced and presented to show the learner's understanding of the global issue, its causes, effects and strategies involved in changing economies in the developed and developing world. For example learners could present a report on the events of economic change that explains in detail, using selected evidence, the issues surrounding changing patterns of trade and globalisation.

## Approaches to assessment and gathering evidence

Assessment is an integral part of learning and teaching in Curriculum for Excellence. Learners should have a clear understanding of the requirements of the unit, should be encouraged to set their own learning objectives, assess the extent of their existing knowledge, and to review their own progress.

Learners learn best when they:

- ◆ understand clearly what they are trying to learn, and what is expected of them
- ◆ are given feedback about the quality of their work, and what they can do to make it better
- ◆ are given advice about how to make improvements and are fully involved in deciding what needs to be done next, and who can give them help if they need it

Teachers and lecturers should:

- ◆ share learning/assessment criteria
- ◆ provide effective feedback
- ◆ encourage peer and self-assessment
- ◆ question effectively using higher order questioning when appropriate

Tasks should be created that allow for personalisation and choice. Learners should be given the opportunity to choose a topic that has interested them and they should be encouraged to choose a variety of relevant sources to research and also method of presentation that suits them in order to facilitate personalisation and choice.

Teachers and lecturers should use inclusive approaches to assessment that takes into account of the specific needs of their learners. Teachers and lecturers should use appropriate content, resources and assessment materials that recognise the achievements and contributions of different groups.

A variety of methods of assessment should be used to gather evidence such as extended writing, source evaluation, pupil presentations, role play, investigation work and creation of various media that will allow learners and teachers and lecturers to establish their next steps.

## **Combining assessment within units**

Assessment could be combined in this unit by holistically assessing all the outcomes of the unit in a single assessment. When assessment within the unit is holistic, teachers and lecturers should take particular care to track the evidence for each individual outcome.

# Administrative information

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**Superclass:** RF

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## History of changes to National unit specification

Version	Description of change	Date
1.1	Unit Support Notes added. Assessment standard threshold added.	September 2018
2.0	Unit code updated	July 2019
3.0	References to units as part of the National 5 course removed.	May 2024

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