



Higher National Unit Specification

General information

Unit title: Clinical Sports Massage

Unit code: H4XX 35

Superclass: PJ

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Version: 04

Unit purpose

This Unit is designed to provide the learner with the skills to plan, apply and evaluate sports massage in the clinical environment. Learners will use both subjective and objective assessment methods to plan and apply treatment for the purposes of preventing or managing sports injuries, and treating clients with pre-existing pathological conditions. Treatment will include basic massage and advanced soft tissue techniques. The Unit covers key elements of the National Occupational Standards in Sports Therapy (cnh22).

Outcomes

On successful completion of the Unit the learner will be able to:

- 1 Explain the underpinning principles required to plan, apply, evaluate and modify appropriate sports massage/soft tissue treatments.
- 2 Consult with clients to devise combined sports massage/soft tissue treatment plans.
- 3 Perform sports massage and soft tissue techniques on clients in a clinical environment.
- 4 Apply, evaluate and modify treatment plans.

Credit points and level

3 Higher National Unit credits at SCQF level 8: (24 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8)

Higher National Unit Specification: General information (cont)

Recommended entry to the Unit

This Unit is mandatory in the HNC Soft Tissue Therapy/HND Sports Therapy. Whilst access is ultimately at the discretion of the Centre, it is anticipated that at the time of practical assessment of this Unit, learners will have successfully completed the following HN Units: *Functional Anatomy, Basic Subjective and Objective Assessment* and *Sports Therapy: Professional Standards*. Learners should also have achieved Outcomes 1–3 of *Anatomy and Physiology for Sports Therapists* or their equivalent SCQF level.

Core Skills

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes for 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 Assessment Support Pack (ASP) for this Unit provides assessment and marking guidelines that exemplify the national standard for achievement. It is a valid, reliable and practicable assessment. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the ASP to ensure a comparable standard. A list of existing ASPs is available to download from SQA's website (<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/46233.2769.html>).

Equality and inclusion

This Unit Specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

Higher National Unit Specification: Statement of standards

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Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

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. Learners 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 underpinning principles required to plan, apply, evaluate and modify appropriate sports massage/soft tissue treatments.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Anatomy, physiology and pathology of the human body
- ◆ Indications, contra-indications and cautions for treatment
- ◆ Physiological, neurological and psychological effects of sports massage
- ◆ Effects, uses and contra-indications of massage manipulations and soft-tissue techniques
- ◆ Assessment methods
- ◆ Feedback methods
- ◆ Use of equipment
- ◆ Use of lubricants
- ◆ Evaluation techniques

Outcome 2

Consult with a range of clients to devise combined sports massage/soft tissue treatment plans.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Communication skills
- ◆ Consultation techniques
- ◆ Subjective and objective assessment skills
- ◆ Aims and requirements of client
- ◆ Indications, contra-indications and cautions for treatment
- ◆ Effects, uses and contra-indications of massage/soft-tissue techniques
- ◆ Treatment planning (short, medium, long-term goals)
- ◆ Record keeping
- ◆ Commercial timelines

Higher National Unit Specification: Statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Clinical Sports Massage

Outcome 3

Perform sports massage and soft tissue techniques on clients in a clinical environment.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Health, safety and hygiene of the environment
- ◆ Preparation of equipment
- ◆ Preparation of self
- ◆ Preparation of client
- ◆ Working posture
- ◆ Correct biomechanics for performing techniques
- ◆ Screening and positioning of client
- ◆ Application of massage and soft tissue techniques
- ◆ Client care and comfort
- ◆ Treatment goals
- ◆ Commercial timelines

Outcome 4

Apply, evaluate and modify treatment plans.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Treatment planning (short, medium, long-term goals)
- ◆ Application of massage /soft-tissue techniques
- ◆ Evaluating client feedback (visual, oral, kinaesthetic)
- ◆ After-care and home care advice
- ◆ Adaptation to treatment plans
- ◆ Reflection, evaluation and self-evaluation
- ◆ Record keeping
- ◆ Commercial timelines

Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Learners will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills across all Outcomes by showing that they can:

Outcome 1

Higher National Unit Specification: Statement of standards (cont)

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- ◆ explain why it is important that Sports Massage Practitioners have a high level of knowledge of anatomy, physiology and pathology of the human body
- ◆ outline the indications for, and benefits of, Sports Massage
- ◆ explain the contra-indications and cautions for the use of sports massage
- ◆ explain physiological, neurological and psychological effects of sports massage
- ◆ outline 3 major effects, 3 uses and 3 specific contra-indications to massage techniques (effleurage, petrissage, compressions, frictions, vibration, tapotement)
- ◆ describe the rationale, and 3 specific contra-indications, for the use of soft-tissue techniques (muscle energy techniques (MET), proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation (PNF), soft tissue release (STR), neuromuscular techniques (NMT), trigger point release (TPR), positional release technique (PRT), myofascial release)
- ◆ explain the importance of obtaining feedback and how this is achieved
- ◆ explain the use of equipment for undertaking massage in a clinical environment
- ◆ outline 4 types of lubricants that can be used during sports massage including their advantages and disadvantages
- ◆ give 3 examples of how and why lubricants should be removed from the clients skin following treatment

Outcomes 2, 3 and 4 should be assessed holistically through a number of case studies, details of which are given following the Evidence Requirements of Outcome 4.

Outcome 2

- ◆ communicate effectively and professionally with a client
- ◆ relate to the client in a sensitive and empathic manner
- ◆ gather subjective and objective information to devise a combined sports massage/soft tissue treatment plan appropriate for the client's requirements
- ◆ recognise indications, contra-indications and cautions to treatment in devising the plan
- ◆ negotiate a treatment plan with the client and describe the markers that will be used to measure its effectiveness
- ◆ obtain informed consent
- ◆ record details accurately and legibly on industry standard documentation following legal procedures for its completion and storage
- ◆ work within acceptable commercial timelines for session

Higher National Unit Specification: Statement of standards (cont)

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Outcome 3

- ◆ demonstrate that adequate public liability and professional indemnity insurance is held
- ◆ prepare the work area for treatment to meet acceptable organisational and industry standards for health, safety and hygiene
- ◆ ensure availability and close proximity of additional small equipment and materials that may be used
- ◆ apply appropriate professional standards of personal hygiene, dress and personal appearance
- ◆ position themselves to ensure the treatment is effective and applied without harm to themselves
- ◆ screen the client appropriately to maintain client's modesty
- ◆ adapt the positioning of the client, when and where necessary, to take into account client's condition and the most effective position to apply the chosen techniques
- ◆ ensure client care and comfort is maintained throughout the treatment
- ◆ apply the following massage techniques effleurage, petrissage, compressions, frictions, vibration, tapotement safely and appropriately in terms of biomechanics, sequence, continuity, depth of pressure, rate and rhythm across the four case studies.
- ◆ apply the following soft-tissue techniques (muscle energy techniques (MET), proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation (PNF), soft tissue release (STR), neuromuscular techniques (NMT)/trigger point release (TPR), positional release technique (PRT), myofascial release(MFR) safely and effectively in terms of own posture and biomechanics, comfort, safety and modesty of client, effectiveness within treatment session.
- ◆ use equipment and materials appropriately throughout the treatment session
- ◆ recognise any restrictions to planned soft tissue techniques during the treatment and make suitable adaptations

Outcome 4

- ◆ apply massage and soft tissue techniques appropriately to achieve the goals of the treatment plan
- ◆ communicate effectively with client before, during and after 'hands-on' in order to obtain feedback
- ◆ offer appropriate after-care and home-care advice
- ◆ evaluate treatment and confirm, modify or adapt treatment plan as appropriate
- ◆ reflect on personal strengths and weakness and identify improvement strategies
- ◆ record details accurately and legibly on industry standard documentation following legal procedures for its completion and storage
- ◆ work within acceptable commercial timelines for treatment session



Higher National Unit Support Notes

Unit title: Clinical Sports Massage

Unit Support Notes are offered as guidance and are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 120 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This mandatory Unit in the Group Awards HNC Soft Tissue Therapy/HND Sports Therapy could be delivered over the whole academic session as this would provide plenty of opportunity for practice out-with contact time. It is recommended that by the time learners come to the practical (Case Study) assessments, they should have completed HN Units: *Functional Anatomy, Basic Subjective and Objective Assessment* and *Sports Therapy: Professional Standards*. Learners should also have achieved Outcomes 1–3 of *Sports Therapy: Anatomy and Physiology* or their equivalent SCQF level, as they provide essential underpinning knowledge.

Outcome 1

- ◆ Practitioner knowledge of Anatomy, Physiology and Pathology: scope of practice, aid information gathering and assessment, interpretation of findings, preparation and delivery of treatment plan to achieve goals.
- ◆ Indications for sports massage: part of a general conditioning programme which might include injury prevention, maintenance of optimal soft-tissue function; pre-event to aid pre-exercise preparation; inter-event to aid physiological and psychological function; post event to aid recovery; post-travel; treatment of injury or impairment in body structures/function, eg adhesions, scarring, decreased ROM, impaired muscle performance, increased muscle tension/tone, postural misalignment, pain, swelling, stress, reduced mental focus.
- ◆ Benefits of Sports Massage: may/may not yet be fully supported by scientific research but clinical evidence suggests use of different manipulations/techniques can: increase ROM, increase flexibility, decrease muscle tension, decrease muscle spasm, helps prevent DOMS, increase mental alertness and clarity, decrease anxiety, increase relaxation, aid warm-up or cool down process, identify sub-clinical level musculoskeletal issues, maximise rehabilitation programme efficiency.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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- ◆ Contra-indications/cautions: contra-indications should be divided into general and local — red flags = symptoms which indicate serious pathology/disease and need for referral. Cautions are conditions where manipulations/techniques must be adapted/modified to suit. Conditions that should be covered: Asthma; Diabetes; Haemophilia; Heart disorders (including angina, heart attack, etc); Hypertension (high blood pressure); low blood pressure; Osteoarthritis; Rheumatoid Arthritis; Osteoporosis; Vertebral disc problems; Tumours, melanoma and other cancers; Undiagnosed lumps or skin disorders; Contagious illness such as colds and flu; Skin conditions: bacterial, fungal, viral, allergic, eczema, dermatitis, psoriasis; Open wounds; Burns (including sunburn); Recent surgery (post operative); Metal pins or plates; Acute soft-tissue inflammation (including bursitis, tendinitis; tendinosis, fasciitis; Whiplash (acute neck strain); Fractures and Dislocations; Bunions; Bruises - haematomas; Myositis ossificans; Varicose Veins; Phlebitis; Thrombosis; Blood clot; DVT; Oedema; Hyperthermia; Hypothermia; Frost Bite; Dehydration; Inoculations; very strong medication.
- ◆ Physiological, neurological and psychological effects of sports massage: the interaction of the effects of sports massage on the skin, musculoskeletal system, circulatory system, nervous and endocrine systems. Scientific literature and texts using an evidence-based approach should be referenced.
- ◆ Assessments: subjective; objective (palpation, ROM, gait, muscle length).
- ◆ Feedback: visual; oral; kinaesthetic.
- ◆ Lubricants: oil; lotion; cream; wax; any product containing essential oils; ice.

Outcomes 2, 3 and 4

- ◆ Case Study Criteria: four case studies (minimum of four treatments each) should be undertaken. The subjects of the Case Studies should not be drawn from the learner's immediate peer group. Different clients with varying needs should be used. Clients must be actively involved in sport or physical activity at any level; recreational, club, national, international. Clients can present for injury prevention, injury management or for help with a pre-existing condition. Clients can be drawn from the following groups: pre-adolescent (9–12), adolescent (13–18), adult, older adult, elite athletes, people with special conditions/physical or learning disabilities, pregnant women. A minimum of one case study should be of upper body and one of lower body (two free choice). Treatment plans should be negotiated with clients in terms of short, medium and long term goals and the objective and subjective markers for evaluation identified. Treatments should be performed in a realistic clinical environment and within generally accepted commercial timelines: one and quarter hours for full consultation, subjective and objective assessment, treatment, re-assessment, advice. 45–60 minutes for subsequent treatments to include subjective and objective updates, reassessment, treatment, post-treatment re-assessment, advice.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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- ◆ Learner evidence: learner will need to demonstrate skills in undertaking consultation, subjective and objective assessments, treatment planning, performing treatment, eliciting feedback and provide a practitioner's report explaining the rationale for assessment and treatment of the client. The practitioner's report should also include reflection and self-assessment of the process of undertaking the case study. Practical demonstration will be supported by the following documentation: consultation form and records of subjective and objective assessments; treatment plan/strategy to cover short, medium and long term goals, record of treatments applied to include massage and soft-tissue techniques planned and used, visual and kinaesthetic observations, oral feedback, assessments and re-assessments, analysis/evaluation, aftercare and homecare. Treatment notes can be written as SOAP notes (subjective, objective, analysis, plan). Learner should choose most effective massage and soft-tissue techniques specific to the client's needs. Across the four case studies, all techniques should be demonstrated and recorded. Across the four case studies, all body parts should be worked on across upper body, lower body, lower back and pelvis. Across the four case studies, safe and effective treatment should be applied with the client in prone, supine, side-lying and seated positions.
- ◆ Assessor evidence: The learner should have an observed assessment on a minimum of four different occasions. Each case study should be observed at least once. A minimum of one assessment should be for the initial session, a minimum of one assessment should be for the final session. All massage manipulations and soft tissue techniques in the Evidence Requirements should be demonstrated across the four case studies. Where these do not form part of the treatment, the assessor should use oral questioning and require demonstration that the manipulations and techniques can be performed effectively. Assessors should complete a comprehensive checklist. Oral questions asked and additional demonstrations given should be noted.
- ◆ Clients will be expected to complete a feedback form, which may also act as a witness testimony, and will be part of the documentary evidence for the case study.

Guidance on approaches to delivery of this Unit

This Unit is one of a suite of mandatory Units mapped to the NOS in Sports Therapy. This Unit, together with *Massage for Events and Special Populations*, and elements within *Sports Therapy: Anatomy and Physiology*, *Functional Anatomy*, *Basic Subjective and Objective Assessment*, *Sports Therapy: Professional Standards*, *Clinical and Team Experience 1* will allow the learner entry to the SMA as a level 4 member. This is a requirement for anyone wishing to work with elite athletes at international competition level, such as Commonwealth Games and Olympics.

The Unit is divided into four Outcomes. Outcome 1 assesses the underpinning theory, and whilst all of this should be achieved before practical assessment of case studies takes place, it is envisaged that the delivery is holistic, integrating theory and practice before assessment.

The Unit should be developing practical skills and problem-solving using a variety of available evidence, simulations and role play. There is the opportunity for learners to be involved in both group and independent activities based on theoretical research, oral presentations and problem-solving activities relating to simulated situations/conditions. Many scenarios can be offered to allow learners to develop practical skills.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Clinical Sports Massage

It would be most advantageous if learners were able to visit facilities where rehabilitation – particularly where it includes massage and soft tissue treatment of athletes - is undertaken. Presentations from sports massage practitioners/sports therapists able to describe their work would be extremely interesting.

Evidence can be generated using different types of instruments of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education.

Outcome 1

- ◆ All Evidence Requirements require demonstration of underpinning knowledge which is necessary for the application of skills in Outcomes 2–4. Therefore, it is suggested that this is evidenced via restricted and extended response questions that have allowed the learner to research and assimilate information, which can then be transferred to practice. Where possible and feasible, information should be referenced.

Outcomes 2–4

- ◆ Learners must undertake four case studies comprising four treatments each. The learner must demonstrate every aspect of treating a client over a period of time. This will include: undertaking a full consultation, subjective and objective assessments, devising and carry out a treatment plan/strategy, treatment using the range of massage manipulations and soft tissue techniques outlined in the Evidence Requirements, collecting feedback, reassessing client, giving appropriate after-care and home care, adapting treatment plan (where necessary) and providing continuing treatments to achieve goals. Assessments must ensure that this can be achieved, additionally, ensuring that all body parts are treated, all manipulations and techniques are covered and all documents are presented fully and accurately completed.
- ◆ This is a large Unit and observational assessment forms a major part. It is therefore extremely important that assessors complete full and detailed checklists to confirm learners' achievement.
- ◆ Learners may use these case studies as part of the 100 logged hours required across the award.

Guidance on approaches to assessment of this Unit

Evidence can be generated using different types of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Outcome 1

All Evidence Requirements for this Outcome should be assessed through restricted or extended response questions that would form a portfolio of work.

Outcomes 2, 3 and 4

These should be holistically assessed through four case studies, each comprising four treatments. Learners should subjectively and objectively assess their clients, treat clients and evaluate treatments. All documentation should be provided together with a rationale for treatment, changes made to the treatment throughout the case study and self-evaluation. Learners should be observed, using a detailed observation checklist, on multiple occasions across the four case studies.

Outcomes 2, 3 and 4 should be assessed holistically as follows:

- learners are required to undertake a minimum of four case studies
- each case study must consist of a consultation, subjective and objective assessments, a devised treatment plan and four recorded treatments
- each case study must be supported by appropriately completed documentation for consultation, assessments undertaken, treatment plan/strategy, and records of treatment.
- For two of the case studies a practitioner's report will be submitted explaining the rationale for assessment and treatment of the client and include reflection and self-assessment of the process
- the subjects of the Case Studies should not be drawn from the learner's immediate peer group (ie those on the same course)
- treatments should be performed in a realistic clinical environment and within commercial timelines
- the learner should treat different clients with varying needs for each case study, a minimum of one case study for an upper body issue one case study for a lower body issue, and one case study for lower back and pelvis must be presented
- each case study client must be an active sports/physical activity participant, but this can be of any level, ie recreational, club, regional or national. The client does not have to present with a sports injury. Clients can be drawn from the following groups: pre-adolescent (9–12), adolescent (13–18), adult, older adult, elite athletes, people with special conditions/physical/learning disabilities, pregnant women
- the learner should have an observed assessment on a minimum of four different occasions. Each case study should be observed at least once. A minimum of one assessment should be for the initial session, a minimum of one assessment should be for the final session
- treatment plans should be negotiated with clients in terms of short, medium and long term goals and the objective and subjective markers for evaluation identified
- the learner should choose the most effective massage and soft-tissue techniques specific to the client's needs. Across the four case studies, all techniques should be demonstrated. Where these do not form part of the treatment, the assessor should use oral questioning and require demonstration that the techniques can be performed effectively
- across the four case studies, the learner should demonstrate techniques on lower body, lower back and pelvis

- across the four case studies the learner should demonstrate safe and effective treatment with the client in prone, supine, side-lying and seated
- clients will be expected to complete a feedback form
- learners can log these case study hours towards professional body recognition

Opportunities for 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 social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all learner evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment.

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

This Unit develops underpinning knowledge in causes, and minimising the risk, of injuries related to sport participation. It equips the learners with essential information to enable a more meaningful clinical assessment process to be undertaken, gives learners the ability to apply treatment modalities for which they are qualified, appropriately and educate their prospective clients to minimise the risk of further injury. Additionally, it introduces learners, within their scope of practice, to the treatment of injuries in the acute phase and management of the injury through rehabilitation programming, allowing the learner to work more effectively with other professionals in the overall rehabilitation of the client. The Unit provides the building blocks for Year 2 Units in the HND Sports Therapy award, which develops the application of information gained through this Unit. It provides underpinning knowledge for three Sports Therapy NOS Units.

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date
04	Clarification of Assessment Methods	31/08/18
03	Clarification on specific knowledge and skills requested by centres.	30/08/16
02	Removal of reference to the SMA and word count of practitioners report.	24/09/14

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General information for learners

Unit title: Clinical Sports Massage

This section will help you decide whether this is the Unit for you by explaining what the Unit is about, what you should know or be able to do before you start, what you will need to do during the Unit and opportunities for further learning and employment.

This Unit is one of the mandatory Units in the HNC Soft Tissue Therapy/HND Sports Therapy programmes. Sports Massage is one of the main methods you will use to treat people as a Sports Therapist. The Unit introduces you to how to use this method effectively in a clinical environment. You will learn how to get the information you need – through subjective and objective assessments — to enable you to plan treatments to meet your client's goals. You might be working to help your clients remain injury free or help them recover from an injury or manage a condition they have. You will learn a variety of massage manipulations — hands on strokes — and soft tissue techniques — combination techniques to help treat your clients effectively. The Unit is very practical and you would be expected to participate fully.

At first you will learn and practice your techniques on other learners within your group. Later you will work on external clients — people you don't know. During the early part of this Unit, for theoretical work, you will have the opportunity to work in groups and present group presentations, as you develop your skills you will be expected to research and present information independently. You will be expected to participate fully in the practical work which will involve you in simulations and role-playing both a client and a therapist.

The Unit is assessed in the following way:

Outcome 1

A portfolio of evidence should be submitted which consists of answers to restricted or extended response questions. This shows your understanding of the how and why you would treat your client. The portfolio work should be achieved before you attempt the practical assessments.

Outcomes 2, 3 and 4

These Outcomes cover the practical case studies on which you are assessed. You need to carry out four case studies, each consisting of four treatments. You need to use different clients for each case study, and treat different conditions/issues. The clients must be actively involved in sport or physical activity. You will need to carry out a consultation, subjective and objective assessments, plan a treatment strategy, perform treatment, get appropriate feedback from your client, give after-care and homecare and evaluate the process and your performance. You will complete records of information and produce a practitioner's report for each case study.