



## Higher National Unit specification

### General information for centres

**Unit title:** Additional Support Needs: Interpersonal Skills

**Unit code:** F7NC 34

**Unit purpose:** This Unit is designed for people who work in a setting with individuals with Additional Support Needs (ASN). This Unit develops the candidate's knowledge of the interpersonal skills required to work with individuals with additional support needs and develops an understanding of the professional help and counselling available for these learners who could be children, young people or adults. It also develops the candidate's knowledge and understanding of the intervention process. Candidates will require to identify, describe and evaluate interpersonal skills in these situations, and explain the role of the professional counselling services available to learners with ASN.

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

- 1 Investigate professional support services for individuals with ASN.
- 2 Describe appropriate interpersonal skills used in support of individuals with ASN.
- 3 Evaluate interpersonal skills in relation to effective intervention.

**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:** No prior knowledge is required. It would be beneficial if the candidate has worked in, or is working in, an ASN setting, either in a voluntary or paid capacity.

**Core Skills:** There is no automatic certification of Core Skills in this Unit. However, there are opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills components in *Working with Others* 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.

**Assessment:** This Unit is assessed by two instruments of assessment. Outcome 1 is assessed by a report of approximately 750 words. Outcomes 2 and 3 are assessed jointly by a written assignment of approximately 1,250–1,500 words.

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

**Unit title:** Additional Support Needs: Interpersonal Skills

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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 professional support services for individuals with Additional Support Needs

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

- ◆ Range of professional support services
- ◆ Roles of professional support services
- ◆ Needs of individuals and their families/carers

#### **Evidence Requirements**

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

- ◆ describe a range of professional support services to meet the needs of individuals with ASN
- ◆ explain the process by which professional support services could meet the needs of individuals with ASN
- ◆ explain the process by which professional support services could meet the needs of families/carers of individuals with ASN

#### **Assessment Guidelines**

Outcome 1 is assessed by a report of approximately 750 words.

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

**Unit title:** Additional Support Needs: Interpersonal Skills

### **Outcome 2**

Describe appropriate interpersonal skills used in support of individuals with ASN

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

- ◆ Interpersonal skills and professional practice requirements for own role
- ◆ Limits/boundaries of own responsibilities
- ◆ When and how to involve specialists and refer on
- ◆ Importance of good interpersonal skills for supporting individuals with ASN
- ◆ Importance of good interpersonal skills when working with other professionals
- ◆ Appropriate interpersonal skills for support to families/carers
- ◆ Interpersonal skills related to intervention

#### **Evidence Requirements**

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

- ◆ explain interpersonal skills required for own role and clearly identify limits/boundaries of own responsibility and when to request professional help
- ◆ identify when referrals should occur and which specialists to involve
- ◆ describe ways in which good interpersonal skills are required when working in an ASN setting
- ◆ explain the interpersonal skills required for professional practice in relation to own role
- ◆ describe interpersonal skills for intervention, in terms of meeting the needs of the client/individual
- ◆ describe interpersonal skills required to support families/carers of individuals with ASN

#### **Assessment Guidelines**

Outcome 2 and Outcome 3 are assessed jointly by an assignment.

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

**Unit title:** Additional Support Needs: Interpersonal Skills

### **Outcome 3**

Evaluate interpersonal skills in relation to effective intervention

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

- ◆ Appropriate models of intervention
- ◆ Evaluation techniques relating to effectiveness of intervention
- ◆ Self-evaluation techniques

#### **Evidence Requirements**

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

- ◆ describe models of intervention
- ◆ evaluate the intervention in terms of own role and reflect on own practice
- ◆ evaluate the intervention in terms of meeting client need

#### **Assessment Guidelines**

Outcome 3 is assessed jointly with Outcome 2 by an assignment. The assignment should comprise a report of approximately 1,250–1,500 words summarising observation and evaluation of at least two scenarios of support for the individual, one of which should involve intervention. The situations/scenarios could be based on own experience or could be based on case studies.

## Administrative Information

**Unit code:** F7NC 34

**Unit title:** Additional Support Needs: Interpersonal Skills

**Superclass category:** PM

**Original date of publication:** August 2009

**Version:** 01

### History of changes:

Version	Description of change	Date

**Source:** SQA

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

### **Unit title:** Additional Support Needs: Interpersonal Skills

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**

#### **General context**

This Unit is designed to provide candidates with an understanding of the importance of interpersonal skills when working with individuals with additional support needs. Put simply, interpersonal skills are how people relate to one another. Using interpersonal skills to establish relationships with individuals with ASN in a learning/support environment is an important method of communication, particularly when other forms of communication may be affected by the individual's needs and level of communication skills. We can use interpersonal skills to exchange information, meaning and feelings through verbal and non-verbal communication. In this context, how information is conveyed to another individual is as important as the content and this 'non-verbal' communication will include facial expressions, gestures/body language, tone of voice, pace of delivery etc. This non-verbal communication facilitates interaction and is useful for picking up cues from individuals who have difficulty in expressing themselves. Exploring the signals given by non-verbal communication and body language, the importance of movements and gestures, facial expression, eye contact and posture can provide the worker with an opportunity to interpret hidden, unarticulated thoughts and facilitate insight into what people are really thinking and feeling but may be unable to express verbally. It can be very difficult for the worker to establish a bond with an individual with additional needs and displaying empathy, demonstrating respect for the individual and showing that their needs and wishes are being taken into account are vital to supporting that individual.

Interpersonal skills are also an important tool in dealing with conflict and challenging situations. People with good interpersonal skills can generally control and often deflect the feelings that emerge in difficult situations and respond appropriately instead of being overwhelmed by emotion — feelings of frustration, anger or helplessness.

The skill of active listening is also very important and is different to hearing — it demonstrates that the individual is paying attention and trying to interpret messages being conveyed. Being able to listen and absorb information is a Core Skill in a range of interpersonal and educational situations — it underpins a communication system which assumes that you are trying to understand messages from the person who is speaking. It also assumes that you have respect for the speaker and are interested in what they have to say; making someone feel that they have a contribution to make, and that their contribution is valued, is particularly important when establishing a working relationship with individuals with additional needs.

Candidates should be encouraged to consider their listening skills style and think about how they can demonstrate that they are 'actively' listening to people and absorbing the information they receive and use this to develop their practice. Because of the closely interrelated nature of many interpersonal skills, active listening can often best be demonstrated when the listener both gives and receives nonverbal messages and uses questioning techniques to show empathy.

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

### Unit title: Additional Support Needs: Interpersonal Skills

The need for confidentiality to be respected at all times should also be emphasised and candidates should be made aware that interacting effectively may lead to individuals disclosing (knowingly or unknowingly) sensitive information to the worker, for example, abuse. This particularly important when working with individuals with additional needs. Candidates should be made aware of the particular issues surrounding disclosure: the importance of reporting procedures, confidentiality, agency procedures and legal requirements as well as the limits and boundaries of the worker's responsibility.

#### Specific context

##### Outcome 1

Candidates should be made aware of the professional support services available in the public, voluntary and private sectors and of how to access these. The support services examined should be appropriate to the additional support needs (learning difficulties/disabilities) of the learner (or group) in the learning environment where the candidate is working or is likely to work. Identifying the range of professionals and associated services could include the following:

- ◆ Educational psychologists
- ◆ Occupational therapists
- ◆ Family support workers
- ◆ Physiotherapists
- ◆ Disability co-ordinators
- ◆ Curriculum advisors (for pre-16)
- ◆ Career advisors/college advisors (for post-16)
- ◆ Social worker/case worker
- ◆ Medical staff (GP, Health Visitor, Practice/School Nurse etc)

When looking at the processes involved, candidates should be made aware of the different support services and structures required for the individuals with ASN, and for the needs of the families and/or carers of these learners. This may include:

- ◆ Day care services
- ◆ Respite care
- ◆ Home care/home schooling
- ◆ Supported living accommodation services
- ◆ Independent living
- ◆ Special schools
- ◆ Educational psychology service
- ◆ Careers Advisory services
- ◆ Voluntary organisations
- ◆ Primary Care team

Examples of good interpersonal skills should be explored (see general context above) and the importance of this aspect of communication should be explored as well as covering wider communication skills needed by a worker in this field (eg, skills for team working, inter-agency communication, caseload management etc).

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

**Unit title:** Additional Support Needs: Interpersonal Skills

### **Outcome 2**

Outcome 2 focuses on the role and responsibilities of the support worker in relation to supporting the individual with ASN and family/carers. It also looks at ways to develop his/ her confidence with regard to interpersonal skills, while at the same time ensuring that the support worker knows how and when to seek professional help and how to liaise with other practitioners. Understanding the job role and responsibilities in relation to professional practice requirements should also be covered. Issues relating to confidentiality of information should be explored. A range of interpersonal skills covered should be covered (see general context above) and these contextualised to the additional needs environment.

Where possible, examples used should be set in the context of the needs of the individuals in the college/centre or workplace.

### **Outcome 3**

Outcome 3 offers an opportunity to examine scenarios and to explore the types of skills required for effective intervention. At least two situations should be examined and evaluated, and at least one should involve intervention.

The purpose and processes of intervention should be covered in teaching and learning.

Evaluation techniques and recording mechanisms should also be taught.

Candidates will require to identify and explain the intervention and the types of interpersonal skills that were successful and also any which did not work in the specific context. There should be opportunities for shared experiences and discussion.

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

Outcomes 1 and 2 allow opportunities for use of videos, case studies, group discussions and/or role play to facilitate the development of interpersonal skills with particular reference to working with individuals with ASN. For all Outcomes, it is important to emphasise the need to maintain confidentiality of information.

### **Outcome 1**

Where possible the support services examined should be relevant to the candidate's experience. Candidates should be encouraged to investigate support services in their local area and to identify those that are most beneficial to the needs of individuals with ASN in their place of work. Opportunities should be taken to examine directories/websites and to interrogate professionals working for those services. Candidates should take notes and then prepare a report on the types of service available (approximately 750 words).

Opportunities for presentations/talks from professionals from a wide range of service providers should be encouraged.



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

**Unit title:** Additional Support Needs: Interpersonal Skills

### **Outcome 2**

This Outcome looks at specific skills required for supporting individuals with ASN. Candidates should be encouraged to learn from observation as well as gaining experience of interpersonal skills through role play and discussion.

### **Outcome 3**

In the delivery of Outcome 3, group discussion and opportunities to share experiences should be encouraged as such activities develop communication and interpersonal skills.

The final evaluation report should include self-evaluation, ie a reflective report, and it is recognised that some advice and tutor input may be required for this. There should also be an evaluation of how the intervention met client needs.

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

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills in this Unit. However, there are clear opportunities for aspects of Core Skill components to be developed in *Working with Others, Communication* (Written and Oral Communication, all Outcomes) and *Problem Solving* (Analysis, particularly Outcome 3).

### **Open learning**

This Unit is suitable for delivery in a range of formats including open, distance and blended learning.

## **Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs**

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website [www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements)

## **General information for candidates**

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This Unit is designed to help develop your knowledge of the interpersonal skills required to work with people who have additional support needs in a learning or support environment. It also provides you with information on the professional help and advice/guidance available for these learners who could be children, young people or adults. It will also help develop your knowledge and understanding of the intervention process. You will require to identify, describe and evaluate interpersonal skills in these situations, and to examine the roles of a range of professional services available to individuals with ASN.

On completion of the Unit you should be able to:

- 1 Investigate professional support services for individuals with ASN.
- 2 Describe appropriate interpersonal skills used in support of individuals with ASN.
- 3 Evaluate interpersonal skills in relation to effective intervention.

There are two assessments for this Unit. Outcome 1 is assessed by a report. Outcomes 2 and 3 are assessed jointly by an assignment.