



## Higher National Unit specification

### General information

**Unit title:** HIV: An Introduction (SCQF level 7)

**Unit code:** HG3N 34

**Superclass:** PA

**Publication date:** August 2016

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 01

### Unit purpose

This Unit is designed to enable learners to develop knowledge and understanding of terminology used when discussing and describing HIV Infection, understanding how the virus is transmitted and describing of prevention methods. Learners will be introduced to the hierarchy of risks associated with the transmission of HIV Infection. The Unit will also help learners to understand the myths and stigma attached to HIV Infection and those who live with it as well as discrimination experienced.

This Unit is suitable for learners wishing to study the Unit as a stand-alone Unit or to study it as part of a Group Award. The Unit is suitable for learners who wish to gain employment, or who may already be employed, in health and social care, education and/or criminal justice sector. The Unit is suitable for learners to gain knowledge of HIV Infection as it relates to these sectors and/or for learners who wish to seek employment within a specialist HIV resource.

### Outcomes

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

- 1 State current terminology associated with HIV.
- 2 Describe the routes of HIV transmission and prevention methods.
- 3 Investigate myths, stigma and discrimination associated with HIV.

### Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7)

## Higher National Unit Specification: General information (cont)

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### Recommended entry to the Unit

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, learners may benefit from having attained one of the following or equivalent levels of award:

- ◆ Child, Health and Social Care Units at SCQF level 6
- ◆ Science Units at SCQF level 5/6
- ◆ Communication Units at SCQF level 6
- ◆ Skills for Work/Health Units at SCQF level 5/6

Those with vocational and/or lived experience may be considered without production of previous academic achievement.

### 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.

### 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](http://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

State current terminology associated with HIV.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Historic terminology as it relates to HIV
- ◆ Current terminology as it relates to HIV
- ◆ Difference between HIV and AIDS

### Outcome 2

Describe the routes of HIV transmission and prevention methods.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Main routes of HIV transmission including maternal transmission
- ◆ Process of transmission through the body and impact on the immune system
- ◆ The hierarchy of risks associated with routes of transmission
- ◆ Prevention Methods

### Outcome 3

Investigate myths, stigma and discrimination associated with HIV.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Myths surrounding routes of HIV transmission
- ◆ Stigma related to HIV and potential/actual consequences for the individual and/or group
- ◆ Impact of Stigma on Health Promotion
- ◆ Discrimination and its effects on individuals and/or groups living with HIV
- ◆ Role of media in perpetuating myths, stigma and discrimination

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

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### Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Learners are required to provide evidence (written and/or oral) to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills across all Outcomes by showing that they can:

- ◆ explain the changing use of terminology over time.
- ◆ explain the differences between HIV and AIDS.
- ◆ identify and explain four of the main routes of infection one of which must be maternal transmission.
- ◆ explain the effect of HIV on the immune system as it progresses through the body.
- ◆ explain the hierarchy of risks associated with routes of transmission.
- ◆ explain three prevention methods.
- ◆ describe two myths associated with transmission of HIV.
- ◆ identify two examples of discrimination and describe the effects of this experienced by individuals/groups living with HIV.
- ◆ define stigma and explain its affect on the individual/group living with HIV.
- ◆ explain the impact of stigma on Health Promotion.
- ◆ explain the influence of media in perpetuating myths, stigma and discrimination.



## Higher National Unit Support Notes

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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 40 hours.

### Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

#### Outcome 1

Learners should be introduced to the following terms and understand their meaning:

- ◆ Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)
- ◆ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)
- ◆ Infection
- ◆ Virus
- ◆ Body Fluids
- ◆ Immune System
- ◆ Antibodies

Learners should know the difference between HIV and AIDS and use the correct terms when discussing either. They should be aware that often members of society use the terms HIV and AIDS interchangeably. HIV is a virus and particular exposure to it can lead to infection. HIV attacks the body's immune system — which is the body's defence system against disease and can render it deficient and unable to work as effectively as it should. HIV can, in some cases, lead to AIDS. AIDS — learners should understand this is not considered a disease but a condition. A syndrome is a collection of different signs and symptoms of illness. AIDS develops when HIV has caused serious damage to the body's immune system. It is a complex condition with symptoms that vary from individual to individual. Symptoms of AIDS are related to the infections a person develops as a result of having a damaged immune system.

#### Outcome 2

Learners should be introduced to the main routes of transmission including maternal transmission.

These can include infected:

- ◆ Semen or Vaginal fluids
- ◆ Rectal secretions
- ◆ Needles, syringes or other injecting drug equipment which is shared

## Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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- ◆ Blood or Breast Milk
- ◆ Mother to Baby Transmission
- ◆ Blood Transfusions and organ transplants (before screening was introduced in UK)

Learners should understand that the risks associated with particular behaviours in relation to HIV are seen as hierarchical. That is some behaviours carry more risks than others. The higher risk behaviours are associated with, for example, sharing of needles, unprotected anal or vaginal sex with an HIV positive individual who is not on treatment.

Learners should be introduced to Prevention Methods to reduce the risk of contracting HIV. These can include awareness of effective and consistent use of condoms during vaginal, anal and/or oral sex. Individuals and their partners could get tested to find their HIV status. If individuals inject drugs they should be supported to use sterile equipment and avoid the sharing of drug equipment. Individuals who do not have HIV but are at increased risk of contracting it should be aware of Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) as a method of medication. Prevention of mother to child transmission should also be discussed with mothers with HIV taking medication throughout the pregnancy and childbirth. Children of HIV infected mothers should receive HIV medication for six weeks after the birth.

Learners should also understand how HIV affects the body. This should include discussion around the infection of cells within the immune system which results in progressive damage to the point the body is unable to fight infections. Learners should understand the virus enters via CD4 cells — a type of T lymphocyte (T cell) using the CD4 cells to make copies that leave the cells thus killing them in the process. This continues until the CD4 cells — also called CD4 count drops so low that the immune system stops working. This can take a period of time during which the individual is likely to feel and appear well.

Impact on the individual is likely to include some of the following:

- ◆ Continual use of medication
- ◆ Physical
- ◆ Psychological
- ◆ Neurological
- ◆ Lifestyle

### Outcome 3

Learners should investigate the myths, stigma and discrimination surrounding HIV and particularly in relation to its transmission.

Some of the general myths should be explored and/or investigated by learners. These could include some of the following:

- ◆ Only gay men get HIV (growing numbers of infection in heterosexual relationships).
- ◆ Condoms are not effective in preventing HIV transmission (majority of infections come from unprotected sex).
- ◆ You can get HIV from having a fish pedicure (no evidence to support this).

## Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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- ◆ HIV can be passed on through sharing razors and toothbrushes (not true but good hygiene would suggest do not share these things).
- ◆ You can get HIV from a mosquito bite (not true).
- ◆ If you get HIV you will die soon (more effective medications).
- ◆ My partner would tell me if he/she had HIV (many individuals are undiagnosed or they may be fearful to say due to stigma towards HIV).

Stigma and discrimination should be understood as a negative force attached to those living with HIV. Learners should investigate and understand the various societal views of HIV. Many individuals do not fully understand HIV and therefore the myths continue. This can cause individuals living with HIV to experience behaviours from others such as being isolated, made to feel shameful, presumptions made about their sexuality and/or their sexual experiences. The stigma may be in relation to their drug use and lifestyle. There is often a view that individuals bring it upon themselves with their lifestyle choices. Some individuals may take a religious view and believe it is their penance for their chosen lifestyle. Due to this level of stigma individuals living with HIV may be reluctant to inform their family/ friends/ workplace for fear of negative reactions. They may also fail to seek information and support from their GP or from organisations that provide information and support to individuals with HIV. As a result positive health promotion for the individual as well as HIV community in general is more likely to be adversely affected.

Learners should understand that discrimination is unfair treatment towards individuals such as those living with HIV. This means that individuals living with HIV are likely to experience behaviours and attitudes, which are not directed at individuals who do not have HIV. Discrimination may occur at a personal level with individuals refusing to work with individuals who are living with HIV or it could be at an organisational level with employers refusing to employ people and/or expecting individuals living with HIV to undergo interventions not expected of the general workforce.

The effects of stigma and discrimination could be better understood by investigating case studies of individuals who have experienced stigma and discrimination. In general learners should understand the effects tend to be negative where individuals living with HIV may feel social isolation, lack of acceptance, anxiety, depression and less likely to challenge the discrimination. If unable to access employment this can lead to issues of poverty and have an impact on life opportunities. Learners should also investigate some positive Outcomes for individuals, for example, using their experience to dispel the myths and to bring HIV into the wider public domain through discussion and public awareness.

The learner should understand the role of the Media in perpetuating myths, stigma and discrimination has how issues have changed over the years. In the early days HIV and particularly AIDS was portrayed by the media as a killer disease and this led to much of the fear and misunderstanding held by the public. However, the learner should understand the important role the media also plays in dispelling myths and producing educational programmes to allow society to have more informed knowledge of HIV and its impact on individuals living with it.

## Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

**Unit title:** HIV: An Introduction (SCQF level 7)

### Guidance on approaches to delivery of this Unit

This Unit can be effectively delivered in the order of Outcomes as they appear within this Unit specification. It is important that learners understand. Learners should be aware of the importance of treatment adherence to HIV medications and the challenges involved in effectively adhering to HIV medication. Treatment adherence means taking medications consistently and correctly, as they are prescribed. Learners will understand the role that treatment adherence plays in achieving and maintaining an undetectable viral load, along with the various barriers to treatment adherence. These barriers can include, for example, medication side effects, stigma, mental health issues, drug use, housing insecurity and food insecurity. However, there are a number of strategies that can be used to improve treatment adherence; learners will become familiar with the approaches that can be used to support individuals in improving adherence.

Learners should understand the changing terminology over time in helping them understanding HIV (Outcome 1). Learners should then understand the routes of transmission of HIV — this should include maternal transmission. Learners should understand the hierarchy of risks and possible effects on the immune system of individuals and/or groups living with HIV. Prevention methods are important and the learner should spend time understanding these (Outcome 2). Learners can then explore the myths surrounding HIV together with the stigma and discrimination experienced by those living with HIV as well as the impact of Stigma on Health Promotion. Learners should understand the role of the media in the possible perpetuation of the myths, stigma and discrimination. Learners should also understand the media has an important role to play in providing educational documentaries to challenge the myths and provide factual information in relation to HIV (Outcome 3).

This Unit should be delivered in a learner centred manner encouraging learners to share their understanding and exploring and researching information in relation to the issues relating to HIV and its impact on individuals and/or groups living with it. Learners should be encouraged to understand their own attitude in relation to HIV and to the individuals/groups living with it. Learners should be supported to understand where these attitudes come from and how they are perpetuated.

Effective use of video, pod casts and other visual and/or social media materials should be used to support the learning process. It may be appropriate to involve local agencies that provide support to individuals/groups living with HIV and/or provide information about HIV. This could include speakers to the classroom setting or arranging field visits to these organisations.

### 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.

## Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Outcomes 1 and 3 could be answered with the learner using an investigative project based on a Case Study (real or hypothetical) to address the evidence points above as they relate to the knowledge and skills for each of these learning Outcomes. The project should be learner led with some support and guidance from the tutor at the outset. The information for the project could be gathered over the Unit teaching with collated information presented towards the end of the Unit for tutor consideration or the learner could deliver their findings by means of an individual or group presentation.

Outcome 2 could be presented as a short answer response to questions set to cover the evidence above as it relates to the knowledge and skills identified. This could be an open-book assessment with a time frame of approximately one hour. The use of a cut off score may be appropriate for this assessment. These short answer responses could also be gathered as an open-book assessment where evidence could be collated over time.

These assessment methods should be completed under Supervision and the tutor/assessor should be satisfied the work produced by the learner is their own. There may also be a requirement for authentication of the learners' work, for example if the learner is undertaking this Unit as distance learning.

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.

### 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](http://www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment).

### Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

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

However, this Unit should provide opportunities for learners to develop skills within their learning. These could include:

*Communication* through the production of written evidence and oral discussions within group work

*Working with Others* within group activities in class.

*Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* through the production of electronically produced assessment evidence.

## History of changes to Unit

| Version | Description of change | Date |
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## General information for learners

### Unit title: HIV: An Introduction (SCQF level 7)

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 will introduce you to the following Outcomes:

- 1 State current terminology associated with HIV.
- 2 Describe the routes of HIV transmission and prevention methods.
- 3 Investigate myths, stigma and discrimination associated with HIV.

This Unit will introduce you to an understanding of HIV and related illnesses. You will be introduced to terminology to help you understand these illnesses. You will also come to understand the routes of HIV transmission to include maternal transmission. You will understand the impact on the immune system as HIV is transmitted through the body. You will be introduced to an understanding of the hierarchy of risks associated with these routes of transmission. You will be able to explore Prevention Methods and other ways that risks can be minimised. You will understand the myths, stigma and discrimination associated with HIV and the impact of this on those living with HIV and the impact of stigma in relation to Health Promotion activities. You will investigate the role of the media in perpetuating myths, stigma and discrimination in regards to individuals/groups living with HIV.

You will be expected to challenge your own views and attitudes in relation to those with HIV. You will share these attitudes with others in your group and explore the attitudes of others in coming to an understanding of HIV and the issues around it. You will work individually or within small groups to investigate the areas noted above. You may have the opportunity to hear visiting speakers who have experience and/or knowledge of HIV and can bring objective views and current thinking. You may also have an opportunity to visit organisations that specialise in providing information and support to those living with HIV and others affected by it.

You will gain knowledge of HIV, better understanding of those living with HIV and how it affects them in their daily living and life opportunities. You will develop good communication skills through discussion and listening to the views of others. You should develop good team working skills through working with others. You will develop investigative skills by working on projects as you complete this Unit. You should gain skills in verbal or written presentation of your work. Employability Skills may be enhanced as this Unit may provide opportunities for you to seek further training and/or employment in social, child, health and criminal justice care environments.

The assessment for this Unit could take the form of an investigative report and/or case study for Outcomes 1 and 3. The information for this can be collated over time during your learning. Your tutor should provide guidance and support during your investigation. Your tutor will inform you of whether this investigation will be an individual or group presentation (verbal or written) Outcome 2 could take the form of a short answer paper to be completed under supervised conditions in class.

You should develop skills in communication, group work and working effectively with others. There will be opportunity to increase skills in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as you use the internet to investigate and produce electronic versions of your findings.

## **General information for learners**

**Unit title:** HIV: An Introduction (SCQF level 7)

You may wish to undertake this Unit and/or the Group Award as a means of seeking further progression within your workplace or as a means of progressing to further higher-level study.