



Higher National Unit specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Developing Professional Childhood Practice

Unit code: F56B 35

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed to enable candidates to examine issues around the role of the professional within childhood practice. The candidate will investigate broad issues relating to professional practice and relate these directly to childhood practice. They will then contextualise these to a professional issue relating to their own practice.

To enable candidates to complete this Unit they must be appropriately employed within the early years and childcare sector but there is no need for them to work directly with children or in a childcare setting.

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

- 1 Investigate current theories of professional practice.
- 2 Investigate influences on professional practice in early years and childcare.
- 3 Demonstrate own professional practice.

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 already have achieved a relevant qualification at SCQF level 7 or equivalent and must be working in a childhood practice context.

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

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 a mandatory Unit in the Professional Development Award in Childhood Practice at SCQF level 8 (G96H 48) but could also be delivered on a stand alone basis for CPD purposes.

General information for centres (cont)

Assessment: The assessment is progressive from Outcomes 1–3. Candidates will be expected to produce an integrative essay or report of approximately 2,500 words covering all three Outcomes. This will enable the candidate to use theory and knowledge of influences and current thinking to examine a professional issue related to their own childhood practice.

An Assessment Exemplar for this Unit has been produced. Centres wishing to use another instrument of assessment are recommended to submit proposals for prior verification.

Alternatively, candidates could give a presentation using PowerPoint on issues relating to their own professional practice, supported by a report.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

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The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, Knowledge and/or Skills, and Evidence Requirements are mandatory.

The assessment for this Unit is holistic please refer to *Evidence Requirements for the Unit* after the Outcomes.

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 current theories of professional practice

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Concept of professional practice
- ◆ A range of professional practice theories
- ◆ Value of a collaborative approach and the contribution of a shared value base in relation to professional practice

Outcome 2

Investigate influences on professional practice in early years and childcare

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Current legislation and policy affecting professional roles within childhood practice
- ◆ Status of the childhood practice professional within a Scottish context
- ◆ Current trends relating to children and childhood practice
- ◆ Importance of reflective practice and engaging in a continuous learning process to the childhood practice professional

Outcome 3

Demonstrate own professional practice

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Issues relating to own professional practice
- ◆ Knowledge and skills required to develop own professional practice
- ◆ Link between own professional practice and reflective practice
- ◆ Understanding of appropriate responses to defined professional practice issues

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Developing Professional Childhood Practice

Evidence Requirements for Unit

The assessment for this Unit is holistic and candidates should show evidence of integrating the knowledge and skills developed across all Outcomes. They are required to apply the theoretical view of professional practice within an early years and childcare context acquired in Outcomes 1 and 2 to their own professional practice issue defined in Outcome 3.

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

- ◆ discuss the concept of professional practice
- ◆ show an understanding of two relevant theories relating to professional practice
- ◆ evaluate the value of collaborative working and the importance of a shared value base in relation to professional practice
- ◆ explore the professional status of the childhood practice professional within a Scottish context
- ◆ identify the influence of two current attitudes and trends towards children and childhood practice
- ◆ explain how current legislation and policy has influenced professional childhood practice
- ◆ evaluate the importance of reflective practice to the childhood professional and give two examples of opportunities that professionals may have to engage in the continuous learning process
- ◆ critically evaluate a professional issue relating to own practice
- ◆ explore a range of knowledge and skills required to develop own professional practice
- ◆ demonstrate the link between own professional practice and reflective practice
- ◆ offer responses to defined professional practice issue
- ◆ draw on a range of sources to support the assessment

Assessment Guidelines for Unit

Candidates could produce a 2,500 word integrative essay or report covering all Evidence Requirements for the Unit. Alternatively, candidates could give a presentation using PowerPoint on issues relating to their own professional practice supported by a report.

Administrative Information

Unit code: F56B 35

Unit title: Developing Professional Childhood Practice

Superclass category: PM

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Version	Description of change	Date

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Developing Professional Childhood Practice

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:

Managers/lead practitioners:

- ◆ 2.2 — value themselves and others by taking responsibility for their own professional learning and development and that of the workers for whom they are responsible
- ◆ 2.3 — value, respect and show commitment to the parents and carers, families, communities and other agencies and partnerships with whom they work
- ◆ 3.1 — have a broad and balanced knowledge and understanding of children and childhoods which underpins their practice and is used to inform their leadership of others
- ◆ 3.7 — have a critical understanding of the contribution of other professionals to the service and to other children's services
- ◆ 4.5 — engage in professional reflection for continuing improvement
- ◆ 4.9 — take responsibility for identifying and supporting their own personal learning and professional development needs

This Unit is primarily intended, for candidates working in childhood practice, this Unit is designed to enable candidates to develop knowledge and skills to engage in professional practice.

Outcome 1 This is a general Outcome and should give candidates a broad overview of what professional practice is in the widest context. It is intended that candidates will then be equipped to relate these issues to an early years and childcare context in the following Outcome and then finally to their own practice in Outcome 3.

Candidates should take the opportunity to examine issues relating to being and becoming a professional. They could explore a range of occupations that are viewed as traditional professions such as doctors, lawyers and those occupations that have achieved professional status relatively recently. Candidates could also examine issues relating to 'emerging professions' and the process that occupations may go through to achieve professional status.

Candidates could examine some of the factors that are seen to contribute to professional status, such as:

- ◆ expert or specialist knowledge gained through formal systematic training within the context of further/higher education
- ◆ voluntary self regulation through a professional body
- ◆ a theoretical knowledge base and applying this knowledge to help others

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Developing Professional Childhood Practice

This may lead candidates to examine the altruistic nature of being a professional and the importance of codes of practice and a value base to professional practice.

Candidates should be encouraged to debate issues surrounding the nature of a vocation rather than an occupation, including issues relating to status, salary and gender. They may also wish to debate issues relating to elitism.

Candidates should explore a range of theories that may relate to professional practice in the widest context and should be encouraged to examine theories out with the early years and childcare context. Appropriate theorists may be:

- ◆ Schon: Reflective Practice
- ◆ Dreyfuss; Model of Skills Acquisition
- ◆ Kolb: Experiential Learning.

Candidates should also be aware of the importance of working collaboratively across professional boundaries and should explore the issues and conflicts that may arrive from having a diverging value base and differing epistemological stances. This should lead candidates into an understanding of how cross-professional and organisational links are established and maintained, and an understanding of the role of professionals from other disciplines and why this may lead to inter-professional conflicts.

Outcome 2 encourages candidates to place early years and childcare into the broader spectrum of professional practice. They should investigate current legislation and policy that affects professional childhood practice and should be encouraged to examine these against current political and economic agendas. Whilst they should examine professional practice within a Scottish context they should also be encouraged to investigate the status of the early childhood professional in the wider context — the work of Pamela Oberhuemer could be investigated in relation to the role of early childhood professionals across Europe.

Legislation and policy that may be relevant could be:

- ◆ Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001: particularly in relation to the role of the SSSC and its Codes of Practice
- ◆ The National Care Standards for Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 (2005)
- ◆ National Review of the Early Education and Childcare Workforce (2004)
- ◆ The Standard for Childhood Practice (2007)
- ◆ Curriculum for Excellence

Candidates should explore current trends relating to children and childhood practice, these could be at local, national or international levels eg increasing awareness of children's rights and participation and analyse how these impact on practice.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Developing Professional Childhood Practice

Candidates throughout this Outcome should begin to consider the concept of reflective practice as it relates to playing a lead role within an early years and childcare setting. They should be encouraged to use the reflective models to explore and analyse some of the issues and debates previously mentioned. They should be able to recognise reflective practice as an effective tool for problem solving:

recommended text:

Illes-Buck & Newstead; (2003); *Essential Skills for Managers of Child-Centred Settings*; London; David Fulton

They should also examine some of the barriers that may exist that would prevent reflective practice and how this could stop the candidate and others from engaging meaningfully in the continuous process of learning. Different models of reflective practice could be evaluated. These could be formal eg Child at the Centre 2 (or current edition) or informal eg personal logs.

Candidates should be encouraged to look at and apply the diagram on page 9 of *The Standard for Childhood Practice* (2007). This highlights the interrelationship of the main aspects of professional development within the context of reflective practice.

Outcome 3 acknowledges the importance of reflecting both IN and ON practice. Candidates should explore professional issues related to their own practice eg collaborative working, communication, resourcing issues, implementing change and introducing new initiatives. It should be stressed that the issue does not need to be one relating to conflict. They should explore an issue related to one of the other Units in the Group Award or their workplace experience, and should demonstrate skills required to offer responses to this issue through professional practice. Candidates should be encouraged to explore a range of outcomes relevant to their identified issue but should be aware that the response may be process led rather than outcome driven. They may wish to demonstrate that they are:

- ◆ competent to work across a wide range of settings
- ◆ confident in what they know and can do
- ◆ clear about own professional identity and that of other professionals
- ◆ flexible and adaptable
- ◆ committed to continuous improvement
- ◆ proactive in responding to and implementing change
- ◆ able to demonstrate leadership and vision
- ◆ able to contribute to the development of the profession
- ◆ examine own value base and the value base of others
- ◆ bring about change

This Unit should be delivered in order of the Outcomes given to enable the candidate to develop the knowledge required to reflect on their own professional issue in Outcome 3.

The delivery of this Unit could take the form of a mixture of lectures, tutorials, placement/work experience and practical lessons.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Developing Professional Childhood Practice

Candidates should be given time within Outcome 3 for reflection and identification of a professional issue. This could be done through individual tutorials or peer group discussion sessions. Candidates should be given access to a range of sources, drawn from childhood practice and also other professional disciplines to enable them to develop the breadth of knowledge required for Outcome 1 and 2.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

This Unit forms part of a Group Award, designed to provide candidates with the knowledge and skills required to work in the Early Years sector.

As the Unit forms part of the mandatory section of the award it will be covered in the Graded Unit, this should be given consideration when deciding which order to deliver the Units.

This Unit has been written in such a way that Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 will be assessed holistically.

Opportunities for Developing Core Skills

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

The Core Skills of *Problem Solving*, *IT* and *Communication* will be developed, due to the nature of content, and also through the research requirements of this Unit. Outcome 3, in particular develops candidates' problem solving abilities.

Open learning

The Unit could be delivered by distance learning. However it would require planning by the centre to ensure the sufficiency and authenticity of candidate evidence. Arrangements would have to be made to ensure that assessment of Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 is assessed by an appropriate supervisor.

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).

General information for candidates

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This Unit is a mandatory Unit in the Professional Development Award in Childhood Practice at SCQF level 8. However it can be used as a stand alone Unit for CPD purposes.

This Unit is designed primarily for qualified practitioners who would like to further develop their understanding and knowledge of professional practice issues and relate this to their own practice. It is expected that you will be working within an appropriate setting with links to early years and childcare sector but there is no requirement to be working directly with children. Therefore this Unit is suitable if you are in a co-ordinating role eg a childcare partnership officer.

In this Unit 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 given the opportunity to reflect on your own practice and how to develop these skills further. Towards the end of the Unit, you should be ready to apply the knowledge and skills gained, and to take the opportunity to use professional practice models to respond to an issue within your workplace.

On completion of the Unit you should be able to:

- 1 Investigate current theories of professional practice.
- 2 Investigate influences on professional practice in early years and childcare.
- 3 Demonstrate own professional practice.

You may be given the opportunity to develop Core Skills and the Core Skill components of *Problem Solving*, *Information Technology* and *Communication* to SCQF level 6, although these will not be certificated.

Assessment methods will be decided by your lecturer following SQA Guidance.