



## Higher National Unit specification

### General information for centres

**Unit title:** Curriculum and Assessment in an Early Years and Childcare Setting

**Unit code:** F3S3 34

**Unit purpose:** The Unit is intended for candidates who are employed in an early years and childcare setting or have a placement within such a setting.

It is designed to enable candidates to understand the contribution a curriculum makes to a quality learning environment and how a range of observational and assessment techniques further contributes to this.

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

- 1 Explain how the curriculum supports a quality learning environment.
- 2 Evaluate the effectiveness of using a range of observational techniques in an early years and childcare setting.
- 3 Explain ways in which a range of assessment techniques can enhance the practitioners understanding of the child's needs.

**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:** It is recommended that candidates should have, or be able to demonstrate, an understanding of the development and behaviour of children. This may be evidenced by significant experience working with children. Evidence could also be through achievement of current NQ Units or equivalent, which assess knowledge and understanding of children in the age range birth to 12 years, or SVQs level 2 *Early Years Care and Education* or *Children's Care Learning and Development*.

**Core Skills:** There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of, *Information Technology*, *Numeracy* and *Communication* to SCQF level 6 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

## General information for centres (cont)

**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:** It is possible to integrate assessment of Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 of this Unit with the portfolio assessment for DF4Y 34 *Working in an Early Education and Childcare Setting*. This approach to assessment is recommended.

Outcome 1 may be assessed with a report which describes and discusses current curricula/guidelines or may be a written illustration of how curricula/guidelines are used, with examples of practice.

Outcomes 2 and 3 may be assessed holistically by a single assessment tool, with candidates providing a sample of observational techniques in an observational study, which shows how they could assess the needs of the child and identify the planning. Alternatively, Outcomes 2 and 3 could be assessed separately by means of a report and/or an oral presentation, respectively.

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

**Unit title:** Curriculum and Assessment in an Early Years and Childcare Setting

**Unit code:** F3S3 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**

Explain how the curriculum supports a quality learning environment

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

- ◆ The purpose of a curriculum
- ◆ Curricular formats
- ◆ How models of planning within a framework can support a quality development and learning environment

#### **Evidence Requirements**

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

- ◆ demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of a curriculum and how planning supports the development and learning environment, within different curricula/guidelines

#### **Assessment Guidelines**

Assessments for this Unit may be integrated with assessments for the Unit DF4Y 34 *Working in an Early Education and Childcare Setting* and so evidence from that portfolio may be used.

Assessments may be based on candidates knowledge and understanding of a sample of the Knowledge and Skills requirements.

This evidence may be presented as a report which describes and discusses current curricula/guidelines or may be an illustration of how curricula/guidelines are used, with examples of practice.

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

**Unit title:** Curriculum and Assessment in an Early Years and Childcare Setting

### **Outcome 2**

Evaluate the effectiveness of using a range of observational techniques in an early years and childcare setting

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

- ◆ Different forms of observational techniques
- ◆ When and how to use these observational techniques in a range of situations
- ◆ How the observations support the quality learning environment
- ◆ Evaluation

#### **Evidence Requirements**

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

- ◆ demonstrate understanding of the purpose of observations and when and how to use them in early years and childcare practice
- ◆ undertake a variety of observational techniques
- ◆ demonstrate how evaluation informs curricular planning needs and the needs of the child

#### **Assessment Guidelines**

Evidence for this Outcome may be generated alongside evidence for the Unit DF4Y 34 *Working in an Early Education and Childcare Setting*.

This Outcome could be assessed with candidates providing a sample of observational techniques in an observational study, which shows how they may meet the identified planning needs and the needs of the child.

The assessment for this Outcome could be combined with Outcome 3 as part of a single assessment.

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

**Unit title:** Curriculum and Assessment in an Early Years and Childcare Setting

### **Outcome 3**

Explain ways in which a range of assessment techniques can enhance the practitioners understanding of the child's needs

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

- ◆ How assessment information can be used to identify and plan for future learning and development needs of the child
- ◆ How assessment information might be shared with all the appropriate stakeholders
- ◆ A range of appropriate assessment techniques in terms of who uses them, how they are used and why they are used

#### **Evidence Requirements**

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

- ◆ demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of a range of assessment techniques (excluding observations)

#### **Assessment Guidelines**

The assessment of this Outcome can be combined with Outcome 2 as a part of a single assessment, with candidates providing a sample of observational techniques in an observational study, which shows how they could assess the needs of the child and identify the planning. Alternatively, this Outcome could be assessed by means of a report or oral presentation.

## Administrative Information

<b>Unit code:</b>	F3S3 34
<b>Unit title:</b>	Curriculum and Assessment in an Early Years and Childcare Setting
<b>Superclass category:</b>	PQ
<b>Original date of publication:</b>	August 2008
<b>Version:</b>	01

### History of changes:

Version	Description of change	Date

**Source:** SQA

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2008

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged.

SQA acknowledges the valuable contribution that Scotland's colleges have made to the development of Higher National qualifications.

Additional copies of this Unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Please contact the Customer Contact Centre for further details, telephone 0845 279 1000.

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes

### Unit title: Curriculum and Assessment in an Early Years and Childcare Setting

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

In keeping with the Scottish Government's vision of a single integrated qualification and professional development framework, this Unit and the Group Award it belongs to has been aligned to the Standard for Childhood Practice, 2007. More specifically this Unit maps to elements of the following Standards:

- 2.1 — value and demonstrate a commitment to inclusion, diversity, social justice, anti-discrimination
- 2.3 — value, respect and show commitment to parents and carers, families, communities and other agencies and partnerships with whom they work
- 3.1 — a broad and balanced knowledge of children and childhoods which underpins their practice and is used to inform their leadership of others
- 3.2 — critical understanding of the content of relevant organisational frameworks and statements of principles for supporting and enabling play, learning opportunities and experiences
- 3.3 — critical understanding of the theories and principles required to analyse and critically evaluate programmes provided by the service
- 3.7 — critical understanding of the contribution of other professionals to the services and to other children's services
- 3.9 — knowledge and understanding needed to support evidence informed practice
- 4.1 — coordinate and lead the of provision of environments that are safe, secure, caring and nurturing, and inclusive
- 4.2 — lead and support the development of positive and caring relationships with each child and family
- 4.3 — coordinate and lead the provision of balanced and flexible programmes that support play and learning opportunities and encourage children to be healthy, active and achieving
- 4.4 — co-ordinate and support the tracking of children's progress and the planning and management of transitions
- 4.5 — engage in professional reflection for continuing improvement

This Unit is designed to enable candidates to develop their knowledge and understanding of how observational techniques and a curriculum, which uses observations to enable planning, supports a quality learning environment in an early years and childcare setting.

It is intended that candidates will see the areas of overlap between this Unit and the Unit DF4Y 34 *Working in an Early Education and Childcare Setting* and that each will complement the other.

Candidates should also be able to do this as a stand alone Unit but must have access to the appropriate setting to undertake assessments.

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

### Unit title: Curriculum and Assessment in an Early Years and Childcare Setting

In Outcome 1 the following issues may be considered when identifying the range of approaches to providing a child centred curriculum and may include:

- ◆ play as a vehicle for learning and as a mechanism for supporting literacy and numeracy and ICT
- ◆ current initiatives which influence the provision of a curriculum eg early intervention schemes, High Scope, the work of Peter Moss on children's spaces, integrated childcare strategies and others such as Margaret Whalley

Current curricular documentation eg 5–14 Curriculum, Curriculum for Excellence; Birth to Three Framework; other local and national guidelines.

In Outcome 2 candidates need to demonstrate they can use a variety of observational techniques such as:

- ◆ direct, naturalistic observations with the candidate as observer and with the candidate as participant.
- ◆ time sampling techniques.
- ◆ checklists/pre-coded categories.
- ◆ structured and free descriptions.
- ◆ the use of observational matrices.
- ◆ frequency sampling techniques.
- ◆ candidates might be encouraged to use, but only where appropriate **and where permission is explicitly given** photographs, visual and sound recordings. N.B ethical considerations here.
- ◆ other approaches as appropriate.

For Outcome 3 candidates need to be aware of:

- ◆ the importance of working with parents or carers
- ◆ the importance of understanding the child's role in the assessment process
- ◆ the importance of confidentiality
- ◆ the importance of sharing information between and across boundaries
- ◆ ethical considerations

Candidates should have an opportunity to observe a range of the following assessment processes, preferably in the workplace for consideration:

- ◆ transition documents
- ◆ baseline assessment
- ◆ the use of formative assessment
- ◆ the use of summative assessment
- ◆ children's profiles a range of assessments eg in-school assessments, local authority driven assessments
- ◆ nationally driven assessments
- ◆ others as they may be used by appropriate professional groups
- ◆ All About Me books
- ◆ Individual Learning Plans
- ◆ Self Assessment

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

**Unit title:** Curriculum and Assessment in an Early Years and Childcare Setting

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

The Unit is designed to prepare candidates for working in an early years and childcare setting and to be able to both observe children effectively and to assess their needs. They will understand the role a curriculum or curricula play in planning for children's learning needs and of how their observation and assessment informs the planning process in an early years and childcare setting.

Candidates undertaking this Unit should therefore have access to children in this context. Candidates cannot complete this Unit without close communication and supervision by a workplace supervisor or by an appropriate assessor since there are practical elements contained within it.

On completion of this Unit candidates should be able to work effectively in observing, planning and evaluating the needs of the children in their care.

#### ***Opportunities for developing Core Skills***

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of, *Information Technology, Numeracy and Communication* to SCQF level 6 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

### **Open learning**

This Unit may be suitable for open learning but candidates would need to be aware of the need to have placement experience in undertaking the Unit.

### **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:** Curriculum and Assessment in an Early Years and Childcare Setting

This Unit is designed to enable an understanding of what a curriculum is, how it is used to support children's learning and how observations and assessment help to complete the picture for professionals, parents and carers. It will also enable you to understand the role children have in contributing to assessment and in determining next steps for learning.

You can only do this Unit if you are either working in an early years and childcare setting where curriculum is an integral part of the structure or in a placement where the same criteria apply.

You will be assessed on your understanding of the meaning and use of a curriculum to support children's learning and development and on how the observation and assessment of children can identify their needs.

You may have the opportunity to develop the Core Skills of, *Information Technology, Numeracy and Communication* to SCQF level 6 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

As part of the assessment for Outcome 1 you may be assessed with a report which describes and discusses current curricula/guidelines or may be a written illustration of how curricula/guidelines are used, with examples of practice.

For Outcomes 2 and 3 you may be assessed holistically by a single assessment tool, with you providing a sample of observational techniques in an observational study, which shows how you could assess the needs of the child and identify the planning. Alternatively, Outcomes 2 and 3 could be assessed separately and you may be asked to provide a report and/or an oral presentation, respectively.

The assessment methods used for this Unit will be decided by your lecturer.