



Higher National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Evidence Based Practice and Research

Unit code: FN69 35

Superclass: HC

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Unit purpose:

This Unit is designed to develop the candidate to access and evaluate information from a variety of primary and secondary sources through critical evaluation. It is designed to emphasise the importance of evidence based practice and research within the candidate's specific area of work/study and will take the candidate through the research process, ethical and legal considerations when undertaking research and presentation of findings. The candidate will be expected to discuss implications for practice and strategies for implementing findings.

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

- 1 Explain the importance of evidence based practice.
- 2 Explain the research process.
- 3 Critically evaluate a research article.

Recommended prior knowledge and skills

Access to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. It is recommended that candidates undertaking this Unit possess good written and oral skills also competence in numeracy and information technology, some prior knowledge of research at SCQF level 7 would be advantageous to the candidate.

Credit points and level

1 Higher National 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.*

General information (cont)

Core Skills

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill	None
Core Skill component	Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit Specification.

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 in the framework of HNC/HND Care and Administrative Practice. It may be suitable for delivery as a stand-alone Unit for candidates with a specific interest in this area.

Assessment

Outcome 1 could be assessed through a 1,000 word report on evidence base practice and research. Outcomes 2 and 3 will be assessed through the critical evaluation of a current research article. Candidates will submit a report of 2,000 words on a selected research article related to their area of study/practice.

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.

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 the importance of evidence based practice.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Evidence based practice
- ◆ Professional requirement for evidence based practice
- ◆ Sources of information for evidence based practice
- ◆ Evidence based practice and research

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ define evidence based practice (EBP)
- ◆ discuss the professional requirement for EBP
- ◆ explore sources of information
- ◆ explain the link between EBP and research.

Assessment Guidelines

Outcome 1 could be assessed through a 1,000 word report on evidence base practice and research to best practice. This should be submitted at an agreed date.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Outcome 2

Explain the research process.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ The research process
- ◆ Purpose of research; aims and objectives
- ◆ Ethical and legal considerations affecting research
- ◆ Identification and secondary sources of information
- ◆ Primary and secondary sources of information
- ◆ Peer review

Outcome 3

Critically evaluate a research article.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Analytical and evaluative skills
- ◆ Methodology
- ◆ Recommendations/strategies for implementing evidence based practice

Evidence Requirements for Outcomes 2 and 3

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

- ◆ explain the research process
- ◆ explain the purpose and aims of the research article
- ◆ discuss the ethical issues relating to the study
- ◆ examine the literature reviewed by the authors of the research article
- ◆ discuss the relevance of the peer review process
- ◆ evaluate the methodology and design
- ◆ identify how the data was analysed
- ◆ examine implications for evidence based practice
- ◆ discuss strategies for implementation of findings.

Assessment Guidelines

The assessment for Outcomes 2 and 3 will be integrated. Candidates will submit a critical evaluation of 2,000 words on a current research article. The article will be selected by the assessment centre and will be relevant to the candidate's area of practice/study.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Evidence Based Practice and Research

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 aims to develop the candidate's ability to access and evaluate information from a variety of sources by planning and reporting on a research activity. The Unit is designed to emphasise the importance of evidence based practice research within the candidate's own area of work/study.

Outcome 1 — candidates should define evidence based practice (EBP) with reference to the three elements that underpin EBP, these are: best evidence, professional expertise and patient preference. This involves being able to critically evaluate evidence from a variety of appropriate sources including e-journals, websites, professional journals, newspapers and TV, to determine its worth, recognising the importance of the patient/client choices and preferences and considering the professional expertise and experience of the candidate. Professional requirement for EBP should be explored in relation to best practice, accountability, clinical governance and quality assurance and where appropriate registration and codes of practice requirements. The candidate should be able to describe the link between EBP and research, that research is a systematic process that aims to clarify and standardise practice and answer questions and promote the development of protocols, procedures and guidelines should be understood by the candidate

Outcome 2 — research has been described by Rae, 2001 as 'an original investigation undertaken to gain knowledge and understanding' candidates must understand that this is the aim of research, that it promotes knowledge and understanding for the promotion of best practice in the workplace. The research process must be explained and the candidate's must be able to describe each stage of the process; identification of the research topic, aims and objectives of the topic, literature review to establish what research has already been undertaken, appropriate research approaches depending on the topic: this will involve examining qualitative approaches and qualitative designs or mixed methods (triangulation). The candidate will have to explore the issues involved in developing a research question and to using accurate and focused questions. The use of the PICO approach will ensure that there are no omissions or gaps when undertaking a research project. Appropriate sources of information should be explored for example: academic databases (Medline, OVID, BNI), Professional guidelines (Codes of Conduct), professional journals, research papers, colleagues, textbooks and e articles or journals. Sampling should be covered and the role it plays in an objective and valid research project. The candidate should also understand the importance of different types of data collection for example questionnaires, surveys, interviews and that these may be influenced n by the research topic. In any research investigation ethical and legal issues can be raised and the candidate has to be aware of the types of issues that can be encountered and the effect this will have on the research project.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Evidence Based Practice and Research

Outcome 3 — the candidate must apply the research process to a critical evaluation of a current research article with reference to the aims and objectives, sources of evidence, sampling, data collection methods used the findings and implications for practice. The candidate will also examine the value of peer review process in research and whether it was utilised in the research article. The candidate should then be able to recommend strategies for implementing evidence based practice in relation to their own area of study.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

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.

Care Planning is a mandatory Unit in the HND Care and Administrative Practice. It is essential that candidates are aware that they need to achieve all Evidence Requirements for the award. It can however, be taken as a stand-alone Unit.

Outcome 1 could be assessed through a 1,000 word report on evidence base practice and research to best practice. This should be submitted at an agreed date.

The assessment for Outcomes 2 and 3 will be integrated. Candidates will submit a critical evaluation of 2000 words on a current research article. The article will be selected by the assessment centre and will be relevant to the candidate's area of practice/study.

Open learning

The Unit could be delivered by open or distance learning. However, it would require planning by the centre to ensure sufficiency and authenticity of candidate evidence. Arrangements would have to be made to ensure that the assessment was conducted under supervision.

Opportunities for the use of e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or e-checklists. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all candidate evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. Further advice is available in *SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education (AA1641, March 2003)*, *SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools (BD2625, June 2005)*.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

This Unit has the Problem Solving component of Critical Thinking embedded in it. This means that when candidates achieve the Unit, their Core Skills profile will also be updated to show they have achieved Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6.

There are opportunities for developing Core Skills of *Communication* at SCQF level 6, *Working with Others* SCQF level 6, *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* at

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Evidence Based Practice and Research

SCQF level 6 although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components

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.

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Core Skills Component Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6 embedded.	02/12/11

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General information for candidates

Unit title: Evidence Based Practice and Research

This Unit is about exploring evidence based practice and research. You will define evidence based practice and investigate the link between evidence based practice and research and how this influences work practices in your area of study.

You will also develop knowledge of the research process including accessing information from a variety of sources, how to evaluate information, types of research, research questions, data collection and presentation of findings. The ethical and legal considerations which arise when undertaking research will also be explored.

You will develop the skills to access, analyse and evaluate information from a variety of sources and to use this ability in the planning, carrying out and reporting of a research report. You will also learn about critical thinking and evaluation processes and the value of the peer review system and apply this knowledge to the critical evaluation of a selected current research article.

The assessment for this Unit is made up of two submitted assignments; a report on evidence based practice and research and a 2,000 word critical evaluation.