



## Higher National Unit specification: general information

**Unit title:** Counselling: Course Residential Experience

**Unit code:** H0HN 35

**Superclass:** PM

**Publication date:** February 2012

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 02

### Unit purpose

This Unit is designed to give candidates who are undertaking counselling training the opportunity to plan, prepare, participate and evaluate a counselling residential experience. Candidates are required to engage in community living for a set period of time, to participate fully in the planning and implementation of group activities and then to reflect and evaluate personal learning gained from the residential course experience. The value of the group residential experience is in enabling the candidate to develop personal and interpersonal skills and to experience group relations. The unit content is underpinned by the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling.

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

- ◆ Contribute to the planning and preparation of the residential, working within a person-centred ethos
- ◆ Undertake tasks and engage in group activities with a counselling focus as planned in residential programme of events
- ◆ Review and evaluate personal learning and benefits gained from individual participation on the course residential

### Recommended prior knowledge and skills

Candidates should have good interpersonal and communication skills. It would be desirable for candidates to have prior knowledge, understanding and practical experience of counselling and/or group work and to have completed counselling training to a minimum level of SCQF level 7, eg HNC Counselling G8H6 15 or equivalent. It would be advantageous if students have previously undertaken Unit F1EK 34 *Group Counselling Skills* and/or F1EN 34 *Personal Development in a Counselling Skills Setting*.

## **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.

## **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**

Contribute to the planning and preparation of the residential, working within a person - centred ethos.

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

- ◆ Theories and skills of team work
- ◆ Group contract
- ◆ Communication and interpersonal skills

#### **Evidence Requirements**

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

- ◆ Negotiate and agree a group contract as part of a team
- ◆ Recognise own needs and respect the needs of others in preparation of course residential experience
- ◆ Contribute, in an agreed role, to the preparation of a programme of group activities

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

**Unit title:** Counselling: Course Residential Experience

### Outcome 2

Undertake tasks and engage in group activities with a counselling focus as planned in residential programme of events.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Group Processes
- ◆ Defence Mechanisms
- ◆ Roles in groups
- ◆ Core conditions of empathy, congruence and unconditional positive regard

#### Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ Demonstrate core conditions of empathy, congruence and unconditional positive regard to course members
- ◆ Describe defence mechanisms or personal barriers that are highlighted from participating in the residential experience
- ◆ Explain own role/ roles in the group and how this impacted on self and their relationships with others

### Outcome 3

Review and evaluate personal learning and benefits gained from individual participation on the course residential experience.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Personal and professional learning
- ◆ Counselling/group ethics and boundaries

#### Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ Evaluate own contribution to the course residential experience in terms of personal and professional learning and explain how this might be transferred into other counselling contexts
- ◆ Explain the importance of boundaries and ethical practice in maintaining a safe and productive residential course experience

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

### **Unit title:** Counselling: Course Residential Experience

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 develop candidate's knowledge and understanding of the value of the group residential experience and to provide them with a residential community setting in which to develop their personal and interpersonal skills and awareness.

The course residential experience offers candidates the opportunity to live in close residence with each other and to be involved with each other between group sessions, eating together, often sharing rooms and socialising. Through this sense of community living, greater continuity, cohesion and intensity build up quickly. Momentum can be sustained and experimentation within the group can more easily occur. The group can operate as a community, free from outside distractions and free to create an environment where norms and values are different from other groups in society. The emphasis of the Unit is very much experiential rather than theoretical.

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

In order to achieve the Outcomes the candidate is required to participate fully in the planning, preparation and duration of the course residential. Once the residential is completed candidates are required to reflect and evaluate the experience. This Unit can be integrated with other counselling Units comprising skills and theory and is intended for those preparing to, or already working in the field of counselling and/or group work.

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

**Unit title:** Counselling: Course Residential Experience

### Suggested Reading

Amis, Kirsten  
Becoming a Counsellor: A Student Companion  
ISBN-13: 978-1848608825

Barnes et al  
An Introduction to Groupwork: A group analytic perspective  
ISBN 0333-162249

Benson, JF  
Working More Creatively in Groups  
ISBN 041-523-038-1

Corey and Corey  
Groups, Process and Practice  
ISBN 0-534-347-894

Rose, Chris (2008)  
The Personal Development Group The students Guide  
Karnac  
ISBN 978-1-85575-535-2

Shakoor, Muhyiddin (2010)  
On becoming a Group Member  
Routledge  
ISBN978-0-415-96522-4

### Guidance on the assessment of this Unit

This course residential experience Unit has three assessments. These could take the form of reflective accounts, observational checklists, essays or journals. Activities planned and delivered to the group could be assessed through the use of a checklist and recorded verbal feedback from peers and tutors.

### Assessment Guidelines

#### Outcome 1

For this Outcome candidates will be required to demonstrate willingness to participate at a high level in all aspects of planning and preparation for the course residential. A person-centred ethos will mean that all contributors and contributions to the group planning process should be heard, respected and given consideration. Participants are expected to articulate their needs and for these to be listened to and respected, maintain the core conditions of empathy, congruence and unconditional positive regard. Sensitivity to individual's needs must be considered and explored, eg where financial costs, sleeping arrangements, etc. are concerned. Compromise and agreement are important factors in the Outcome of the group planning and preparation process.

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

### Unit title: Counselling: Course Residential Experience

Assessment for this Outcome could come at the beginning of the Unit and be completed and submitted prior to the residential experience taking place.

A checklist may be used to ensure that relevant decisions have been discussed and agreed and can be completed as a self assessment and also using peer and tutor feedback.

#### Outcome 2

For this Outcome candidates are required to participate in the role/s agreed in the planning and preparation of group activities and tasks. Candidates could deliver a group activity either alone or co-working with a peer. Reflection on the issues involved in co-working and how these impacted on participants, eg compromise, different leadership styles, authority, projection etc.

Candidates could describe how personal barriers or defence mechanisms come into play when in this unique setting. What are the difficulties around food, activities, accommodation, personal differences? These are areas that may otherwise not have been identified or revealed out with the residential experience and are often highlighted due to the intensity of the setting.

Candidates will fulfil roles in their personal lives, eg wife, mother, son, manager, etc. These roles may have been acquired or learned and may not sit comfortably with the organismic self. Through being in the group and community setting of the residential experience they can become aware of roles within the group and reflect on how comfortably these fit or how they may become more in touch with the core self, free from outside demands. Here, they can reflect on these roles and explore new possibilities.

Candidates should also reflect on boundaries and how compliance with these affected them, relating this to the experience of the residential and incorporate learning that can be transferred to the counselling environment. Boundaries may include — confidentiality, in group and with peers out with group, emotional safety, sensitivity to others needs, regard for others physical space, your own solitude and need for rest.

The assessment for this Outcome is in the form of an observational checklist which can be completed by self, peers and tutor. Content could include reflection on defence patterns, personal behaviours, roles in group and facilitation of group activity. Evidence may be gathered to include in portfolio covering Outcomes 1, 2 and 3.

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

**Unit title:** Counselling: Course Residential Experience

### Outcome 3

For this Outcome candidates are required to reflect on the experience of their personal learning and consider how this might be transferred into other areas and contexts in their lives. In particular, reflection is required as to how this learning might be transferred into the practice of counselling and also consider how this may impact on their way of being in other settings, eg with family, friends, work teams.

Candidates are asked to reflect on the benefits of the residential experience. What makes this a unique experience and how do the personal and professional boundaries that are agreed and worked with add to the value of the experience? What is the value of engaging in group activities, both in group sessions and in a social setting? What can be learned from this in considering safe and ethical practice when working with clients individually and in groups?

Candidates may also consider the benefits of this way of relating to other community contexts, eg work teams, social groups and how the learning can be transferred to develop and benefit their involvement in these contexts.

Assessment is in the form of a reflective account and should be submitted at the end of the Unit following the residential experience. This may be assessed jointly with learning Outcome 2.

### Online and Distance Learning

This Unit is not suitable for open or distance learning as it is an experiential learning experience of relating to others in a group setting.

### Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skill(s) of *Problem Solving*, *Working with Others* and *Communication* as this Unit contains opportunities for problem solving exercises, experiential group activities, planning, preparing and delivering group activity and using interpersonal and communication skills.

### Curriculum for Excellence

Participation and learning from this Unit meets Curriculum for Excellence aims in encouraging learning through experience. The Unit focuses on sharing, communicating, engagement, reflection and evaluating experiences and as such promotes learning in order that students may become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors within society.



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

**Unit title:** Counselling: Course Residential Experience

### **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)

## History of changes to Unit

| Version | Description of change                      | Date       |
|---------|--|------------|
| 02      | Additional sentence added to unit purpose. | 23/03/2017 |
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## General information for candidates

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