



Higher National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Counselling: Self Evaluation for Counsellors

Unit code: H0C4 35

Superclass: PM

Publication date: January 2012

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

Unit purpose

This Unit is designed to give candidates opportunity to evaluate their overall performance on the counselling training course with a view to becoming reflective practitioners. It recognises that the counsellors 'self' is an essential tool in practice and that increasing self awareness can develop confidence in the counsellor and inspire confidence in others.

Through a process of self evaluation, candidates will review their understanding of theory, their relationship with and impact on others and their strengths and weaknesses in relation to maintaining a professional counselling role.

Candidates will engage in a number of activities, including consulting with others, which are designed to develop their understanding of the 'use of self' in the counselling context.

This Unit is aimed at candidates who want to become counsellors or those whose primary role is not counselling who would however like to enhance their practice.

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

- 1 Produce an initial self-assessment of values, knowledge, attitudes, skills, experiences and learning needs.
- 2 Evaluate self-assessment taking account of feedback from others.
- 3 Identify and address learning needs for ongoing personal development.

Recommended prior knowledge and skills

Candidates should have knowledge, understanding and practical experience of counselling. This could be demonstrated by possession of the HNC Counselling G8H6 15. The practical experience could be from work experience or simulated practice on a training course. Ultimately, entry is at the discretion of the centre.

General information (cont)

Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit 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.*

Core Skills

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

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this Unit.

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.

The nature of the Unit requires that it be delivered over an extended period of time. This will normally be one academic year for full time candidates or two years for part time candidates.

The Unit is designed to encourage self- directed learning and development. Candidates will require regular ongoing support which can be provided through a wide range of group and individual activities.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Counselling: Self Evaluation for Counsellors

Unit code: H0C4 35

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

Produce an initial self-assessment of values, knowledge, attitudes, skills, experiences and learning needs.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Communication Skills
- ◆ Counselling skills and professional boundaries
- ◆ Theoretical approaches to counselling
- ◆ Skills and qualities of effective counsellors

Evidence Requirements

This Unit is assessed holistically. Please refer to the Evidence Requirement listed after Outcome 3.

Outcome 2

Evaluate the self-assessment taking account of feedback from others.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Personal action planning process
- ◆ Reflection and Evaluation

Evidence Requirements

This Unit is assessed holistically. Please refer to the Evidence Requirement listed after Outcome 3.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Counselling: Self Evaluation for Counsellors

Outcome 3

Identify and address learning needs for ongoing personal development.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Principles underpinning personal and professional development and reflective practice
- ◆ Skills and knowledge required to practice effectively
- ◆ Development opportunities to improve practice

Evidence Requirements for the Unit

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

Create, maintain and produce a self evaluation portfolio over the duration of the course. The portfolio will be in three parts;

- 1 An initial self-assessment of values, knowledge, attitudes, skills, experiences and learning needs:
 - ◆ identification of current skills, qualities and abilities
 - ◆ identification of own strengths and weaknesses
 - ◆ identification of own development needs.
- 2 An evaluation of the self assessment in the light of insight gained from activities the candidate has engaged in including:
 - ◆ obtaining feedback from others
 - ◆ use of a range of reflection techniques
 - ◆ evaluation of own performance on training course
 - ◆ amendment to initial analysis in the light of experience, reflection and evaluation.
- 3 Identification of how the candidate has and will continue to address learning needs for ongoing personal development including:
 - ◆ evaluation of how learning occurred
 - ◆ implications for future development
 - ◆ identification of ways to improve performance
 - ◆ action taken to improve performance.

The evidence will be gathered at appropriate points throughout the course. The portfolio will be produced in open-book conditions.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Counselling: Self Evaluation for Counsellors

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

Self evaluation is widely believed to be essential in counselling training and practice. Self evaluation for the purpose of this Unit means giving candidates opportunity to take a critical look at their overall performance on the training course and identify strengths and learning needs. This will include their understanding of theory and how it is applied to practice, their relationship with and impact on others and their strengths and learning needs with regard to the skills and qualities required of counsellors. The process will begin with a self assessment of their current circumstances. This would most likely include reflection on values, beliefs, attitudes, experiences, skills and include recognised strengths and areas of doubt, uncertainty and confusion.

Self evaluation includes being self-aware. Burnard [1992] defines self-awareness as 'the process of getting to know your feelings, attitudes and values. It is also learning about the effect you have on others'.

Self awareness for counselling candidates includes recognising their feelings and how situations affect them emotionally. Also, how their behaviour and presentation of self affects others and in turn how others affect them. If student counsellors are not sensitive to how others perceive them, this can create distance and barriers between themselves and those they are working with. It is also relevant in terms of equality of opportunity. We live in a society characterised by diversity and candidates need to reflect on their identity and their attitudes towards those whom they see as being 'different' to them in some way.

This Unit gives candidates the opportunity to reflect on themselves in relation to all aspects of the course and could be seen as a 'summary' of their experiences on the course including understanding of theory, personal development and workplace practice.

Guidance on the delivery of this Unit

It is anticipated that the Unit will be delivered over the duration of the course and timetabled accordingly. This means that time should be allocated for candidates to reflect on experiences, meet with peers and tutors to discuss their self evaluation portfolio and to produce it.

Guidance on the assessment of this Unit

The Unit should be assessed holistically. To achieve this, a candidate should create, maintain and produce a portfolio of evidence. This will include activities he/she has undertaken to evaluate their performance throughout the training course.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Counselling: Self Evaluation for Counsellors

Assessment Guidelines

The Unit should be assessed holistically. To achieve this, a candidate should create, maintain and produce a portfolio of evidence. This will include activities he/she has undertaken to evaluate their performance on the training course.

The portfolio should be in three parts and include evidence of:

- ◆ Candidates own reflection on their strengths and weaknesses ie aspects that work for them in the counselling context and also those aspects that work against them, including their understanding of theory and ability to relate theory to practice.
- ◆ Consultation with others to obtain feedback about their performance ie tutors, peers and placement supervisors.
- ◆ Action taken to address identified learning needs.

The self evaluation portfolio can be presented in any suitable way including written, oral or signed. Encouragement should be given to candidates to include entries that show different ways of reflecting on their values, attitudes, skills and experiences. These could be art work, poetry etc. Also, the portfolio can include various examples of activities the candidate has engaged in to develop their self awareness.

Candidates can be introduced to self assessment tools such as the 'self puzzle' [John McLeod 2004 The Counsellor's workbook], Johari window [see www.businessballs.com] or personal profile questionnaires [Preston-Shoot 1987 Effective Group work] to facilitate their personal self-assessment.

However, candidates should be encouraged to find and develop their own ways of creating the self assessment which have meaning for themselves.

After the initial self assessment, candidates can engage in activities that challenge their perception of self. These can be many and varied including individual and group work. Candidates can reflect on the activities and revise their assessment accordingly. Activities can include presentations to demonstrate understanding of concepts in counselling and application to practice. Art work, such as mask making can be used in groups to look at the persona and the shadow for example. Other tools and techniques could be used such as Johari window, SWOT, Blobs, poetry and letter writing. Candidates should have opportunity to obtain feedback from peers in a safe setting as to how they are perceived and then have time to reflect on this feedback in order to integrate it into their self assessment.

Following review of the self assessment, candidates should be able to identify more areas for development and show that they have addressed some of the learning needs. It is not expected that they will have been able to address all those identified, however it is desirable for them to suggest ways that they will continue their personal development. This could include further tasks and activities including reading, discussing and gathering more feedback from others. Techniques could include SMART goals, force field analysis and action planning.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Counselling: Self Evaluation for Counsellors

Online and Distance Learning

This Unit is not suitable for open learning as it requires candidates to engage with other candidates on a regular basis to monitor their effect on others and how others affect them.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There will be opportunities to gather evidence towards Core Skills of *Communication*, *ICT* and *Working with Others*, all at SCQF level 6 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components. It can also support the development of other transferable skills, such as, essay/report writing and thinking, analytical and critical skills.

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

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2012

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.

Additional copies of this Unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Please contact the Business Development and Customer Support team, telephone 0303 333 0330.

General information for candidates

Unit title: Counselling: Self Evaluation for Counsellors

This Unit will give you the opportunity to monitor, evaluate and record your personal development whilst on the course. It recognises that the counsellors 'self' is an essential tool in practice and that increasing self awareness can develop confidence in you as a trainee counsellor and inspire confidence in others.

You will create, maintain and produce a Self Evaluation portfolio on an on-going basis for the duration of the course. This portfolio will include:

- ◆ for Outcome 1, an initial self assessment of the values, knowledge, attitudes, skills, experiences and learning needs, you bring to counselling training.
- ◆ for Outcome 2, a review of the self assessment in the light of insight gained from activities you have engaged in, including gathering feedback from others, eg peers, tutor and workplace supervisor.
- ◆ for Outcome 3, identification of further learning needs and ways that you have and will address these needs for ongoing personal development.

Self evaluation is widely believed to be essential in counselling training and practice. Self evaluation for the purpose of this Unit means giving you opportunity to take a critical look at your overall performance on the training course and help you identify strengths and learning needs. This will include your understanding of theory and how it is applied in practice, your relationship with and impact on others and your strengths and learning needs with regard to the skills and qualities required of counsellors.

This Unit gives you the opportunity to reflect on yourself in relation to all aspects of the course and could be seen as a 'summary' of your experiences on the course including understanding of theory, personal development and workplace practice.

You will be offered guidance and support to create, maintain and produce your Self Evaluation portfolio.

Throughout the assessment of this Unit you will have the opportunity to develop the Core Skills of *Communication*, *Working with Others* and *ICT*. It can also support the development of other transferable skills, such as essay/report writing and thinking, analytical and critical skills.