

Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Managing Quality in Early Education and Childcare Settings

Unit code: DN1H 35

Unit purpose:

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

- ◆ Investigate legislative, national and local requirements in respect of ensuring quality in Early Education and Childcare Settings
- ◆ Critically evaluate the various quality assurance and accountability mechanisms employed in Early Education and Childcare Settings
- ◆ Evaluate the role of policy and its relation to the management of quality in Early Education and Childcare settings
- ◆ Take the lead role in evaluating an existing policy which is intended to promote quality improvement within an Early Education and Childcare Setting

Credit points and level: 1 HN Credit at SCQF level 8 (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8*)

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: It is recommended that candidates should have already achieved a recognised qualification in early years eg. HNC, SVQ level 3 or equivalent. They should also be working in an early years or childcare setting or have access to a suitable work placement.

Core skills: There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or a Core Skill component in this Unit. However there may be opportunities to develop the Core Skills of Communication, Working with Others and Information Technology.

Context for delivery: If this Unit is delivered as part of a group award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the group award to which it contributes. This Unit is included in the framework for the PDA Early Education and Childcare.

Assessment: Outcomes 1 and 2 will be jointly assessed by an assignment of approximately 1200 words. Outcomes 3 and 4 will also be jointly assessed by an assignment of approximately 1300 words.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Managing Quality in Early Education and Childcare Settings

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The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, knowledge and/or skills, and evidence requirements are mandatory.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the knowledge and/or skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Outcome 1

Investigate legislative, national and local requirements in respect of ensuring quality in Early Education and Childcare Settings.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Relevant legislative and non-legislative requirements
- ◆ Functions of Scottish Social Services Council and Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care in respect of Early Education and Childcare settings
- ◆ Relevant Human Resource Issues
- ◆ Current national curriculum or playwork guidelines

Evidence requirements

By the end of this Outcome, candidates should have investigated some of the relevant legislation and other documents which are used in Early Education and Childcare settings to support quality provision.

Candidates should be able to demonstrate:

- ◆ Knowledge of a minimum of 3 relevant pieces of legislation
- ◆ Knowledge of a minimum of 3 non-legislative requirements
- ◆ An awareness of the main functions of the Scottish Social Services Council and Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care in respect of Early Education and Childcare settings
- ◆ Knowledge of minimum of 3 requirements linked to Human Resource Issues
- ◆ Knowledge of current national curriculum or playwork guidelines

Assessment guidelines

This Outcome will be assessed jointly with Outcome 2 — see Outcome 2 Assessment Guidelines.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Managing Quality in Early Education and Childcare Setting

Outcome 2

Critically evaluate the various quality assurance and accountability mechanisms employed in Early Education and Childcare Settings

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Bodies to whom staff are accountable
- ◆ Different quality assurance and accountability mechanisms used in Early Education and Childcare settings
- ◆ Effects of these mechanisms in respect of the service, the staff and the users of the service

Evidence requirements

Candidates should provide evidence that they have knowledge of relevant current documentation to support their work.

By the end of Outcome 2, candidates should have examined and evaluated the various mechanisms used to support accountability and quality assurance processes.

Candidates should be able to:

- ◆ Explain the terms 'quality assurance' and 'accountability' in respect of Early Education and Childcare settings
- ◆ Identify a minimum of 5 bodies to whom staff are accountable
- ◆ Identify and explain a minimum of 4 different quality assurance and accountability mechanisms used in Early Education and Childcare settings
- ◆ Select and critically evaluate a minimum of 2 of these mechanisms in respect of effects on the service, the staff and the users of the service

Assessment guidelines

- ◆ Outcomes 1 and 2 will be assessed jointly
- ◆ An assignment of approximately 1200 words should be used
- ◆ Candidates should show evidence of having researched a minimum of 4 relevant reference sources to support their assessment response

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Managing Quality in Early Education and Childcare Setting

Outcome 3

Evaluate the role of organisational policy in relation to the management of quality in Early Education and Childcare settings.

Knowledge and/or skills

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- ◆ Current policies for Early Education and Childcare settings
- ◆ Purposes served by having formal, written policies
- ◆ Aims in relation to policy
- ◆ Reasons for revising / creating policy
- ◆ Requirements of a 'good' policy
- ◆ Effects of policy
- ◆ Relationship between policy and practice

Evidence requirements

By the end of this Outcome, candidates should have investigated different policy documents and evaluated the role of policy in relation to an Early Education and Childcare setting.

The candidate should be able to:

- ◆ Explain what is meant by the term 'policy'
- ◆ Identify a minimum of 10 appropriate policies for Early Education and Childcare settings
- ◆ Investigate the purposes served by having formal, written policies in Early Education and Childcare Settings
- ◆ Explain how the aims of the setting relate to the centre's policies
- ◆ Explore possible reasons for revising an existing policy
- ◆ Explore possible reasons for creating a new policy
- ◆ Compile a checklist of a minimum of 10 important requirements when creating a 'good' policy
- ◆ Explain 2 ways in which having policy documents can assist and 2 ways in which the provision of policy could adversely affect, the management of quality within a setting
- ◆ Examine the relationship between policy and practice by providing a minimum of 2 ways in which practice informs policy and 2 ways in which policy informs practice
- ◆ Make reference to a minimum of 4 secondary sources used to support the assessment response

Assessment guidelines

This Outcome will be assessed jointly with Outcome 4. See Outcome 4 – assessment guidelines.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Managing Quality in Early Education and Childcare Settings

Outcome 4

Take the lead role in evaluating a policy statement which is intended to promote quality improvement within an Early Education and Childcare Setting.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Suitable consultative tools which inform the evaluation process
- ◆ How to arrange and chair a meeting with agenda
- ◆ How to evaluate policy statements

Evidence requirements

By the end of this Outcome, candidates should have taken a lead role in evaluating a policy statement relating to the Early Education and Childcare setting within which she/he works.

Whilst some candidates may be able to carry out the meeting and use the selected consultative tool such as a questionnaire, others may not obtain approval to do this fully. Where it is not possible for candidates to carry out some of the practical tasks associated with the evaluation process, they should nevertheless involve the manager and/or other staff as fully as possible.

In either case, the relevant documentation, eg agenda, questionnaire, should be produced by the candidate and submitted as part of the portfolio. (This documentation should be word processed.)

The candidate should:

- ◆ Identify a possible existing policy within an Early Education and Childcare setting which could be evaluated
- ◆ Consult with manager / appropriate colleagues to agree on the selection
- ◆ Using the 'create a policy checklist' (see Outcome 3), devise a suitable consultative tool (eg questionnaire), to inform the evaluation process
- ◆ Arrange an appropriate meeting with agenda to discuss issues relating to the evaluation of the selected policy
- ◆ In the light of the evaluation, explain a minimum of 2 key points which would be changed and evaluate 2 implications for practice

Assessment guidelines

Outcomes 3 and 4 will be assessed jointly. A portfolio should be compiled taking account of the knowledge and/or skill requirements for both Outcomes. The evaluation of the policy should form part of the portfolio and should consist of approximately 500 words. The other sections in the folio should consist of approximately 800 words, resulting in a folio which amounts to a total of approximately 1300 words.

Administrative Information

Unit code:	DN1H 35
Unit title:	Managing Quality in Early Education and Childcare Settings
Superclass category:	PM
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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Managing Quality in Early Education and Childcare Settings

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This Unit is designed to enable candidates to examine and evaluate the theoretical and practical aspects of 'Quality' within an Early Education and Childcare setting. Upon successful completion of this and the other Units within the Group Award, candidates should be able to contribute effectively to ensuring the provision of high quality services for children and their families.

The Unit focuses on current policy, legislation and other documentation, with a view to supporting candidates in their ability to translate policy into practice and vice versa.

Whilst undertaking this Unit, candidates should be working in an Early Education and Childcare setting (or appropriate, related setting) which allows them to carry out the designated tasks.

It is intended that candidates will be encouraged to make links between the content of this Unit and the following Units within the Group Award:

- ◆ **Effective Leadership and Management in Care Settings**
- ◆ **Integrated Services for Children and Families**
- ◆ **Managing the Implementation of the Values and Principles of Playwork**

And/or

- ◆ **Manage a Quality Curriculum**

This Unit, and those Unit titles indicated above, form the mandatory section of the group award. It is intended that this Unit will contribute to the requirements of the **Graded Unit: Early Education and Childcare**

Outcome 1

Awareness of the importance of striving for and maintaining high quality services for children and their families cannot be overstated. Candidates should be encouraged to consider what is meant by the term 'Quality' before going on to familiarise themselves with some of the key pieces of legislation and other relevant requirements in the sector. Candidates should not be required to study the detail of the legislation, but rather should know of its existence and its main purpose. Candidates should be encouraged to look at a minimum of 3 pieces of legislation although they should at least be aware of the existence of more than this.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Managing Quality in Early Education and Childcare Settings

Possible Legislation could include:

- ◆ The Children Act (1989)
- ◆ The Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- ◆ The Data Protection Act 1998
- ◆ The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- ◆ The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
- ◆ The Race Relations Act 1976
- ◆ The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- ◆ The Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001
- ◆ The Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- ◆ Standards in Scotland's Schools etc, Act 2000
- ◆ Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003
- ◆ Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004

It should be noted that all references given in the Unit descriptor are current at the time of writing and up-dated references should be used where appropriate and possible.

Candidates should also be facilitated to understand that as well as legislation, staff in Early Education and Childcare settings need to take account of other policy requirements and guidelines.

Examples could include:

- ◆ Curriculum Frameworks
- ◆ Birth to 3: Supporting our Youngest Children
- ◆ The Child at the Centre
- ◆ Local Authority policies and other circulars
- ◆ Quality Assurance Schemes
- ◆ Values and Assumptions of Playwork

There are many other possible inclusions here.

Whilst candidates must be aware of the existence and main functions of the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care (SCRC), they should not be expected to know the detail of their activities, as their duties are extensive and extend beyond the Early Education and Childcare Sector.

Candidates should be encouraged to examine some of the HR requirements including the need for staff to understand the role of Disclosure Scotland, the need for all staff to be registered with SSSC, the importance of references, experience and relevant qualifications. Candidates should also be aware of the 3 categories of Early Years registration with SSSC, as well as the requirement for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for re-registration.

Depending upon the candidates' particular area of interest or work setting, national curriculum or playwork guidelines should be investigated.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Managing Quality in Early Education and Childcare Settings

Outcome 2

This Outcome looks at the various quality assurance and accountability mechanisms employed in Early Education and Childcare Settings. Having defined the terms 'quality', 'quality assurance' and 'accountability', candidates should then be encouraged to consider the various people/agencies to whom staff are accountable, including:

- ◆ Children
- ◆ Parents/carers
- ◆ Public
- ◆ Local authority
- ◆ Central Government
- ◆ Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)
- ◆ Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care (SCRC)

Candidates should also try to identify others to whom staff are/should be accountable and why.

Various mechanisms which facilitate Quality improvement and accountability processes should be identified, examined and evaluated.

Identified mechanisms could include:

- ◆ Development Planning
- ◆ Inspections (HMI and SCRC)
- ◆ Care Standards
- ◆ Curriculum Guidelines
- ◆ Quality Assurance Schemes
- ◆ Evaluation Procedures
- ◆ Staff Appraisal
- ◆ Performance Indicators
- ◆ Handbooks

Candidates should be encouraged to identify other, often more local mechanisms.

In evaluating these mechanisms, candidates should be provided with (and encouraged to obtain from their own settings where possible), relevant documentation eg Joint Inspection Reports, Development Plans, Child at the Centre etc.

Candidates should also evaluate the effects of using these mechanisms in relation to staff, agencies and users of the service.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Managing Quality in Early Education and Childcare Settings

Outcome 3

The provision of written policy statements in Early Education and Childcare settings is a crucial and integral part of quality provision. Through examining various actual policy documents, candidates should be encouraged to research the various areas which require policies within the sector, as well as the purposes served by policy.

Most importantly, candidates should be aware of the need for policy statements to be used as working documents which inform practice and not as paper documents which are filed and stored neatly for inspection purposes.

Some of the purposes served by policy which candidates may identify include:

- ◆ Meets legal /national/local requirements
- ◆ Promotes professionalism
- ◆ Guides activities within setting
- ◆ Clarifies roles and responsibilities
- ◆ Highlights culture and ethos of setting
- ◆ Standardises procedures and practice
- ◆ Reinforces aims of service provision
- ◆ Acts as common point of reference
- ◆ Justifies approaches
- ◆ Serves as accountability mechanism
- ◆ Re assures parents/carers and others
- ◆ Provides meaningful induction
- ◆ Protects children/staff/parents/carers

Through reference to their own experience of working with children, candidates should identify reasons for revising or creating new policies, such as:

- ◆ Changes to legislation or national policy
- ◆ Changes to funding mechanisms/resources
- ◆ Changes to structure or staff allocation
- ◆ Result of a specific incident
- ◆ Identification of gaps in policy/procedure/practice
- ◆ Outcome of monitoring/reviewing existing policy

Candidates should consider the policy statements they have access to and this could act as a springboard for them to compile a checklist of requirements for formulating a 'good policy'.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Managing Quality in Early Education and Childcare Settings

The checklist could include examples, such as:

- ◆ Include aims of policy
- ◆ Link to aims of provision
- ◆ Consider target audience
- ◆ Have appropriate discussion, consultation agreement with others
- ◆ Use uncomplicated plain language
- ◆ Include any legislative requirements
- ◆ Structure of policy
- ◆ Consistent with/complement other policies
- ◆ Take account of resource implications
- ◆ Translation into first language of users
- ◆ Procedures linked to policy
- ◆ Accessibility/whereabouts of policy
- ◆ Evaluation and monitoring of policy
- ◆ Date of last review and source/author

Whilst candidates will mainly focus on the advantages of having formal written policies, they should also be encouraged to evaluate some of the potential disadvantages which could arise, and adversely affect the management of quality in a given setting. Examples of potential disadvantages could include:

- ◆ If too many, could lose their significance
- ◆ Could result in lack of flexibility
- ◆ May be open to misinterpretation
- ◆ Practice could become out-dated and unresponsive
- ◆ Staff/ children could lose sense of spontaneity/creativity
- ◆ May become more policy-centred and less child-centred
- ◆ May restrict practice as no policy to support certain activities

Candidates should identify possible strategies for minimising/counteracting these potential disadvantages. They should also be encouraged to identify and reflect on times they have witnessed practice which has/could have informed policy and incidents where they have witnessed policy having a direct impact on practice.

Outcome 4

Within this Outcome, candidates should now be in a position to take a lead role in evaluating an existing policy statement, preferably for the setting within which they work. They should propose a suggested policy and agree in conjunction with the manager of the setting.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Managing Quality in Early Education and Childcare Settings

Candidates should use the information and documentation from Outcome 3 to help them engage in the process, for example, the checklist they devised in Outcome 3 for creating a ‘good policy’.

Candidates should be encouraged to consult and discuss the issues in as many appropriate ways as possible.

They should provide documentary evidence of how they would organise this process even if it is not possible to carry out some of the tasks, for example hold a meeting.

Guidance on the Delivery and Assessment of this Unit

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

This Unit is included in the mandatory section of the framework for the Group Award: Professional Development Award Early Education and Childcare. It is recommended that it is delivered within the framework.

However, the Unit is also suitable as a ‘stand-alone’ Unit of study for those working in the sector wishing to engage in the process of continuous professional development (CPD).

In terms of the delivery of this Unit, there should be a balance of tutor-led activity and candidate research.

As well as the tutor providing references and documentation to support the delivery, candidates should also obtain and provide examples of materials from their own practice setting, as this will enhance the overall impact of the Unit.

It is recommended that this Unit is delivered at an early stage of the course delivery as familiarity with many of the key documents will assist the students in the other Units.

Achievement of this PDA award, along with a relevant practitioner qualification, will enable candidates to be eligible to apply to the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) for registration as a manager/lead practitioner.

References to Support Delivery of this Unit include:

1. 3 – 5 Curriculum Framework Document, published 1999 KAI ISBN 1859556701
2. Andreski & Nicholls, *Managing Your Nursery* ISBN 1-899514-01-5 Nursery World Publications 1997
3. Barratt-Pugh & Rohl, *Literacy Learning*, published Open University press 2001 ISBN 0-33520846-0
4. Bell, J, *Doing your Research Project*, published Open University press 1999 ISBN-0-335-203-884

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Managing Quality in Early Education and Childcare Settings

5. Hobart & Frankel, Understanding Children's Language and Literacy, published Nelson Thornes 2000 ISBN 0-7487-3972-6
6. MacNaughton, Doing Early Childhood Research, published Open University press 2001 ISBN 0-335-20902-5
7. Nreum and Tallock, Good Practice in Implementing a Pre-School Curriculum, published Nelson Thornes 2000 ISBN 0-7487-555-35
8. Penn and Moss, Comparing Nurseries, published Paul Chapman 1997 ISBN 1-85-396-357-7
9. Rodd J, Leadership in Early Childhood, published Open University press 1998 ISBN 0335-202-810
10. Sadek J, Good Practice in Nursery Management, published Nelson Thornes 1996 ISBN 0-7487-22831
11. South Lanarkshire Curriculum Guidelines 'Learning for Living'
12. Scottish Executive, Child at the Centre (2001) ISBN 0748093265
13. Scottish Executive, Integrated Strategy for Early Years
14. Scottish Executive, TSO, Protecting Children and Young People: Framework for Standards (2004) ISBN 0-7559-40873
15. Scottish Executive, TSO, "School's Out Framework for the Development of out of School Care (2003) ISBN 0-7559-0800-7
16. Learning and Teaching Scotland, Progress with Purpose Staff Development Pack
17. Learning and Teaching Scotland, Working with Parents Early Education Support Series
18. Whitehead, Marian Language and Literacy in the Early Years, published Paul Chapman 1997 ISBN 1-85396-341-0
19. Wilkinson, J.E. (2003). 'Early Education – The New Agenda Dunedin Academic Press ISBN 1903765 17X

Useful Websites include:

1. www.childreninscotland.org.uk
2. [www.ltsotland.org.uk/early years](http://www.ltsotland.org.uk/early%20years) (Learning and Teaching Scotland)
3. www.scotland.gov.uk (Scottish Executive Education Department)
4. www.scotland.gov.uk/HMIE (Her Majesty's Inspectorate Education)
5. www.carecommission.com (The National Care Commission)
6. www.uk.com (The Scottish Social Services Council)
7. www.skillsactive.org.uk (Sector Skills Council for Playwork)

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Managing Quality in Early Education and Childcare Settings

Open learning

This Unit could be developed for open learning mode of delivery.

For information on normal open learning arrangements, please refer to the SQA guide *Assessment and Quality Assurance of Open and Distance Learning* (SQA 2000).

Candidates with additional support needs

This Unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs*, which is available on the SQA website www.sqa.org.uk

General information for candidates

Unit title: Managing Quality in Early Education and Childcare Settings

This Unit is designed primarily for qualified practitioners who would like to develop further their understanding of how to manage 'quality' within a setting.

It is expected that you will be working with children as you undertake this Unit and that you will continuously make links between theory and practice.

As you progress through the Unit, you will be required to investigate relevant legislation and consider the implications for practice.

You will be encouraged to examine the various methods used to evaluate quality within a setting and you will also consider the effects of the various methods on the service as a whole.

The role of policy is also included in the Unit and you will investigate how policy impacts on the quality of service provision.

Towards the end of the Unit, you should be ready to apply the knowledge and skills gained, to take the lead role in evaluating an existing policy within your setting.