HNC Rural Business Management

(part-time online distance learning)

## **Programme Content**

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# Module Specifications

**Business Management: An Introduction**

This Unit enables you to acquire basic business skills and a basic knowledge of the business world. Most college graduates will finish their careers with some measure of business responsibility and an awareness of the various topics covered in this Unit is invaluable.

This Unit introduces you to the study of Business Management. The Unit examines the roles of managers and the differing styles of management and discusses the relationship between managerial behaviour and an effective organisation. You will also look at the importance of leadership as part of the management process.

By the end of the Unit you should also be able to understand the important role financial budgeting plays throughout the business planning process. The Unit also gives a broad introduction to the human resource function. It is not intended that the subject matter be taught in detail but that you will understand the range of activities carried out by Human Resource Management and how these contribute to organisational success.

The Unit will give you a flavour of the challenges of employing people, marketing goods or services and also financial management.

The assessment for this Unit is likely to be through a case study of a real or hypothetical organisation. You will be required to answer questions and produce a report of around 2,000 words. You will also be required to analyse a balance sheet and profit and loss account and interpret the results.

There are opportunities to develop the following Core Skills Units/components within this Unit although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills Units or Core Skills components:

Communication at SCQF level 6

Planning and organising (a component of the Problem Solving Core Skill) at SCQF level 5

Working with numbers (a component of the Numeracy Core Skill) at SCQF level 5.

**Information Technology: Applications Software 1**

This Unit is designed to enable you to use IT systems and applications independently to support a range of information processing activities. You should develop a broad knowledge of the theoretical concepts, principles, boundaries and scope of IT Applications. By the end of the Unit you should have learned how to plan for, develop and produce the relevant information requirements of users.

To meet the requirements of users you will be required to use and develop a broad range of skills in a range of software applications packages, (a minimum of four), such as, word processor, spreadsheet, database, simulation, graphics, communications, (ie Internet, intranet, email, etc), audio/music, animation, video, multimedia, desktop publishing, data logging and retrieval, control or other packages.

On successful completion of the Unit you will be able to:

1. Operate a range of IT equipment independently, giving attention to security and to other users

2. Use a range of software packages to meet complex information requirements

In Outcome 1 you will learn about the components of hardware, the functions of operating system tools and how these are used. You will also learn about data security measures and resolving common hardware and software problems. You will learn about all of the elements above in the context of meeting the needs of all users of a computer system.

In Outcome 2 you will learn about how to use a range of software packages to meet complex information requirements. You will learn about a minimum of four different software packages from the whole range of applications packages available. The emphasis in this Outcome will be on producing complex information in a context that is unfamiliar to you. You will learn how to integrate data types, (eg text, number, graphics, audio, video) into a single product and to format the product so that the final output is clear and helpful to users. You will find out how to: plan to meet users’ information requirements; select software packages appropriate to information requirements; select suitable computer data sources for information and extract suitable information from these computer data sources to meet relevant user requirements.

To complete this Unit successfully, you must demonstrate a satisfactory level of performance in a number of tasks covering the Outcomes listed above. You must provide evidence of the work you carry out for each assessment task in the form of a set of printed documents with a front cover: each print having details of your name, the date and the task. You will be encouraged to access on-line help facilities, tutorial support and/or supplier’s manuals as required.

More detailed guidance on the content, amount, style and quality required of your work will be made available to you during your progress through the Unit.

Your assessor will observe you carrying out the assessment tasks, and will complete an observation checklist to certify that each of your prints is your own work and whether or not it has reached the required standard.

**Developing Skills for Personal Effectiveness**

By completing this Unit you will gain important knowledge and skills to help you improve your personal effectiveness.

The unit focuses on three main areas:

• self awareness and personal skills – such as, self-assessment, time management, problem solving and task management

• knowledge and understanding of the causes of stress and approaches to its reduction and resolution

• interpersonal skills – such as, communication skills, working with others, negotiating skills, assertiveness skills

The unit will enable you to:

• identify the requirements for personal effectiveness

• carry out a review of your existing personal effectiveness, strengths and development needs

• create an Action Plan – based on your review – to improve your own personal effectiveness

• implement your Action Plan

• evaluate your plan, its implementation and its contribution to developing your own personal effectiveness.

You will be able to relate the activities and outcomes of this Unit to your own personal and work/career development.

On completion of the Unit you will be able to:

1. Develop self awareness and their use of personal skills.

2. Demonstrate an understanding of effective approaches to stress management.

3. Develop and apply a range of interpersonal skills for effective working with others.

Your tutor will provide you with guidance and support in completing the Unit activities. However, because the unit focuses on your personal development and effectiveness, it is your responsibility to gather, and present in your portfolio, sufficient evidence to demonstrate that you have met the assessment requirements associated with each of the three main outcomes.

**Environmental Awareness**

You will examine the main environmental effects of the use of the earth’s resources by an increasing human population. The unit develops your knowledge of the effects on the environment of using a range of resources such as energy and minerals. The Unit also introduces you to the concept that the environment is about physical, social and economic issues.

On completion of this Unit you should be able to:

* identify a range of pollutants.
* explain the effect of pollutants on the environment.
* identify the main contributing factors to global warming and acid rain.
* identify the effects your day to day activities have on the environment
* recognise the contribution you could make to environmental improvement.

You may complete one assessment which assesses all Outcomes of this Unit. Wherever possible you should relate the Outcomes to your own experience. Your ability to recognise and reduce negative influences on the environment, particularly through your own actions, will be examined by means of a report and a Personal Action Plan. The plan requires students to identify the individual impact their actions related to leisure, study and home has on the environment. This takes the form of recording actions, impacts and effects and suggesting what they might do as individuals to reduce their impact on the environment.

**Economic Issues: An Introduction**

This Unit introduces you to some basic issues in economics with a particular emphasis on the business environment. It introduces you to the basic economic problem (i.e. the allocation of resources) and how the consumer and other economic agents address this problem. It also considers how markets operate and what can be done when the operation of these markets fail. National income and its importance in government policy is also addressed.

The unit has 3 outcomes of learning introducing you to –

• the allocation of resources within the economy

• national income and its importance

• the role of government policy in the UK market

To achieve this Unit you will be asked to complete 3 pieces of assessment work. You will be asked to answer questions, normally from either a case study or statistical data or other similar stimuli. These assessments will normally be conducted in a controlled situation, lasting no more than 1 hour each time. You will be allowed to bring into the assessment some written material as support notes.

**Marketing: An Introduction**

This Unit introduces you to the basic concepts of marketing and marketing research. It explains the nature and purpose of marketing in both profit and non-profit making organisations and it introduces the concept of the marketing mix.

You will consider organisations’ product, pricing, distribution and promotional decisions in relation to changing market conditions, and you will examine marketing in terms of both consumer and industrial markets. The Unit relates to the marketing of both products and services.

Marketing should be at the heart of all organisations, and you will consider marketing’s pivotal role in relation to other organisational functions.

The Unit also considers the role of marketing research and you will consider different methods of gathering primary, secondary, qualitative and quantitative data from internal and external sources.

Throughout the Unit you will be encouraged to relate marketing theory to specific types of organisations and to specific business situations.

On completion of the Unit you will be able to explain the importance of marketing and marketing research to different organisations.

The Unit will be assessed by two separate written assignments which will be assessed under controlled conditions. Each assessment will take the form of a set of structured questions based on a case study or other stimulus material. Ideally, the same case study/stimulus material will be used for both Outcomes and each assessment will last approximately two hours.

**Financial Records for Small Business**

In this Unit you will cover a range of fundamental record-keeping skills required by managers. It is primarily aimed at candidates with no previous book-keeping experience.

The aims of the Unit are to consider the information needs of a business and how such information is recorded and processed. This includes information which must be kept by law as well as that which can be used to improve the management of the business. Some of this information will be generic and applicable to a range of businesses and some should relate more specifically to your own area of study. This will include learning about one area of policy relevant to your vocational area.

You will learn basic book-keeping skills, including the completion of a monthly cash book and VAT return. In addition you will learn about the calculation of wages for employees and the completion of associated paperwork.

Where appropriate the focus will be on learning by doing, including the use of online material and computer software.

In order to complete the Unit successfully, you will be required to achieve a satisfactory level of performance in the assessment associated with each Outcome. The selection of assessment may vary according to vocational area, particularly with regard to the policy element of Outcome 1. The main focus of the assessments will be on practical exercises.

**Creating a Culture of Customer Care**

This Unit is designed to enable you to recognise, develop and evaluate effective customer care within a work environment appropriate to your area of study.

This unit will enhance your knowledge and understanding of this key area of importance and value in today’s world of work.

The unit is made up of three outcomes.

Outcome 1 covers the key principles of customer care and looks at the need for establishing relationships with customers with a view to engendering customer loyalty.

Outcome 2 looks at different styles of management in relation to customer care.

Outcome 3 offers the opportunity for you to examine customer care standards. You will look at how a strategy is developed and how feedback is obtained. You will also consider the importance to organisations of continuous review and improvement of standards.

In order to complete this unit successfully you will be required to achieve a satisfactory level of performance in two assessed pieces of work. The first assessment will normally cover both outcomes 1 and 2 and will be undertaken in controlled conditions although you will be able to use your notes. This is shown as an open book assessment but done under the supervision of a tutor or mentor. You will have approximately 2-3 hours to do this.

The second assessment may take the form of an investigative report. You will be expected to gather information for this in your own time as well as using some class time. The second piece of assessed work will relate to the knowledge and/or skills you have learned about in outcome 3.

**Web Design: An Introduction**

This Unit is designed to introduce you to the concepts and workings of designing and creating for the web. It is primarily intended to equip you with the knowledge to create a basic website. You can do this by using a template design from elements supplied.

This Unit has three main areas, each of which is subject to a separate Outcome. To begin with you will look at analysing web pages to learn how they were put together then you will appraise other website designs. Then you will construct a basic website. You can either do this from elements and templates which will be given to you to follow or from your own designs.

Overall, you will be expected to use the knowledge and skills from the Unit to enable you to competently build a basic website.

In order to complete this Unit successfully, you will be required to achieve a satisfactory level of performance in three areas of assessed work. The first piece of assessment material will be either a written or oral assessment or an annotated visual, which will cover Outcome 1 of the Unit. For the second assessment you will be required to make an oral/or written response either individually or as part of a group to specific questions for Outcome 2. The last piece of assessment for Outcome 3 will require you to undertake a practical project to build a simple website in response to a given brief.

**Human Resource Management: Introduction**

This unit is designed to give you a general understanding of the development of human resource management. It will introduce you to the range of activities that make up the human resource management function and how they can operate in organisations. You will learn the purpose of these activities and how they can contribute to the business success.

You may be someone considering human resources as a career. You may already have human resource management or administration as part of your role at work. If so this unit is useful for you to give you a broad overview of the function. If you are considering general management as a career or if you are already in a management role, this unit will give you a greater understanding of the purpose of human resource management activities. It will enable you to make better use of the services offered by human resource professionals and help you improve your management of people.

**Rural Business: Graded Unit 1**

Thisis a single credit Graded Unit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7)

This Graded Unit is a project (case study) and may be completed towards the end of your HNC course. It is designed to assess your ability to integrate and apply knowledge and understanding from the mandatory Units in order to meet the principal aims of the HNC Rural Business Management award.

You may re-visit the selected rural business and collect supplementary data and information for your report if time permits. The report includes proposals for adding value to the business’s production.

You may visit the business more than once and receive support from the business owner. It is likely that this Unit will start mid way through the academic year. You will be required to produce an Action Plan indicating the types of information you need to source, along with timescales for production of the report. You will learn to collect data from the business; some of this data will be collected “live” during a scene setting visit while other data will be retrospectively collected through continued contact with the rural business owner or from information supplied in the case study brief.

This piece of work will develop the Core Skills of communications (written) and numeracy (numbers and graphical presentation). Your report will compare your findings with published benchmarks and you will identify good practice within the selected business. You will suggest improvements that can be made to the rural business to give added value to a production issue.

You will present findings and proposals in a structured report. There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of Problem Solving, Numeracy, and Communication all at SCQF level 5, and Information Technology at SCQF level 6 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

If you fail the project overall or wish to upgrade, then this must be done using a *substantially different* project, i.e. all stages are undertaken using a new case study. In this case, your grade will be based on the achievement in thereassessment.

**Rural Land Use in Scotland**

This Unit will introduce you to the main rural land uses in Scotland: agriculture; forestry; freshwater; field sports; energy production, mineral extraction, biodiversity and countryside recreation.

As well as looking at these individual land uses you will also consider how they interact with each other. Where possible, field trips will play an integral part of the Unit.

There are two Outcomes.

Outcome 1

This Outcome looks at agriculture in Scotland at both the national and local level. You can expect to look at aspects such as:

♦ national and local patters of use

♦ socio-economic importance

♦ range of operations carried out and annual calendar of events

♦ products

♦ geographic distribution and the influence of abiotic factors — soil, geology, climate etc

♦ associated terminology

♦ European, national and local policy directions including agri- environmental schemes

♦ environmental impacts — soil, water, air, landscape

♦ potential future developments

After considering agriculture at the national level you will be given the chance to look at the local situation — what happens, where and why? This will look at the interaction between agricultural use and environmental considerations such as geology, soil and climate.

Outcome 2:

In this Outcome you will look at the following land uses:

♦ forestry

♦ freshwater

♦ field sports

♦ energy production

♦ mineral extraction

♦ countryside recreation

♦ biodiversity conservation

After considering these individually you will switch attention to a particular area. This could be a river catchment, regional park, national park, private estate and any individual large land holding including those of organisations such as the NTS or RSPB. Here you will consider how a minimum of four of these land uses operate and the interaction between them.