

Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit Title: Learning and Development: Evaluating Own Practice and Planning for Self Development

Unit Code: DN3E 34

Unit Purpose: This Unit is designed to enable candidates to develop the skills and knowledge necessary for continued self-evaluation, personal action planning and development. On completion of the Unit the candidate will be able to:

1. Evaluate own practice.
2. Identify self-development needs.
3. Review individual action plan.

Credit points and level: 1 HN Credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7*)

**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: Access to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. However, candidates would normally be expected to have competence in communication skills at Intermediate 2 (SCQF Level 5) or similar qualifications or experience.

Core skills: There may be opportunities to gather evidence towards core skills in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of core skills or core skill components. However, this unit will help candidates develop core skills particularly in the areas of problem solving and communication.

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. Where appropriate, the evaluation and development should be linked to future work and career goals. If the College assessing this Unit has a Guidance system which includes tutor support sessions, this Unit may be a useful aid to the Guidance process. This Unit is included as mandatory in the framework of the HNC Learning and Development.

Assessment: This Unit will be assessed by a single assessment generating documentary evidence based on the candidate's own performance, practices and behaviour. The candidate will produce a report, an individual action plan, a record and evidence of achievement, and a reflective account.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Learning and Development: Evaluating Own Practice and Planning for Self Development

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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

Evaluate own practice

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ The factors which influence the need for personal and, where appropriate, work-related development
- ◆ How to gather, reflect on and interpret evidence of own performance
- ◆ Factors which have an impact on the ability to identify own development

Outcome 2

Identify self-development needs

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Ways of meeting own development needs
- ◆ How to draw up an individual action plan
- ◆ How to evaluate and prioritise goals and targets
- ◆ How to maintain a record of achievement

Outcome 3

Review individual action plan

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ How to evaluate the effectiveness of an individual action plan
- ◆ The impact of changes and developments in own practice

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Learning and Development: Evaluating Own Practice and Planning for Self Development

Evidence Requirements for the Unit

The assessment for this Unit must be a real evaluation of the candidate's own practices, behaviour and performance, and a genuine attempt by the candidate to assess his/her own individual self-development needs. The assessment must not be carried out as a case study, simulation, or theoretical exercise.

Candidates will demonstrate their knowledge and skills by providing linked documentary evidence for each of the three Outcomes.

For Outcome 1

Candidates should submit a report which shows they can evaluate their own practices and performance, taking account of relevant factors. They should:

- ◆ use a range of valid and reliable evidence to assess own practices, which includes an assessment of:
 - the effects of own behaviour and values on others, and
 - relevant external factors
- ◆ evaluate own performance against targets and goals
- ◆ use evidence to reflect on own behaviour and performance
- ◆ involve others in the interpretation of evidence
- ◆ accept criticism in a positive manner and assess its validity and importance
- ◆ revise goals and targets in the light of evidence reviewed.

For Outcome 2

Candidates should submit:

- ◆ an individual action plan
- ◆ a record and evidence of achievement

The candidate's action plan must set clear goals and targets for his/her own development. These goals and targets may be SMART [specific, measurable (small steps with outcomes that are objectively discernable), attainable, realistic (recognizing the constraints of available time and resources) and time-bound}, RUMBA (relevant, understandable, measurable, behavioural, achievable) or other objective system.

The action plan should contain:

- ◆ a clear statement of the goals and targets - where the candidate wants to be at the end of a specified period
- ◆ the specific knowledge and skills that will be needed to get there
- ◆ the actions the candidate will have to take to acquire the required knowledge and skills
- ◆ the resources and support required for the candidate in order to achieve his/her goal
- ◆ the criteria by which the candidate will determine whether or not he/she is still 'on course'
- ◆ intermediate stages with target dates for every step in the plan, as well as dates for completion and/or dates for review.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Learning and Development: Evaluating Own Practice and Planning for Self Development

The record of achievement should include:

- ◆ what the candidate has done and why
- ◆ what the candidate learned from each activity
- ◆ how the candidate will use the skills knowledge developed
- ◆ further activity required.

The candidate should include a portfolio of evidence of achievement.

For Outcome 3

Candidates should produce a reflective account considering how the actions taken have met individual objectives and improved practice. It should provide evidence showing that they can:

- ◆ review own action plan regularly
- ◆ re-assess objectives taking account of own personal experience and feedback from appropriate people
- ◆ revise goals and targets to ensure continued self-development to meet individual objectives.
- ◆ produce a reflective account considering how actions taken have met individual objectives and improved practice.

Assessment guidelines for the Unit

The assessment for this Unit will be by a single instrument of assessment which clearly identifies the key areas and stages of the processes of self-evaluation and action planning (where appropriate, linked to work and career goals), which will include:

- ◆ an evaluation of own practice
- ◆ an individual action plan and record of achievement
- ◆ evidence of review
- ◆ a reflective account

The candidates must provide evidence of self-evaluation. Simulation, or case study, or purely theoretical answers are therefore not appropriate for this unit.

Administrative Information

Unit code:	DN3E 34
Unit title:	Learning and Development: Evaluating Own Practice and Planning for Self Development
Superclass category:	HB
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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Learning and Development: Evaluating Own Practice and Planning for Self Development

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 concerned with providing the candidates the opportunity to evaluate their self-development needs, devise a personal action plan, and then review and re-evaluate.

The personal development described by the candidate can be work related, study related or personal development related.

This Unit may, however, form part of a group award which is primarily designed to provide candidates with technical or professional knowledge and skills related to a specific occupational area. Given the current requirements in many organisations and professions for continuous professional development, this Unit may be taught in a variety of occupational contexts - in which case it is helpful if the candidate has access to a workplace where evidence to meet the requirements can be generated (although this is not compulsory).

Outcome 1 asks the candidate to reflect and review his/her own practices. The factors to be considered are current practices and competencies, preferred and/or required practices, competencies and codes of conduct, anticipated future needs/ requirements, and personal aspirations. The candidate should start with a period of personal reflection, considering his/her main career achievements, life achievements, lessons learned and future aspirations. The candidate should consider what skills, knowledge, competence and performance levels he/she already has. Methods of reviewing performance may include, for example, personal experience, achievement, personal aspirations, work results, appraisals, formative assessments and the views of others, including colleagues and clients.

The candidate should, where appropriate, consider and research competence and performance levels required for his/her present or foreseeable future jobs. This could include research into national standards and codes of conduct, as well as anticipated future demands and developments in work practices, and consideration of the implications of the changes identified for his/her own development needs.

It may be helpful for the candidate at this point to carry out a SWOT analysis, in order to determine strengths and weaknesses, opportunities for improvement and, where appropriate, career advancement, and to note any potential obstacles.

In **Outcome 2**, candidates prepare an individual action plan and maintain a record of achievement. The candidate should look at what he/she wants to do in the future, and consider how to get there. The candidate should set aims and objectives regarding what he/she would like to achieve, taking account of personal goals and, where appropriate, work-related targets. The candidate should identify the knowledge and expertise required to achieve targets and goals. The gaps between the current and target position should be the basis of the candidate's development plan, as from this

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Learning and Development: Evaluating Own Practice and Planning for Self Development

process, the candidate should be able to identify what skills and knowledge will be needed to meet present and predicted future challenges.

Outcome 3 recognises the circular process of evaluating own practice and development needs. Candidates should note what they have done in order to carry out the plan, giving the reason, noting what they have learned, how they used the skills/knowledge gained and noting any further action required. Each candidate should also reflect on the overall process at regular intervals, take stock and make revisions and changes to take account of new developments and circumstances.

The following are suggestions of what could be included:

- ◆ sources of evidence to draw on when evaluating own practices and performance
- ◆ factors which have an impact on the ability to identify own needs and to develop
- ◆ resource and other constraints applicable
- ◆ the contribution that others make to candidate's self-evaluation
- ◆ ways of addressing own development needs: for example, as well as courses and training, it is possible to learn by participating in personal activities such as taking part in public duties, voluntary or charity work, organizing social or sports events or helping to run a club or society, writing or lecturing, informal learning such as books, newspapers, magazines, television, videos, radio, audio tapes, CD ROMS and the internet.

The list is neither prescriptive or exhaustive, and should be used as a guide only.

Also, if the candidate is at present working, or aspires to work in an organization:

- ◆ the candidate's current role, or anticipated future role, and the skills and knowledge required to carry out that role competently
- ◆ methods of evaluating own experience and performance against the requirements of the job
- ◆ organisation's aims, objectives, policies and the nature of the organization, including future needs and development and the implications for the self-development needs of the candidate
- ◆ sources of professional / work-related support and advice, knowledge and development and how to access them
- ◆ current issues and trends within professional or work-related practice, team and organisational requirements
- ◆ what constitutes best professional practice
- ◆ staff development and review procedures
- ◆ ways of addressing own development needs, eg as well as courses, seminars and conferences, it is possible to learn by taking part in professional work-related activities such as planning and running a new training course, working with a team from various disciplines, implementing new systems and techniques, writing reports and making presentations; coaching and mentoring
- ◆ how to plan own personal development and how personal development fits in to wider organisational strategies.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Learning and Development: Evaluating Own Practice and Planning for Self Development

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

The candidate will learn the skills and knowledge required for this Unit by reflection and consideration of his/her own past experiences, strengths and weaknesses, and an analysis of their own practices, therefore there are opportunities for candidate-centred discussions, including group work and pairing.

The candidate should be encouraged to generate evidence of achievement from all available sources. The following forms of evidence would be appropriate to this Unit:

- ◆ documentation, eg reports, completed staff development and review forms
- ◆ evidence given by those who have witnessed the candidate's performance
- ◆ the candidate's own description of his/her performance – written or oral – the candidate could keep a reflective diary over a period of 6 months. This form of record would need to be substantiated by an authorised source
- ◆ oral questioning, where competence cannot be inferred from direct performance evidence and supporting evidence of performance. This could include answers given by the candidate to questions about his/her actual performance and what the candidate would do in different circumstances.

Where the evidence is generated in a workplace, line managers and employers should be encouraged, wherever possible, to assist the candidate in generating real performance evidence into a portfolio of evidence.

Open Learning

If this unit is delivered by open or distance learning methods, additional planning and resources may be required for candidate support, assessment and quality assurance.

For further information and advice, please see *Assessment and Quality Assurance for Open and Distance Learning* (SQA February 2001 – publication code A1030)

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

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This Unit is designed to enable you to carry out a self-evaluation of your individual development needs,

While tackling this Unit you will work through 3 main processes, each of which is the subject of a separate Outcome.

- ◆ To begin with you will evaluate your current practice.
- ◆ Then you will identify your self-development needs and devise and carry out activities to achieve goals and targets you have identified and set out in your action plan for self-development. You will gather evidence of what you have done.
- ◆ You will reflect on the overall process at regular intervals, take stock and make revisions and changes to take account of circumstances. The Unit also gives you the opportunity to evaluate what improvements have been made to your personal practice and to consider what you have learned.

You should be able to use the knowledge and skills from the Unit to continue the process of self-evaluation and development into the future, in order to aim to achieve your personal life targets, as well as, where appropriate, your career goals and aspirations.

In order to complete this Unit successfully, you will be required to achieve a satisfactory level of performance by providing evidence that you have completed the whole process of self-evaluation and development including an evaluation of your own practice, a personal action plan, record of achievement, evidence of review and a reflective account.