

**PLAY IN EARLY EDUCATION AND
CHILDCARE**
Higher

1st edition – published August 2005



National Course Specification

COURSE Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher)

COURSE CODE C06L 12

COURSE STRUCTURE

This Course comprises of 2 mandatory Units, as follows:

DM41 12	<i>Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher)</i>	<i>1 credit (40 hours)</i>
DM42 12	<i>Play in Practice (Higher)</i>	<i>2 credits (80 hours)</i>

All Courses include a further 40 hours for induction, preparation for the external assessment and in this project assessed Course, the external assessment itself. In effect up to 30 hours is allowed for the completion of the project and its associated tasks which leaves 10 hours for induction, consolidation of learning and any other support. Further information regarding the external assessment is contained later in this document and in the Course Project Specification.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally benefit from having some knowledge and understanding of the developmental needs of children aged 0-12 years. They would also benefit from having attained one of the following:

- ◆ Standard Grade at Credit level in any relevant subject
- ◆ Core Skill Communication at Intermediate 2 level
- ◆ A Course or Units in Care at Intermediate 2
- ◆ Courses or Units in any relevant subject at Intermediate 2
- ◆ Care Scottish Group Award at Intermediate 2
- ◆ SVQ or SVQ Units at level 2 in a related subject.

It is acknowledged that there are a variety of prior learning experiences which are relevant to candidates wishing to undertake this Course. Candidates may have completed or are working towards completion of Units within the *National Certificate Group Award: Early Education and Childcare (Higher)*.

PROGRESSION

This Course or its component Units may provide progression in the following way:

- ◆ progression to a Higher National programme in Early Education and Childcare
- ◆ part of the National Certificate Group Award: Early Education and Childcare
- ◆ Exit to Further or Higher Education Courses which include the study of related childcare subjects

Administrative Information

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National Course Specification (cont)

COURSE Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher)

CORE SKILLS

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

CREDIT VALUE

The project assessed Course: Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher) is allocated 24 SCQF* credit points at SCQF level 6.

SCQF points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher)

RATIONALE

The Early Education and Childcare sector is a growth industry across Scotland. There exists within the sector a wide range of employment opportunities at a variety of levels. In 2006 the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) will begin mandatory registration of all people working with children aged 0-12 years in Scotland. The SSSC is charged to ensure that the sector is served by a confident, competent workforce. A key priority in workforce development is linking knowledge and understanding to practical competencies.

Play is an essential part of any Early Education and Childcare training at whatever level and it is vital that anyone working with children should have knowledge and understanding of play as it applies to all children across the age range. It is also essential that they are able to demonstrate competencies in the workplace underpinned by this knowledge and understanding. This Course intends to bring these two elements together for the first time at Higher level.

This Course is suitable for candidates who may wish to gain employment in the early education and childcare sector. This Course is a mandatory part of the *National Certificate Group Award: Early Education and Childcare*. Successful completion of the National Certificate Group Award would entitle candidates to register with the SSSC at support worker level. Although at Higher level, the focus of this Course is for those who will work with children with delegated responsibility for the care, learning and development of children. It is intended to offer candidates who wish to work at this level an academic challenge. This Course is also suitable for those already employed within the sector who wish to increase their knowledge and understanding of play and develop their professional competencies as part of their continuing professional development. The SSSC will require evidence of continuous professional development as part of on-going registration.

To complete this Course candidates must be employed or have a work placement in an early education and childcare setting.

AIMS

This Course aims to:

- ◆ facilitate candidates' understanding of the interrelationship between component Units
- ◆ foster practical competencies within the early education and childcare sector
- ◆ develop knowledge and understanding and skills in relation to children's play
- ◆ encourage reflective practice
- ◆ highlight the importance of play in relation to the care, learning and development of children aged 0-12 years
- ◆ highlight the importance of the role of the adult in supporting children's play
- ◆ contribute to personal and professional development
- ◆ enable candidates to draw on the outcomes of the component Units to inform and enhance their understanding of what can be considered as effective play practice within early education and child care
- ◆ enhance valued and established provision in Further Education
- ◆ have currency with candidates, employers, lecturers and the early education and childcare sector
- ◆ ease progression into the HNC: Early Education and Childcare
- ◆ allow candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding through performance in the workplace
- ◆ allow candidates the opportunity to reflect and evaluate their practice within the workplace
- ◆ allow candidates to demonstrate practical competencies to employers
- ◆ offer candidates an academic challenge at Higher.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher)

COURSE CONTENT

This Course consists of 2 mandatory Units of 40 and 80 hours. The 40 hour Unit *Play in Early Education and Childcare*, gives the candidates the knowledge and understanding of how play supports the care, learning and development of the child. The 80 hour Unit, *Play in Practice* involves the demonstration of practical competencies and an application of knowledge and understanding in an early education and childcare setting. Under supervision in an early education and childcare setting, candidates are expected to demonstrate the skills required to support children's play. The Course assessment is a project which integrates the knowledge and understanding learned and practiced across the Units and allows the candidate to reflect on their practice and the practice of others.

For the placement element of the Course, candidates should be placed in an early education and childcare setting that offers high quality play provision. The candidate should be supervised in placement by a designated workplace supervisor who is eligible for registration with the SSSC at practitioner level. Regular tutorials that support the candidate's workplace practice and the process of self-evaluation should be provided both in the centre and in the workplace. Delivering centres should meet regularly with workplace providers to ensure standards are met and to monitor candidates' progress.

Where new skills and knowledge are presented to the candidate within the classroom environment this should be as candidate-centred as possible rather than content driven. Centres will have the opportunity to present candidates with a variety of types of play. Where possible this should be done through practical workshop sessions, allowing candidates to develop new skills prior to these being applied in the workplace. Candidates should be encouraged through the Course to link theory to practice and to reflect on their own experiences and the experiences of others in placement.

Summary of Course Content

Play In Early Education and Childcare (Higher)

This Unit requires the candidate to have knowledge and understanding of how play supports the process of child development in a childcare and education setting. Candidates should be able to demonstrate an understanding of how the play environment affects children's play experiences and they should be able to explain how play benefits the developing child aged 0-12 years. They should demonstrate an understanding of the role the adult takes in supporting the organisation and processes of children's play in an early education and childcare setting.

Area of Study	Content
Factors which are important in creating play environments in an early education and childcare setting	Types of areas of play, hazards, teamwork, communication skills, encouraging children's participation
Different types of play	Symbolic play, books, creative play, ICT, games
Importance of play to the developing child	Developmental stages, child's preferred play, play setting
Role of the adult in setting up types of play	Adapting play to suit needs of child, discuss plans, maintaining and developing resources

All of the above Course content will be subject to sampling in the external assessment.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher)

Play in Practice (Higher)

This Unit requires the candidate to demonstrate the skills required to support children's play within an early education and childcare setting. Whilst working under supervision with children within the age range 0-12 years, the candidate should demonstrate the ability to support and maintain a play environment and support a variety of different types of play. They should be able to explain what benefits the child derives from play and demonstrate an understanding of the role of the adult in supporting children's play.

Area of Study	Content
Support play environments	Types of areas of play, hazards, teamwork, communication skills, encouraging children's participation
Support different types of play	Symbolic play, books, creative play, ICT, games
Demonstrate the importance of play to the developing child	Developmental stages, child's preferred play, play setting
Demonstrate the role of the adult in setting up types of play	Adapting play to suit needs of child, discuss plans, maintaining and developing resources

All of the above Course content will be subject to sampling in the external assessment.

Course Organisation

Both Units within the Course can be delivered in isolation but the Course lends itself to integration and sequential teaching. It is important that when delivering the Units candidates are presented with knowledge and new skills and then allowed to demonstrate these within the workplace environment. This is open to various models depending on centre organisation, facilities, timetable arrangements, resources and candidate experience.

For the workplace element of the Course, centres should offer placement experiences to candidates according to principles of best practice, or in an appropriate setting. It is suggested that candidates would benefit from the experience of working with children from two of the following age ranges: 0-3; 3-5; 5-8; 8-12. Placements could be offered to candidates across the early education and childcare sector, including the local authority, private and voluntary sectors. Candidates should have enough time in placement to ensure that all learning outcomes and performance criteria are met, but there is no requirement for candidates to attend placements on a full-day basis. Candidates should be able to complete the Unit in a placement that only provides part day provision, e.g. playgroup, after school club. For those candidates who may be employed in the early education and childcare sector their workplace could act in lieu of placement, although consideration should be given where practicable of offering these candidates the opportunity to experience different age ranges and experience in other settings. The choice of the candidate's placement will influence their choice of case study scenario undertaken in the external assessment.

For the Course Project some of the work done in the Units could be taken forward into the Course project work, for example work carried out by candidates in placement could be used to support the research based report.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher)

ASSESSMENT

To achieve the Course award the candidate must pass all Unit assessments as well as the Course assessment. The candidate's grade is based on the Course assessment.

Assessment Objectives

The aim of both Unit and Course assessment is to allow candidates to demonstrate competence in the following areas:

Knowledge and Understanding of:

- ◆ Factors which are important in creating play environments in early education and child care settings
- ◆ The different types of play
- ◆ The importance of play to the developing child
- ◆ The importance of the adult in setting up different types of play.
- ◆ Meeting the play needs of individual children, including those with additional support needs.
- ◆ Ways that the child can be encouraged to participate in setting up play experiences.

Develop practical competencies in:

- ◆ Supporting play environments (whilst working under supervision)
- ◆ Supporting different types of play (whilst working under supervision).

The skills of Analysis and Evaluation with reference to:

- ◆ Reflecting on the importance of play to the developing child
- ◆ Reflecting on the role of adults.

Unit Assessment

Satisfactory evidence of the attainment of all Outcomes and Performance Criteria for each Unit is in the form of written and/or recorded oral responses to structured questions. To maintain reliability and credibility, assessment evidence is produced under supervision, ensuring that it is the candidate's own work. The evidence for the Unit *Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher)* is in the form of a closed-book test with a time limit of one hour. The evidence for Unit *Play in Practice (Higher)* is a Folio of Evidence built up during the candidate's placement. To ensure authenticity and to support the candidate at an appropriate level, evidence for this folio must be signed and dated by the candidate's designated workplace supervisor, who must be eligible for registration with the SSSC at practitioner level.

Further details about Unit assessment for this Course can be found in the NAB materials and in the Unit Specifications.

When Units are taken as component parts of a Course, candidates will have opportunities to achieve at levels beyond that required to attain each of the Unit outcomes. This attainment may, where appropriate, be recorded and used to contribute towards Course estimates, and to provide evidence for appeals.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher)

DETAILS OF THE INSTRUMENTS FOR EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Course assessment will be external and will sample across the outcomes of the component Units. Attainment in the Course is assessed through an individual candidate's investigation and report on a case study scenario. Further details of the Course Assessment are given in the Project Specification. The project will cover the two mandatory Units and consist of 200 marks. The grade descriptions for Course assessment relate to performance criteria for internal assessment, but also place additional demands on candidates by testing their ability and giving them the opportunity to demonstrate the greater level of attainment appropriate for a graded Higher Course award by:

- ◆ integrating knowledge and skills across the component Units
- ◆ demonstrating the long-term retention of knowledge and skills
- ◆ demonstrating a greater depth and breadth of knowledge and understanding
- ◆ answering questions in which the more complex skills of analysis and evaluation attract a higher proportion of the marks available than those in Unit assessment
- ◆ applying and adapting the skills of analysis and evaluation in a variety of contexts
- ◆ applying knowledge and skills in more challenging ways, for example, in less familiar contexts
- ◆ planning an investigation
- ◆ retrieving information from a variety of sources
- ◆ using a range of investigation techniques
- ◆ writing a research report according to standardised procedures, eg including a contents page and bibliography
- ◆ evaluating the planning process.

The total time allocation for the Course is 160 hours with the mandatory Units being allocated 120 hours. The remaining 40 hours should focus on ensuring that candidates have the necessary skills to carry out the project work and on the completion of the project, since this forms the external assessment. Approximately 10 hours should be allowed for preparation of candidates to undertake the project and the remaining 30 hours should be used for candidates to carry out the project and produce their assessment evidence. The project specification should be completed by all candidates and evidence provided for external assessment. This evidence should be provided in three sections as follows:

1. Planning
2. Developing -
 - a) research based report
 - b) case study report
 - c) conclusions and recommendations
3. Evaluating

Further details of the external assessment are available in the Course Project Specification.

There are four separate cycles of procedures within a session for this Course, linked to completion months of May, August, November or February.

For information on the operational arrangements, please refer to the current version of the Operational Guide for Schools, Operational Guide for Colleges or Operational Guide for Employers and Training Providers.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher)

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS AT A AND C

Assessment will be based on the outcome of the project. An overall grade (A, B or C) will be determined by assessment of each candidate's performance in producing the project. This assessment will be subject to external marking. To gain the Course award the candidate must pass both mandatory Units, *Play in Early Education and Childcare* and *Play in Practice*, as well as the project assessment. The descriptions below are of expected performances at Grade C and at Grade A. They are intended to assist candidates, teachers, lecturers and users of the certificate and to help establish standards when projects are being set. The grade of the award will be based on the total score obtained in the project.

GradeA	GradeC
Looking at the evidence as a whole:	Looking at the evidence as a whole:
<p>A Case Study at Grade A:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is a seamless, coherent piece of work in which evidence for the three essential phases of the Extended Case Study is produced to a high standard and is clearly inter-related. • is a piece of work to which candidates have brought an accurate and insightful interpretation of the case study specification. • is highly focused and relevant to the content of the Units. • is clear and well-structured throughout and language used is of a high standard in terms of level, accuracy and technical content. • is a piece of work which effectively consolidates and integrates knowledge, understanding and skills from the Course Units. • contains evidence that knowledge and skills have been applied to complex contexts, situations and data. 	<p>A Case Study at Grade C:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is a reasonably well co-coordinated piece of work in which evidence of the three essential phases of the Extended Case Study is produced to an adequate standard and is fairly well inter-related. • is a piece of work to which candidates have brought an acceptable interpretation of the case study specification. • is fairly well focused and relevant to the contents of the Units • is satisfactorily structured and language used is adequate in terms of level, accuracy and technical content. • is a piece of work in which consolidation and integration of knowledge, understanding and skills from the Course Units may lack some continuity and consistency. • contains evidence that knowledge and skills have been applied generally to straightforward contexts, situations and data.
Looking at evidence in relation to content:	Looking at evidence in relation to content:
<p>Plan at Grade A:</p> <p>An A candidate will demonstrate insight into the holistic nature of the Project. Aims will be relevant and highly focused on the set tasks. Objectives will clearly show how the aims will be met.</p>	<p>Plan at Grade C:</p> <p>At C there will be basic understanding of the Project requirements. Aims will relate to the set tasks. Objectives will outline how the aims will be met.</p>

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher)

<p>Research-based Report at A:</p> <p>The candidate will show a high level of knowledge and understanding relating to the type of play selected. This will include an explanation of type of play chosen; scope of type of play; theoretical perspectives of type of play. It will also explain the benefits of play to the child and will include examples of good practice observed in the work placement as well as examples of the candidate's own involvement in this type of play from their workplace practice.</p> <p>An A candidate will relate these effectively to the case study scenario and will show how the above have created current provision.</p> <p>Case Study Report at A:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report will allow the candidate to demonstrate insight and understanding of identified individuals including the role of the professional, the importance of effective preparation and the participation of the child in setting up the play experience. • An explanation of one play experience to meet the needs of the child should be clearly and accurately described and discussed fully in relation to the child. This play experience should be clearly linked to the research based report. 	<p>Research-based Report at C:</p> <p>The candidate will show a basic level of knowledge and understanding relating to the type of play selected. This will include an explanation of type of play chosen and the scope of type of play. Some knowledge of theoretical perspectives of type of play should be demonstrated. A description of the benefits of play to the child and the inclusion of examples of good practice observed in the work placement as well as examples of the candidate's own involvement in this type of play from their workplace practice.</p> <p>There will be limited application to the case study and to current provision.</p> <p>Case Study Report at C:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report will allow the candidate to demonstrate some understanding of identified individuals including the role of the professional, the importance of effective preparation and the participation of the child in setting up the play experience. • An explanation of one play experience to meet the needs of the child should be described with some accuracy and discussed in relation to the child. The candidate should make some link between this planned experience and the research based report.
<p>Conclusions and Recommendations at A:</p> <p>The A candidate will draw on understanding and knowledge from the research-based report to conclude on provision and will make detailed and accurate recommendations to meet the needs of the individuals identified in the case study report. An A candidate will include appropriate suggestions for the development of play provision and in particular the type of play selected which will meet the identified needs.</p>	<p>Conclusions and Recommendations at C:</p> <p>At C conclusions may lack consistency in light of research undertaken. Recommendations will be satisfactory and relevant to the case study scenario.</p>
<p>Looking at evidence in relation to content:</p>	<p>Looking at evidence in relation to content:</p>
<p>Evaluation at A:</p> <p>Will be analytical and show a high level of insight and understanding of both the content and process of the project. An A candidate will reflect effectively and accurately on knowledge/skills/understanding developed.</p>	<p>Evaluation at C:</p> <p>At C, the candidate will review the project and will show straight forward analysis of the content and process. A C candidate will reflect on knowledge/skills/understanding in a basic way.</p>

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher)

ESTIMATES AND APPEALS

Estimates

In preparing estimates, evidence of performance should be considered across the breadth of coverage of the content of the Course and must take account of performance in the whole Course. The mark given to the candidate's completed project by the internal assessor is considered to be the estimate grade for that candidate. Further advice on the preparation of estimates is given in the Project Specification.

Appeals

While appeals made on behalf of candidates will be considered, this, in reality, will be a request for a remark of the project. SQA accepts appeals on the basis that a candidate has not performed as well as expected on the day of the Course assessment. In the case of a project completed over a period of time it is generally difficult to present better evidence than that already presented in the project.

The completed project provides:

- ◆ evidence of long-term retention of knowledge and skills
- ◆ evidence which samples across all Units
- ◆ evidence which integrates knowledge from across the Course
- ◆ evidence of the ability to perform more complex tasks than those demanded for Unit assessment
- ◆ evidence of the ability to apply and adapt the skills of analysis and evaluation in a variety of contexts
- ◆ a clear indication that where appropriate evidence has been gathered under controlled conditions.

Individual NAB items, or their equivalent, do not provide sufficient evidence for estimates and appeals on their own. This is because they:

- ◆ only sample across the content of one Unit
- ◆ do not attract the same proportion of marks for the more complex skills of analysis and evaluation.

However, evidence gathered from Unit assessment items may contribute to an appeal if this clearly shows a level of attainment in line with elements of the Grade Descriptions for the Course. Marking schemes which refer to the Grade Descriptions should be included with all evidence submitted in support of an appeal.

Quality Assurance

All National Courses are subject to external marking and/or moderation. External markers, visiting examiners and moderators are trained by SQA to apply national standards. SQA is currently seeking to assist centres by preparing exemplification of standards materials in a number of subject areas. This will be rolled out to all subjects in due Course.

The component Units of all Courses are subject to internal moderation and may also be chosen for external moderation. This is to ensure that national standards are being applied across all subjects.

Courses may be assessed by a variety of methods including central marking and external examination. Where marking is undertaken by a trained marker in their own time, markers meetings are held to ensure that a consistent standard is applied. The work of all markers is subject to scrutiny by the Principal Assessor and a PA report is published for all subjects.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher)

APPROACHES TO LEARNING AND TEACHING

Course Delivery

This Course and its component Units are at SCQF level 6. Teachers/lecturers should be aware of the content and structure of this level prior to delivering this Course. This will give a clear indication of the level of content, assessment and delivery. Information about SCQF levels can be found on SQA's website www.sqa.org.uk

In delivering the Course, it is important that staff ensure that there is a balance between teacher/lecturer presentation and experiential learning. An important aim in delivering the Course is to help candidates become independent thinkers, reflective analysts who are able to question and challenge but are equally able to substantiate their own views.

The Course at Higher level can be taught using a variety of teaching methods, which, as indicated, includes experiential learning. Where appropriate, candidates should be helped to draw on previous learning and their own experience. Candidates can be enabled to:

- ◆ generate ideas and explore concepts and theories, by means of creative thinking, small group exercise, group discussion, case studies, worksheets, individual research, videos and lectures
- ◆ apply knowledge and understanding to given case studies and situations within early education and childcare settings. For example, by using stimulus video material as a basis for group work and discussion
- ◆ develop skills in analysing and evaluating types of play by means of individual research, case studies and candidate presentations
- ◆ develop skills in effective communication and working as part of a team by means of group presentations, for example, by carrying out research in small groups on supporting play environments and sharing this information with the whole group
- ◆ develop skills in accessing information from a variety of organisations and media sources, for example by using the Internet to find out about types of play.
- ◆ practical workshops demonstrating play techniques which candidates could try out in placement.

Candidates should be helped to gain an appreciation of the need for those employed in early education and childcare to keep their knowledge and skills up-to-date and in line with current theoretical approaches and methods.

Both Units within the Course can be delivered in isolation but the Course lends itself to integration and sequential teaching. It is important that when delivering the Units candidates are presented with knowledge and new skills and then allowed to demonstrate these within the workplace environment. This is open to various models depending on centre organisation, facilities, timetable arrangements, resources and candidate experience.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher)

Developing Knowledge and Understanding and the skills of Analysis and Evaluation

There are many ways to promote knowledge and understanding and analysis and evaluation skills. Appropriate methods will, as mentioned above, depend on the prior experience of candidates, the range of candidates studying the Course and the resources available. A menu of possible activities appears below. This menu is not exhaustive, but reflects a variety of learning and teaching approaches:

- ◆ teacher presentations of information
- ◆ teacher led question and answer sessions
- ◆ individual study which is reinforced by structured questions
- ◆ individual/group/paired work which is focused on the retrieval of information
- ◆ feedback sessions from individual/group/paired work which involves recording information, opinions, conclusions and/or reasons
- ◆ multiple choice questions - these may be attempted individually, in pairs or in groups - they could be approached in the manner of a formative assessment, quiz, match-up or arranging under correct headings exercises
- ◆ visits by external speakers which involve both presentation and feedback
- ◆ structured debates where candidates are required to propose or oppose a motion which may not be in agreement with their personal views
- ◆ additional exercises which are designed to reinforce or extend activities in the classroom or lecture theatre
- ◆ structured individual/group/paired study of the theory element of the Course
- ◆ feedback from Unit assessments which highlights the achievements and next steps for candidates.

Assessment as an Important Learning and Teaching Opportunity

Unit assessment provides a clear indication of whether or not candidates have achieved the minimum standards required to pass an individual Unit. As such, Unit assessment is summative. However, for candidates who require reassessment and/or intend to attempt the External assessment element of the Course, all assessment has a formative value.

In order to make maximum use of assessment, teachers and lecturers need to provide meaningful feedback on all items of internal and end-of-topic assessments. This feedback should highlight areas where candidates have performed well. It should also highlight areas where candidates need additional development. Homework exercises should also be commented on. Feedback should be elicited after all classroom activities and summing-up comments should be made by the teacher or lecturer. The nature of such feedback will depend on the prior experience of candidates, the range of candidates and the resources available.

Use of the additional 40 hours

All Courses include a further 40 hours for induction, preparation for the external assessment and in this project assessed Course, the external assessment itself. In effect up to 30 hours is allowed for the completion of the project and its associated tasks which leaves 10 hours for induction, consolidation of learning and any other support.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher)

CURRENT NATIONAL INITIATIVES IN EDUCATION

Cross-curricular themes and issues

A number of national initiatives and programmes have been designed to promote cross-curricular themes such as education for citizenship and enterprise in education that are important to contemporary society. These themes contribute to individual subjects and Courses by making connections beyond the subject boundaries and enrich the learning experience. Similarly, the specialist knowledge and skills developed through study of a particular subject contributes to the understanding of these cross-curricular themes.

The National Improvement Framework, specifically the National Priorities and their outcomes are important general reference points. A local authority's education improvement objectives are the reflection of these priorities and outcomes. These provide an important set of detailed reference points for school and departmental development planning.

Careful consideration should also be given to recording and reporting the achievements of the cross-curricular experiences of young people.

CANDIDATES WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

This Course Specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on assessment for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Need* (SQA, 2004).

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT	Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher)
CODE	DM41 12
COURSE	Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher)

SUMMARY

This Unit requires the candidate to have knowledge and understanding of how play supports the process of child development in a childcare and education setting. Candidates should be able to demonstrate an understanding of how the play environment affects children's play experiences and they should be able to explain how play benefits the developing child aged 0-12 years. They should demonstrate an understanding of the role the adult takes in supporting the organisation and processes of children's play in an early education and childcare setting.

This Unit is a mandatory Unit in the National Certificate Group Award: Early Education and Childcare and also a mandatory Unit in the Course: Play in Early Education and Childcare. It is also suitable for candidates wishing to study the Unit on its own. The Unit is suitable for candidates who wish to gain employment, or may already be employed, in the childcare and education sector support working under supervision or to progress onto higher level early education and childcare qualifications.

OUTCOMES

1. Analyse a play environment in an early education and childcare setting.
2. Evaluate the importance of play to the developing child.
3. Explain how you would set up different types of play in an early education and childcare setting.

Administrative Information

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Version:	1

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Additional copies of this unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. The cost for each unit specification is £2.50. (A handling charge of £1.95 will apply to all orders for priced items.)

National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher)

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Higher (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6*)

**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

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

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher)

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 the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

OUTCOME 1

Analyse a play environment in an early education and childcare setting.

Performance Criteria

- a) Describe factors which are important in creating a play environment.
- b) Explain ways in which the adult can effectively support the creation of a play environment.
- c) Analyse ways in which a play environment can affect children's play.

OUTCOME 2

Evaluate the importance of play to the developing child.

Performance Criteria

- a) Describe a range of different types of play.
- b) Explain how play can support a child's development.
- c) Evaluate the importance of the role adults take in supporting different types of play.

OUTCOME 3

Explain how you would set up different types of play in an early education and childcare setting.

Performance Criteria

- a) Explain how different play experiences can be adapted to meet the needs of the child.
- b) Explain why effective preparation is important in supporting different play experiences.
- c) Explain ways in which the adult would ensure the child is involved in setting up play experiences.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Written and/or recorded oral evidence is required to demonstrate that the candidate has achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

The evidence for this Unit should be obtained under controlled, supervised conditions and should last no more than one hour. A single question paper with both extended and restricted response questions, such as one that is illustrated in the National Assessment Bank item for this Unit, could be used. This single question paper should be administered on the completion of the Unit. Achievement can be decided by the use of a cut off score.

Specific Advice:

- Outcome 1 pc (a): Candidates should describe **three** factors which are important in creating a play environment.
- Outcome 2 pc (a): Candidates should give examples of at least **three** different types of play.
- Outcome 3: Candidates should give examples of at least **three** different types of play.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher)

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

Outcome 1

PC (a): Candidates should have the opportunity to learn about and discuss factors which are important in creating the environment for play in a variety of early education and childcare settings. These factors will include:

- ◆ Different types of areas of play environment (including outdoor play areas). These may include areas for creativity; areas for quiet reflection; areas which encourage reading and language enrichment; areas which allow children to experiment and explore. Candidates should be encouraged to add to this list.
- ◆ How children and adults move from one area to another without disrupting other children's play or concentration.
- ◆ Possible hazards.
- ◆ Possible log jams.
- ◆ Need for quiet in some areas.
- ◆ Need for space in some play areas.
- ◆ How the organisation of the environment allows children's play to flow.
- ◆ The visual impact of the play environment.
- ◆ How play materials need to be well looked after and maintained.
- ◆ Ensuring visual levels are appropriate for the children.

PC (b): Candidates should have opportunities to discuss and investigate which factors enable the adult to create a play environment for children. Candidates and lecturers should expand this list to take into account a variety of childcare settings. The factors may include:

- ◆ Good teamwork.
- ◆ Good communications skills.
- ◆ How planning is important and how they as support workers would be involved in the process.
- ◆ How you set up, tidy away and replenish.
- ◆ How adults could involve children in the process.
- ◆ The need for organisation, appropriate storage and labelling of equipment boxes.
- ◆ Devices which will help children, such as clear guidance on where to tidy away resources

PC (c): Candidates should analyse the way play environments affect children's play by examining the factors described above and looking at the ways that they can support the child development. They may also wish to look at the negative impact that certain factors may have on children's play.

Outcome 2

PC (a): The different types of play to be covered in this Unit are listed within the mandatory context in the Appendix to the Statement of Standards. Teachers/lecturers are free to choose other types of play in addition to this list.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher)

PC (b): Candidates should explore how different models of play are favoured at different developmental stages, e.g. playing alone, playing alongside others and playing together and the significance of that to the child. They should also be given the chance to consider how play can support the child's overall development i.e. cognitive, physical, emotional social and linguistic by considering what is meant by age appropriate play. Candidates should give due consideration to children who may have additional support needs and whose play may not be age appropriate. Candidates should be encouraged to draw on their knowledge and understanding of child development when considering this aspect of the Unit.

PC (c) Candidates should evaluate the importance of the role of the adult in supporting play opportunities, taking into account:

- ◆ the child's age
- ◆ the developmental appropriateness of the play
- ◆ the child's preferred play
- ◆ the play setting.

They should be aware of how the adult can extend the potential of play by sensitively intervening where appropriate or standing back from the play to allow children to take the play forward. It is important that candidates are aware of the role adults take in developing play by considering the following:

- ◆ How they will support the child in making choices
- ◆ How they will provide an environment in which play can thrive
- ◆ How they will enable the child to develop resilience in their play without endangering him/her
- ◆ How they will ensure equality of provision and opportunity for all children
- ◆ How they will engage with other colleagues in the planning and observation process.

Outcome 3

PC (a): Candidates should show how adults can take different types of play and adapt it to meet the varying needs of children. Examples of this would be:

- ◆ Mixing a variety of different types of paint
- ◆ Understanding the potential of different types of brushes, rollers and other print making materials
- ◆ Showing how they would use "found materials" effectively with children
- ◆ Making boxes which contain a variety of different materials e.g. "Topic" boxes, boxes with dressing up materials, Seasonal or Occasions boxes and "Treasure" boxes
- ◆ Setting up a reading corner and a quiet area
- ◆ Understanding the value of display and appropriate lettering or signage
- ◆ Developing areas for cooking, baking and making snacks
- ◆ Using materials creatively, e.g. making music, making puppet theatres, discovery materials
- ◆ Showing how sand, water and similar materials can be altered and adapted
- ◆ Developing the outdoors
- ◆ Adapting materials or areas to develop enquiry and curiosity
- ◆ Considering which play materials best support sharing, turn taking and citizenship.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher)

PC (b): Candidates need to consider the role of effective preparation in supporting play experiences for children. This will include an understanding of the role they and other adults play in developing useful resources for the children. They should be aware that effective preparation is not only about preparing materials but that it is also about effectively working with others to ensure the smooth running of the setting. Therefore, candidates should know about:

- ◆ The need to communicate ideas
- ◆ Discuss plans
- ◆ Maintain and develop materials
- ◆ The need to be vigilant about health and safety.

In showing an awareness of the above processes, candidates should also know how the play which is provided is linked to the care, learning and development of the child and how they will ensure continuity and progression in play. An example of this would be that candidates are aware of when children have mastered specific skills, e.g. riding a bicycle and are ready for the next challenge – using Road Signs to negotiate a track.

PC(c): Candidates should understand their role in enabling the child to make choices about his/her preferred play. They should consider the child as an active agent who is entitled to make decisions about how the play might be adapted and should show consistency and fairness in embracing the child's ideas. The candidate needs to be aware of the practical implications of offering choices to children and discuss how conflicts with children over play options would be resolved. They should also be aware that they may have to support the child in making choices and in ensuring that all children regardless of race, ability or gender have equal opportunity to play experiences. They should finally, but importantly understand the process of active listening to ensure they listen to children.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

In delivering this Unit there should be a balance between teacher/lecturer presentation and candidate-centred learning. The suggested approach to learning and teaching in this Unit is by use of practical workshops where possible. It is important that candidates not only understand the concepts which are identified in this Unit but that they can apply them practically as well.

Case studies which exemplify some of the issues identified in the Unit should be used to support practical workshops and it is suggested that commercially produced videos, particularly those from Learning and Teaching Scotland might be an appropriate way of showing the candidates different play based scenarios. Question and answer sheets could be used to support the use of video materials.

Candidates may also be encouraged to keep a log book of practical ideas which will serve as a useful reference tool in their professional life. This log book might include sections on some of the more practical skills of making dough and paint, possible floor plans for a play setting, general ideas or examples of creative ideas such as music making, or mask making. It might also be adapted to include books, stories, poetry and songs they have used with children. Candidates should be encouraged to use ICT throughout this Unit.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher)

Other methods that could be used could include:

- ◆ Small group exercises
- ◆ Individual research, including the use of appropriate websites
- ◆ Visiting speakers
- ◆ Visits to early education and childcare settings
- ◆ Reading list and access to reference material
- ◆ Use of text books, periodicals and journals.

This Unit can be delivered in a flexible manner, i.e as distance learning.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

The assessment for this Unit is laid out clearly in the Evidence Requirements section of the Statement of Standards of this specification. The standard to be applied is exemplified in the National Assessment Bank item for this Unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this Unit, they should be of a comparable standard. Assessment should always be carried out under supervision. Assessment time allocated for this Unit should not exceed 1 hour.

CANDIDATES WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

This Course Specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on assessment for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Need* (SQA, 2004).

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards

UNIT Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher)

Outcome 2 PC (a): Candidates should have opportunities to investigate different types of play which children engage in and why this variety of play is important to children. These will include:

- ◆ Symbolic Play
- ◆ Creative Play
- ◆ Discovery Play
- ◆ Vigorous Play
- ◆ Play with Technology
- ◆ Books and play which support language enrichment
- ◆ Games.

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT	Play in Practice (Higher)
CODE	DM42 12
COURSE	Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher)

SUMMARY

This Unit requires the candidate to demonstrate the skills required to support children's play within an early education and childcare setting. Whilst working under supervision with children within the age range 0-12 years, the candidate should demonstrate the ability to support and maintain a play environment and support a variety of different types of play. They should be able to explain what benefits the child derives from play and demonstrate an understanding of the role of the adult in supporting children's play.

This Unit is a mandatory Unit in the National Certificate Group Award: Early Education and Childcare and also a mandatory Unit in the Course: Play in Early Education and Childcare. It is also suitable for candidates wishing to study the Unit on its own. The Unit is suitable for candidates who wish to gain employment, or may already be employed, in the early education and childcare sector working under supervision. They may wish to progress on to higher early education and childcare qualifications. To complete this Unit, candidates are required to have a work placement or be employed in an early education and child care setting

OUTCOMES

1. Support a play environment within an early education and childcare setting.
2. Support different types of play within an early education and childcare setting.
3. Evaluate how play supports the care, learning and development of the child.
4. Explain the role of the adult in supporting play within an early education and childcare setting.

Administrative Information

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Play in Practice (Higher)

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, it is expected that candidates will have a clear understanding of the basic concepts of play. This may be evidenced by candidates undertaking or having completed the Unit *Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher)*, and have some knowledge and understanding of child development. In addition, candidates would normally be expected to have attained one of the following, or equivalent:

- Standard Grade at Credit level in any relevant subject
- A Course or Units in Care at Intermediate 2
- Courses or Units at Intermediate 2 in Communication or any relevant subject
- Scottish Group Award at Intermediate 2
- SVQ or SVQ Units at level 2 in a related subject.

It is acknowledged that there are a variety of prior learning experiences which are relevant to candidates wishing to undertake this Unit. Candidates may have completed or are working towards completion of Units within the *National Certificate Group Award: Early Education and Childcare (Higher)*.

CREDIT VALUE

2 credits at Higher (12 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6*)

**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

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

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Play in Practice (Higher)

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 the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

OUTCOME 1

Support a play environment within an early education and childcare setting.

Performance Criteria

- a) Identify factors within an early education and childcare setting which are important in creating a play environment.
- b) Working under supervision, support the creation of a play environment.
- c) Working under supervision, support the maintenance of a play environment.

OUTCOME 2

Support different types of play within an early education and childcare setting.

Performance Criteria

- a) Explain a range of different types of play observed within an early education and childcare setting.
- b) Working under supervision, support a variety of planned play experiences.
- c) Working under supervision, support a variety of spontaneous play experiences.

OUTCOME 3

Evaluate how play supports the care, learning and development of the child.

Performance Criteria

- a) Describe a variety of play experiences that have supported the care, learning and development of the child.
- b) Explain how a variety of play experiences can support the care, learning and development of the child.
- c) In consultation with others, assess how a variety of play experiences could be extended to support the care, learning and development of the child.

Outcome 4

Explain the role of the adult in supporting play within an early education and childcare setting

Performance Criteria

- a) Explain the role of the adult in supporting the play environment.
- b) Explain the role of the adult in supporting a variety of play experiences.
- c) Explain the role of the adult in extending children's play experiences.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Play in Practice (Higher)

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

There should be a single assessment folio for this Unit which the candidate builds during practical placement in an early education and childcare setting. Where applicable the assessment for this Unit should be integrated with other workplace based Units within the *National Certificate Group Award: Early Education and Childcare*. This folio should be gathered from one or two work placements within the age range of 0-12 years. This folio should be evidenced by the candidate's workplace supervisor. The supervisor must be eligible for registration at practitioner level with the SSSC.

Folio to include (as per PCs):

- ◆ Description of setting and play experiences on offer
- ◆ Record of candidate's involvement in 6 play experiences (both planned and unplanned experiences)
- ◆ An evaluation of how the play needs of the child were supported
- ◆ Explanation of how the candidate supported the child's play experience
- ◆ Checklist for placement supervisor
- ◆ Checklist for assessor.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Play in Practice (Higher)

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 80 hours.

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

Outcome 1

In identifying factors which are important in helping to create a suitable play environment, candidates should be aware of the role they play in ensuring the areas are accessible for children and that children's play can flow easily from one play experience to the next. They must show awareness of any sensitivities that might occur in the type of play offered and ensure it is not disrespectful to any religious group and that it is appropriate and accessible for all children. This might include examples like making sure aids, such as scissors can potentially be used by all children, including children who have a preference to use their left hand or who have additional support needs.

Candidates need to be aware of the impact of the play as it is presented to the children. The play environment should have a strong sensory impact and candidates should be made aware of how this is best achieved in the particular setting, bearing in mind they may be working in an environment which has to be set up and taken down daily. Candidates should be aware of their role in that process and of the importance of creating an environment that fits the age and developmental requirements of the group with whom they are working.

In relation to demonstrating how adults can support the creation of a play environment, candidates need to be aware of the importance of planning, observation and communication in the team as a whole and what their role would be as support workers, including how they communicate with others. Candidates need to have opportunities to determine how play materials are best stored in relation to the need of the particular setting. In the case of a play facility which sets up and takes down daily, they should know how to store equipment appropriately and safely in storage boxes and how these can be labelled and stored safely.

Candidates also need to be clear that play equipment has to be maintained to an appropriate standard to make it safe and attractive to children. This may involve cleaning equipment and checking for breakages and missing pieces. This is also particularly important in areas such as sand, water and dough where there is a risk of spreading germs. The candidate has to be aware of his/her role in the process, how children can be involved and why it is happening.

Outcome 2

In demonstrating a range of different types of play, the candidates should be aware of the following types of play. These may include:

- ◆ Symbolic Play
- ◆ Creative Play
- ◆ Discovery Play
- ◆ Vigorous Play
- ◆ Play with Technology
- ◆ Books and play which supports language enrichment
- ◆ Games.

Other types of play such as heuristic play may also be included as appropriate.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Play in Practice (Higher)

Candidates would be expected to have undertaken basic observations of children engaged in different types of play. These observations should be seen as supporting the candidate's understanding of the ways in which children play. Candidates are also expected to have seen different examples of the types of play, indicated above and to understand what is meant by these types of play. They are also expected to have had sufficient opportunities to explore the potential of materials which might be used to provide the specific type of play.

Candidates should also have the opportunity to see how adding to or altering the play which is offered might extend the learning experience for the child.

Examples of this are:

- ◆ The candidates might want to add equipment to sand that shows how sand flows.
- ◆ They might change the appearance of imaginative play areas by providing new props such as mirrors.
- ◆ They might add some pebbles to the water.
- ◆ They might add large paint rollers and buckets of water to the outside play areas on a warm summer's day.
- ◆ They might make up treasure baskets for babies.
- ◆ Exploring with older children the potential of adding obstacles to a bike track.
- ◆ Adding art/craft resources to a mask making activity.
- ◆ Providing ICT resources for children making posters.

It is important in this outcome that candidates are given the opportunity to see how play can be extended to facilitate different learning experiences for children.

In describing how adults can offer a range of opportunities in different types of play it is essential that candidates understand the role all adults take in observing children's play and in providing additional resources according to the children's needs. They should have opportunities to see how all adults contribute to this directly or indirectly according to their job roles and understand the importance of team working and of good communication.

Outcome 3 and 4

In demonstrating how play can support aspects of the child's overall care, learning and development, candidates are asked to describe types of play which might best support the child's cognitive development, physical development and social and emotional development and they may use a curriculum framework to support their understanding if this is appropriate to the play context.

Candidates are expected to have opportunities to contribute under supervision to providing types of play to support the child's overall development and are expected to have opportunities to evaluate how this happened and how it supported the child's informal learning. Candidates are expected to show which aspects of development they had in mind when planning the experience.

Candidates are expected to show how the play they have offered extends children's learning. They might show this, for example, by providing materials which allow children to develop additional skills and confidence, for example, a problem solving experience. By participating in a play experience with children e.g. by telling a story or making music with children, or by showing that they took time to help the child develop a particular skill such as doing up buttons on a coat or being sensitive to their needs at the sewing table.

In supporting aspects of children's overall development candidates are expected to show an awareness of how the child's preferred mode of play was identified and extended, e.g. where a child prefers to play alone but engages in repetitive play, how they sensitively intervene by providing extra resources.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Play in Practice (Higher)

It is important to provide candidates with practical opportunities to see how the cycle of plan, observe, report and record are used by other adults to identify children's play needs. It is important that candidates are given some opportunities to observe other adults using these strategies and to start developing these skills by having limited opportunities to contribute to observation and planning for children's play needs. This would be done under close supervision and candidates at this level would not be expected to take a lead role in this process.

Candidates should however be able to identify the role the adult takes in identifying and meeting the child's developmental needs through play and this will include developing an understanding of what is meant by planning, observing, reporting and recording and how and why it is essential to do this effectively in an early education and childcare setting.

Candidates are expected to have opportunities to see appropriate adult intervention in play in a practical context. They should be able to identify why adults intervene to extend children's play and under what circumstances adult intervention can have positive effects on the quality of play or to enable children to maximise play opportunities. Examples of this might be when an adult brings in additional resources to take the child's interest forward or plans for a forthcoming event like a festival. This might also be done to support a particular and immediate need in the child such as a forthcoming visit to hospital or the arrival of a sibling.

Candidates should also be given the opportunity to see effective team working in action and to understand the role of all the adults in the team, how these adults use and are reliant on parents and other professionals to extend their knowledge of the children and the extent to which they involve the child in the process of their own learning.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

It is important to emphasise that this Unit involves the demonstration of practical competences and the application of knowledge and understanding in the work setting. For this, regular tutorial meetings with candidates which explore aspects of workplace practice and which support candidates in the process of self evaluation and recording of evidence (such as log reporting) will be essential. A combination of tutorial support and placement supervision would facilitate candidates' progress through the Unit. A named workplace supervisor should monitor candidate progress in partnership with tutor(s). It is also essential that delivering centres continuously meet with supervisors to aid understanding and establish candidate progress.

Written materials in the form of structured log books, task/project sheets and evaluation records and questions, or reports on progress, could also be used to ensure effective progress throughout the Unit. Centres should continue to offer placement experiences to candidates according to principles of best practice, or in an appropriate setting. It is suggested that candidates would benefit from experiencing working with children from two of the following age ranges: 0-3; 3-5; 5-8; 8-12. Placements could be offered to candidates across the early education and childcare sector, including the local authority, private and voluntary sectors. Candidates should have enough time in placement to ensure that all learning outcomes and performance criteria are met. Candidates should be able to complete the Unit in a placement that only provides part day provision, e.g. playgroup, after school club.

This Unit can be delivered in a flexible manner, i.e as distance learning although measures should be taken by the Centre to ensure the validity of the candidate's practice.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Play in Practice (Higher)

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

It is suggested there should be a single assessment folio for this Unit which the candidate builds during practical placement in an early education and childcare setting. Where applicable the assessment for this Unit should be integrated with other workplace based Units within the National Certificate Group Award: Early Education and Childcare. This will allow candidates to see the holistic nature of early education and childcare play provision. The assessment of this Unit should be on-going and should allow the candidate the opportunity to develop, as well as demonstrate, the skills required to meet the Outcomes and performance criteria of the Unit.

The standard to be applied is exemplified in the National Assessment Bank item for this Unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this Unit, they should be of a comparable standard.

CANDIDATES WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

This Course Specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on assessment for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Need* (SQA, 2004).