



Higher National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Counselling: Setting up a Counselling Practice

Unit code: H0HM 35

Superclass: PM

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Unit purpose

This Unit is designed to give candidates an opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding of the factors involved when setting up a counselling practice in the statutory, voluntary or independent sector, and the operational requirements of running a professional service. Candidates are required to consider the planning and preparation of a service, the legal and ethical issues arising when setting up a practice and the quality assurance and accountability mechanisms.

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

- ◆ Investigate issues relating to the setting up of a counselling practice.
- ◆ Analyse the legal and ethical issues arising when setting up a counselling practice.
- ◆ Investigate quality assurance and accountability mechanisms when setting up a counselling practice.

Recommended prior knowledge and skills

The candidate should have a knowledge and understanding of counselling practice. It is recommended that candidates should hold SCQF level 7 Units relating to counselling, eg HNC Counselling G8H6 15 or equivalent. Candidates should also have good communication skills.

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.*

General information (cont)

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.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Counselling: Setting up a Counselling Practice

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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 issues relating to the setting up of a counselling practice

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Market Research
- ◆ Marketing methods
- ◆ Costs — capital and running
- ◆ Resources — physical, financial, human

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ Explain the type and nature of research necessary when setting up a practice
- ◆ Describe two methods of marketing necessary when setting up a practice
- ◆ Identify three sources of funding and describe the role of funding and finance
- ◆ Describe the communication and interpersonal skills necessary when setting up a counselling practice
- ◆ Identify factors which may affect the setting up of a practice
- ◆ Describe the recruitment process
- ◆ Explain the roles of staff within the organisation

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Counselling: Setting up a Counselling Practice

Outcome 2

Analyse the legal and ethical issues arising when setting up a counselling practice.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Confidentiality
- ◆ Health and Safety and Risk assessment
- ◆ Data Protection
- ◆ Supervision
- ◆ Relevant legislation
- ◆ Codes of Ethics

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ Explain the measures necessary to protect the confidentiality of clients using the service
- ◆ Describe the health and safety considerations and procedures necessary to ensure the health and safety of workers and clients
- ◆ Analyse the legal and ethical issues arising when setting up a counselling practice, including client contracts, counsellor supervision and insurance
- ◆ Describe the key features of a minimum of three pieces of legislation which relate to the policies chosen

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Counselling: Setting up a Counselling Practice

Outcome 3

Investigate quality assurance and accountability mechanisms when setting up a counselling practice.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Personal and organisational accountability
- ◆ Financial accountability
- ◆ Continued Professional Development (CPD) requirements
- ◆ Organisational constitutions/policies

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ Explain personal and organisational accountability mechanisms
- ◆ Explain the need for financial accountability
- ◆ Explain the need for organisational constitutions/policies
- ◆ Explain the importance of CPD for volunteers and staff

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Counselling: Setting up a Counselling 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

This specialist Unit is designed to give candidates an opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding of the factors involved when setting up a counselling practice in the statutory, voluntary or independent sectors and the operational requirements of the running a professional service. Candidates are required to consider the planning of a practice, legal and ethical issues, quality assurance and accountability mechanisms.

Guidance on the delivery of this Unit

This Unit will require candidates to consider all aspects of setting up a counselling practice. They will be expected to use research and communication skills to investigate the factors involved in the planning and preparation of such an activity.

The delivery of this Unit may be enhanced by the use of visiting speakers such as counselling practitioners or representatives from agencies who will bring first hand, up to date knowledge of the considerations and requirements necessary when setting up and operating a service for clients.

Guidance on the assessment of this Unit

This Unit could be assessed holistically using one instrument of assessment. This could be a series of extended response questions which cover all the Evidence Requirements from the three Outcomes.

Candidates must achieve all the minimum evidence specified for all Outcomes in order to pass the Unit.

Specific advice on assessment is given for each Outcome.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Counselling: Setting up a Counselling Practice

Assessment Guidelines

Outcome 1

Evidence could be presented as written, oral or signed responses to extended response questions to cover all Evidence Requirements.

This Outcome requires the candidate to explain the research necessary prior to setting up a counselling service. The following questions may be considered by the candidate:

- ◆ Funding and finance: From where does the funding come? Local council, health service, grant providers, bank loans?
- ◆ How will the financial side of the service be managed? Management committee/support group? When investigating the finance and support available a range of funding sources should be identified. The importance of meeting funders' criteria should be stressed together with the requirement to follow correct procedures for successful applicants.
- ◆ Service marketing: how is the service marketed? Development of a web site, flyers distributed throughout community, contact with GP surgeries, local church contacts, etc?
- ◆ Location and premises: where should the premises be located to best meet the needs of the service users? What is it important to consider when choosing premises? Accessibility in terms of transport — is it on a bus route? Do the premises meet the requirements of equality legislation? Are the counselling rooms confidential? (Physical resources.) Candidates may also consider the implications of running a counselling service from home.
- ◆ Choice of counsellors, administrative and support staff. What skills and qualities are required? What qualifications are necessary? How will staff be recruited? (Human resources.)
- ◆ Barriers to setting up a service: what could prevent the effective setting up of a counselling practice?

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Counselling: Setting up a Counselling Practice

Outcome 2

Evidence could be presented as written, oral or signed responses to extended response questions to cover all Evidence Requirements.

This Outcome requires the candidate to analyse the legal and ethical issues arising when setting up a counselling practice. This includes data storage, note taking, ethics and confidentiality, self care and personal safety. The need for policy statements and procedures to be used as working documents which inform practice should be considered. Through examining the policies and their relationship with legislation, the candidate will develop knowledge and understanding. They should be able to explain the role of legislation in promoting positive care within the practice.

Legislation which may be considered:

- ◆ Mental Health Care and Treatment Act (2000)
- ◆ The Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001
- ◆ Human Rights Act (1998)
- ◆ Data Protection Act(1998)
- ◆ The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- ◆ The Equality Act 2010

Legislation provides clients with rights and responsibilities and counsellors require an awareness of these.

In considering the legislation and related policies within the counselling practice, candidates should be familiar with the key features of relevant legislation. Candidates should develop knowledge and understanding of ethics and principles of counselling practice. It is important that the supervision of counsellors, client contracts and insurance be considered.

Outcome 3

Evidence could be presented as written, oral or signed responses to extended response questions to cover all Evidence Requirements.

This Outcome requires the candidate to investigate quality assurance mechanisms necessary within a counselling service. Candidates should understand the terms 'quality assurance' and 'accountability' and should examine and evaluate the impact these mechanisms have on clients, volunteers, paid employees and the counselling practice.

Candidates are required to explain the importance of continuous professional development for volunteers and staff and the need for ongoing training.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Counselling: Setting up a Counselling Practice

Candidates will learn of the importance of policy documents and an organisational constitution within a counselling practice.

- ◆ Protects clients and volunteers
- ◆ Standardises practice
- ◆ Meets legal requirements
- ◆ Accountability mechanism
- ◆ Offers guidance within service
- ◆ Induction tool

Online and Distance Learning

This Unit is best offered as a group based activity to facilitate the necessary personal learning. Due to the experiential and participatory nature of the content of this Unit, careful consideration should be given before offering it by open or distance learning.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There will be opportunities to gather evidence towards Core Skills in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components. There may be opportunities to develop the skills of *Communication*, *Problem Solving*, *Working with Others* and *Information and Communication Technology*.

Curriculum for Excellence

The investigation, research, and preparation of the project provide candidates with the opportunity to meet the aims of Curriculum for Excellence. Candidates will become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors within society.

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

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General information for candidates

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On completion of the Unit you should be able to:

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- ◆ Investigate quality assurance and accountability mechanisms when setting up a counselling practice

Evidence could be presented as written, oral or signed responses to extended response questions to cover all Evidence Requirements.

You must achieve all the minimum evidence specified for all Outcomes in order to pass the Unit.

You will have the opportunity to develop the Core Skills of *Communication*, *Problem Solving*, *Working with Others* and *Information and Communication Technology*. In addition, whilst preparing your project you will demonstrate the aims of Curriculum for Excellence and become a successful learner, a confident individual, a responsible citizen and an effective contributor within society.