



## Higher National Unit specification

### General information for centres

**Unit title:** Learning and the Learning Environment

**Unit code:** F2VB 34

**Unit purpose:** To enable candidates to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to communicate effectively with learners in order to aid learners' practice-based learning within a specific practice context, and to enable candidates to continue to develop their own learning.

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

- 1 Communicate effectively with learners and others in the learning environment.
- 2 Support others in their learning about legislation, policy and/or guidance in agency context.
- 3 Contribute to own and others on-going learning and development.

**Credit points and level:** 1.5 HN credits at SCQF level 7: (12 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:** Candidates should have good communication skills and will be expected to be active within an environment where they are contributing to the learning of others, and be knowledgeable about relevant agency policy and procedures.

Acceptance of candidates' competence and experience will be at the discretion of the centre.

**Core Skills:** Although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components in this Unit, there will be opportunities to develop the Core Skills of Working with Others, Problem Solving and Communication at SCQF level 6. Additionally, there may be opportunities to develop the Core Skill of 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.

**Assessment:** The focus of this Unit is on the development of competence to use a range of approaches and skills to develop an understanding of learning processes and the importance of the learning environment. It is suitable for holistic assessment and the recommended assessment mechanism is a collection of practice evidence gathered from a range of sources.

## **General information for centres (cont)**

The collection of evidence approach allows candidates flexibility in relation to evidence gathering and scope to present their evidence in a way that best fits with their learning needs and styles. The evidence gathered to demonstrate that a candidate has achieved the Outcomes should be naturally occurring during their day to day activity, therefore encouraging candidates to reflect on the nature of what they do on a daily basis.

Candidates' practice evidence of their ability to understand learning processes and the importance of the learning environment can be drawn from a variety of sources including feedback from peers, managers, learners, service users, carers and other professionals. This will be collated alongside evidence of the candidate's knowledge and understanding of the topics covered by the Unit. Also within their collections of evidence candidates should provide a reflective narrative identifying their learning for the Unit, reflecting on what they might have done differently and what they need to work on in the future.

It is a requirement that there is evidence of direct observation of the candidate's current practice with a learner or learners eg these may be in the form of witness statements from, for example, managers, colleagues, service users, the learners themselves or practitioners in other related disciplines. There is also an expectation that there must be direct observation by an occupationally competent assessor.

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards**

**Unit title:** Learning and the Learning Environment

**Unit code:** F2VB 34

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**

Communicate effectively with learners and others in the learning environment

#### **Knowledge and/or Skills**

- ◆ Methods of, and barriers to, effective communication
- ◆ Self awareness in interactions with learners
- ◆ Impact of learning environment on learners

### **Outcome 2**

Support others in their learning about legislation, policy and/or guidance in agency context

#### **Knowledge and/or Skills**

- ◆ Agency legislation and policy
- ◆ Methods of supporting learners to learn about agency context, legislation and policy
- ◆ Application of legislation, policy and/or guidance to practice in agency context

### **Outcome 3**

Contribute to own and others ongoing learning and development

#### **Knowledge and/or Skills**

- ◆ Theories of learning and the factors involved in creating a learning environment
- ◆ Learning experiences: helpful and unhelpful factors
- ◆ Awareness of own knowledge and skills, and how to model good practice
- ◆ Impact of difference, diversity and power in learning situations

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)**

**Unit title:** Learning and the Learning Environment

### **Evidence Requirements for the Unit**

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ describe own role and responsibilities in relation to learning
- ◆ describe and reflect on own effective and ineffective communication in a learning situation
- ◆ compare and contrast positive and negative aspects of a specific learning environment
- ◆ evaluate and use own experiences of learning to support learning and development of others
- ◆ provide examples of own awareness of the impact of difference, diversity and power on the learning environment and on the learner
- ◆ apply and evaluate at least one theory of learning and how this has enabled the learner to develop knowledge and skills
- ◆ evaluate own contribution to the creation of an environment for learning
- ◆ assist the learner to identify and apply agency legislation, policy and/or guidance to real examples in the workplace

Direct observation of Candidate interaction with the learner is mandatory

### **Assessment Guidelines for the Unit**

This Unit stands alone and can be assessed in its own right (preferably holistically). However when delivered as part of a Group Award it may be appropriate for candidate evidence including observation to span more than one Unit.

It is suggested that the above Evidence Requirements may be best assessed through a variety of evidence, most of which is practice based. This could include, for example, records of meetings between candidate and learner, formal and informal feedback from others, reflective accounts, activities and/or assignments, and direct observation which is mandatory.

Combining evidence from more than one Unit should be encouraged wherever possible. It will give candidates the chance to develop a more comprehensive record of their learning, but will also highlight the close connections and relationships between the different strands involved in professional development. It may also enable candidates to make use of the same piece of evidence in different contexts.

This will be more easily achieved by clear and focussed individual assessment planning.

## Administrative Information

**Unit code:** F2VB 34

**Unit title:** Learning and the Learning Environment

**Superclass category:** PM

**Original date of publication:** August 2007

**Version:** 01

### History of changes:

Version	Description of change	Date

**Source:** SQA

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## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes**

### **Unit title:** Learning and the Learning Environment

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 60 hours.

### **Guidance on the content and context for this Unit**

This Unit has been designed as a stand alone Unit. It can be delivered as a stand-alone Unit if a centre has determined that the knowledge and skills developed within this Unit are all that are required to enhance the capability of candidates. Alternatively, the Unit can be delivered as part of an SQA Group Award such as a Professional Development Award (PDA). For example, it is one of two Units that comprise the:

- ◆ PDA in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 7
- ◆ PDA in Practice Learning at SCQF level 7

Where this Unit is delivered as part of the PDA in Practice Learning (Social Services), the centre should be aware that there may be additional entry requirements for candidates in line with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) policy.

This Unit is intended for candidates from a range of situations relating to social services, education or health settings. It is primarily intended for candidates who are themselves users of services (service users), or people who are carers for others who use human services, volunteers in human service settings, or staff undertaking personal care roles in human services. This list is not exhaustive but provides a flavour of the diversity of people who might wish to access this Unit from a social service or other relevant setting. Candidates might have already been involved in the support of learners on placement, for example HNC, HND, Nursing, OT or community education courses.

The knowledge and skills obtained from the Outcomes of this Unit will enable candidates to describe effective and ineffective communication; describe positive and negative aspects of learning environment; evaluate and use own previous experiences of learning to support learning and development of others; provide examples of their awareness of the impact of difference, diversity and power on the learning environment and on the learner; use methods to help others learn; reflect on their own ways of communicating with learners; identify agency legislation, policy and/or guidance important for learners; and provide accessible information about, and support to learn about agency legislation, policy and/or guidance.

The overall purpose of the Unit is to provide candidates with the knowledge and skills necessary to communicate effectively with learners in order to aid learners' development, to support learners in developing their knowledge of the legislative and policy context of the agency, and to develop their own learning.

This Unit covers a range of approaches and skills to enable candidates to develop their understanding of learning processes and the importance of the learning environment.

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

### Unit title: Learning and the Learning Environment

In **Outcome 1** candidates should explore and apply methods of effective communication eg active listening, summarising, advice giving (eg J. Koprowska), and apply knowledge of the impact of the learning environment for learners (eg impact of anxiety and uncertainty). They should be able to explain how they communicated effectively with the learner, and others, and explain any aspects of the learning environment which had a positive or negative impact on communication (eg physical space, communication systems between staff).

In **Outcome 2** candidates should be able to explain how to provide information on legislation, policy and/or guidance to the learner in relation to agency services and practice eg National Care Standards, Health & Safety legislation; Equalities legislation). The candidate should be able to assist learners to apply this to practice, for example, through one to one supervision, through team meetings, through individual care plans.

In **Outcome 3** candidates should reflect on and analyse the impact of difference, diversity and power on these learning experiences (eg feeling negatively labelled in the learning environment, use of overly complicated language by educators). They should be able to identify aspects of their own knowledge and skills which they can use to help others to learn, and give examples of how they modelled good practice. They should be able to apply knowledge of the ways people learn (eg Kolb's learning cycle, Honey & Mumford learning styles). They should be able to give examples of their practical skills in establishing rapport with learners, and to apply methods to help learners to learn (eg provision of shadowing opportunities, one to one supervision, discussing own perspectives on services or role in their delivery). They should be able to identify the improvements in their practice with learners.

On successful completion of the Unit, candidates will be able to: communicate effectively with learners and others in the learning environment and be able to analyse the factors which contributed to effective communication. They will be able to reflect on how they used their own knowledge and skills to assist learners to develop knowledge about the legislation, policy and/or guidance relevant to the agency context. They will be able to provide examples of how they modelled good practice, and they will be able to reflect on their own experiences of learning and how they made use of positive and negative experiences to develop their constructive role with learners, taking account of issues of difference, diversity and power.

### Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

#### *Delivery*

This Unit involves candidates in a significant amount of experiential learning. Candidates are required to reflect on and evaluate this experience and to be able to make conclusions for their future behaviour and development. At the start, a plan of action should be devised and must take account of RPL and Credit Transfer to ensure candidates are not over-assessed.

## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

### **Unit title:** Learning and the Learning Environment

The delivery mechanisms adopted by centres should be flexible to allow comprehensive access and participation, including distance and e-learning. A holistic approach, centred round the learning needs of the individual, may best meet the requirement for flexible delivery. The delivery of the Unit must take account of its practical nature and of the backgrounds of candidates.

At the outset, Centres should make candidates aware of the requirements of the Unit, including the need to gather evidence, evaluate and report on their experiences. They should also inform candidates at the outset about the type of evidence they will have to provide in order to complete the Unit successfully. It is likely that delivery will consist of some initial orientation and briefing sessions after which candidates will be given direction on how to manage their learning independently. Centres will make suitable arrangements to support and guide candidates throughout. This could involve regular meetings with candidates on an individual basis or in groups or through e-learning.

#### ***Assessment***

Centres should advise candidates about assessment requirements. The Unit takes a holistic approach to assessment and all three Outcomes are closely and systematically connected. Candidates can be encouraged to seek opportunities to generate evidence that would span more than one of the Outcomes. For example, candidates may be able to draw material from their own experiences of learning (Outcome 3) to explain how they decided to communicate with learners (Outcome 1). Additionally they may be able to draw material from their own experiences of new learning (Outcome 3) to explain how they made learning about the practice context accessible for the learner (Outcome 2).

Candidates should demonstrate that they have achieved the Unit Outcomes by gathering evidence from a range of sources eg assignments, video, audio, oral presentation, witness statements etc. As far as possible for most candidates the evidence should be 'naturally occurring' during the course of their day to day activity. Some candidates will not be able to rely solely on naturally occurring evidence, in which case supplementary assessment activity such as role play or simulation will need to be developed by centres. The approach aims to encourage candidates to reflect on the nature of what they do on a daily basis.

Centres should provide advice and guidance to candidates on gathering evidence. The evidence should be presented as a coherent and logical whole rather than a collection of disparate items. Essentially, it is a record of the learning journey undertaken by candidates.

Whilst it is recognised that the collection of evidence method will be suitable for most candidates undertaking this award the individual Unit specifications do not require this as a mandatory approach. It is important to recognise that dependant on individual candidate needs other methods may be equally applicable.

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

### Unit title: Learning and the Learning Environment

The evidence produced by candidates should demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to each Outcome. Overall, this should encompass a demonstration of:

- ◆ the performance improvements that candidates have achieved as a result of participating in this learning and related practical activities
- ◆ candidates' ability to explain and comment on their own and their learners' experiences of the learning environment
- ◆ candidates' understanding of relevant theories and methods to enhance the learning environment, and experience of learners

There may be opportunities to combine evidence including observation for this Unit with evidence from other Units, especially where candidates are undertaking a relevant Group Award or a number of Units as part of a programme of Continuous Professional Development.

Combining evidence from more than one Unit should be encouraged wherever possible. It will give candidates the chance to develop a more comprehensive record of their learning, but will also highlight the close connections and relationships between the different strands involved in professional development. It may also enable candidates to make use of the same piece of evidence in different contexts.

#### *Collection of Evidence*

The collection of evidence should offer candidates flexibility in relation to evidence gathering against the Unit Outcomes. Each candidate's collection of evidence will be unique. Although unique, all collections of evidence will be expected to meet a set of minimum required content criteria as advised by the centre. Candidates are encouraged to offer fewer rather than more pieces of work to evidence several Outcomes. This is not intended to deter candidates from taking a rigorous approach to their assessment tasks, but rather to allow them scope to focus their evidence. Each Unit contains mandatory Evidence Requirements but the type of evidence candidates present for assessment is not prescribed unless listed as an additional requirement.

It is likely that content will include items covering both product and process. Evidence of support for learning can be drawn from any context across health, education and social services and involve work with individual learners and/or groups, such as through contributions to group supervision, or contributing to training events. Evidence can come in a variety of forms including assignment, video, audio, oral presentation, witness statements etc.

It is a requirement that there is evidence of direct observation of the candidate's current practice with a learner or learners eg these may be in the form of witness statements from, for example, managers, colleagues, service users, the learners themselves or practitioners in other related disciplines. There is also an expectation that there must be direct observation by an occupationally competent assessor.

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

### Unit title: Learning and the Learning Environment

Centres will advise on specific requirements but candidates will need to provide evidence of knowledge, values and skills and may include some of the following, for example:

- 1 the candidate's reflective accounts of how they have met each of the Outcomes for each Unit.
- 2 formal and informal feedback on practice from a learner or learners with whom the candidate has been working.
- 3 formal and informal feedback on practice from an appropriate: mentor, assessor, a service user, carer, peers managers or other professional.
- 4 a self-assessment, including reflection by the candidate on feedback received.
- 5 product evidence to specifically demonstrate knowledge gained eg an induction programme, notes of meeting with learner.
- 6 a reflective narrative of the learning from each Unit as a whole. This is the candidate's summary of how the evidence they have provided meets the Outcomes. It can include a clear map indicating where the evidence provided links to the Outcomes. It is likely that this will also describe what they might have done differently and what they need to work on in the future.
- 7 the necessity of observation.

#### *Opportunities for developing Core Skills*

There are opportunities to develop the following Core Skills in this Unit:

Centres will be aware that this award was developed amongst other things to enable service users and carers to access an award that would recognise their contribution to the learning of those in the social services profession. It would be important to recognise the diverse needs of this group of learners. Centres may wish to consider additional input to enable candidates to achieve the Core Skills.

**Communication** (at SCQF level 6): could be evidenced through reporting, assessments and use of effective communications with learners, colleagues and other professionals. For example, analytical communication skills will be practiced and developed through presentations, negotiations and collaborations with learners, colleagues and other professionals.

**Working with Others** (at SCQF level 6): could be evidenced through feedback and analysis of working relationships and collaborations with learners, colleagues and other professionals.

**Problem Solving** (at SCQF level 6): planning and organising, reviewing and analysing could be evidenced through supervised practice, assessments and discussions with supervisor or mentor about the most appropriate courses of action for learning for an individual or group of learners.

**Information Technology** (at SCQF level 6): could be evidenced through the use of technology to communicate, analyse and present reports. Further IT skills may be developed if a candidate opts to submit assessment evidence in electronic formats.

## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

**Unit title:** Learning and the Learning Environment

### **Open learning**

This Unit requires candidates to take responsibility for their own learning. If it is to be delivered by means of open learning it will be necessary to ensure candidates have access to relevant material to enable them to assimilate the underpinning concepts and knowledge. Candidates will also need access to guidance and support throughout the learning and development process. However, this would require to be managed effectively with the organisation to ensure the authenticity of the candidate's work.

### **Candidates with disabilities and/or additional support needs**

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. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)).

## General information for candidates

### **Unit title:** Learning and the Learning Environment

The Unit is designed to enable you to learn about how to communicate in an effective way with learners in a practice-based context and to assist learners to learn about this context, in particular the legislation, policy and guidance relating to services. It is designed to enable you to learn about the positive and negative parts of a learning environment and to think about your own experiences of learning so that you can make use of this to support new learners. It is designed, additionally, to enable you to think about and reflect on your own development and future learning.

In this Unit you have to achieve three Outcomes. Collectively these Outcomes cover a range of approaches and skills to support learning as part of a wider inter-professional context for a range of learners in practice learning environments.

In Outcome 1 you will gain knowledge about how communication with learners can work well or not very well, and you will develop skills for effective communication. You will learn about how to apply your communication skills with learners and with others who are involved in the planning and delivery of learning.

In Outcome 2 you will gain knowledge about how to help learners understand some of the laws, policy and guidance that are important in the agency. This might involve you in using your own experiences of services, or the experiences of others, to explain to learners what is important in the service. You will learn (from Outcome 1) how to do this in a way which learners can understand.

In Outcome 3 you will gain knowledge about what factors can create a positive or negative learning environment and you will be encouraged to reflect on your own and others' experiences of learning. You will be encouraged to think about the impact of difference, diversity and power on learning and on creating learning environments. This knowledge will assist you to plan how you can create a positive relationship with a learner so that the learner can learn more effectively. Additionally, you will gain knowledge about different styles of learning, and you will be encouraged to apply this knowledge to learners and to yourself to aid your own professional development.

The overall purpose of the Unit is to enable you to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to communicate effectively with learners in order to aid learners' practice-based learning within a specific practice context, and to enable you to continue to develop your own learning.

On successful completion of this Unit, you will be able to communicate effectively with learners and others in the learning environment in order to use methods to assist learning about the practice context (particularly in relation to legislation, policy and guidance and through drawing on your own experiences) and you will be able to describe your own learning and what future learning you could achieve.

The assessment for the Unit requires you to produce evidence that you can describe effective and ineffective communication; describe positive and negative aspects of the learning environment; evaluate and use your own previous experiences of learning to support learning and development of others; provide examples of your awareness of the impact of difference, diversity and power on the learning environment and on the learner; use methods to help others learn; reflect on your own ways of communicating with learners; identify agency legislation, policy and/or guidance important for learners; and provide accessible information about, and support to learners to learn about agency legislation, policy and/or guidance.

## General information for candidates

### Unit title: Learning and the Learning Environment

You may already have some of this evidence from previous experience. You can discuss credit transfer and RPL when you devise your plan of action with your assessor.

It is important that you collect this evidence from your ongoing practice with learners and build a collection of evidence of your work. This tool should offer you flexibility in relation to evidence gathering against the Outcomes. Your collection of evidence will be unique, although it will be expected to meet a set of minimum required content criteria as advised by the centre and will include evidence of knowledge, values and skills. You can draw evidence from any context across health, education and social services and involve work with individual learners and/or groups, such as through contributions to group supervision, or contributing to training events.

Your evidence is likely to consist of several different types of item covering both product and process. Centres will advise you about any specific requirements. Some examples of items of evidence you might provide are:

- ◆ reflective accounts of how you have met each of the Outcomes.
- ◆ witness testimony from others involved in the learning process (learners, colleagues, service users, assessors, other professionals, university or college tutors etc).
- ◆ product evidence to specifically demonstrate knowledge gained eg an induction programme, notes from meeting with learner. For example, assignments, reports, extracts of minutes, supervision notes and practice documents etc.
- ◆ a reflective narrative of learning from the Unit as a whole.
- ◆ video, audio, oral presentations.
- ◆ role play and simulations.
- ◆ direct observation of practice is mandatory.

If you take this Unit along with one or more other Units, you may be able to present evidence for more than one Unit at the same time. In this way, you can provide a much fuller record of several interconnected aspects of your personal development. It is possible, therefore, to use evidence generated as part of this Unit to gain credit for more than one Unit.