



Arrangements for:
Professional Development Award in
Practice Learning (Social Services) at
SCQF level 10

Group Award Code: G8K8 50

and

Professional Development Award in
Practice Learning at SCQF level 10

Group Award Code: G8K7 50

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Contents

1	Introduction.....	1
2	Rationale for the Awards	1
2.1	Rationale.....	1
2.2	Target client groups.....	3
2.2.1	PDA in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10.....	4
2.2.2	PDA in Practice Learning at SCQF level 10.....	4
2.3	Continuous professional development	4
2.4	Links to national standards.....	5
2.4.1	PDA in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10.....	5
2.4.2	PDA in Practice Learning at SCQF level 10.....	7
3	Aims of the Awards	9
3.1	General aims.....	9
3.2	Specific aims	9
3.3	Other aims	10
4	Access to the Awards.....	10
5	Structure of the Awards	11
5.1	Conditions of the Awards.....	11
5.2	Framework.....	11
5.2.1	PDA in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10.....	11
5.2.2	PDA in Practice Learning at SCQF level 10.....	12
5.3	Mapping.....	12
5.4	Articulation, professional recognition and credit transfer	12
5.4.1	Articulation.....	12
5.4.2	Recognition of prior learning and credit transfer	13
5.4.3	Professional recognition	14
6	Approaches to delivery and assessment.....	14
6.1	Delivery	14
6.2	Learning materials.....	16
6.3	Assessment	17
6.4	Collection of evidence.....	19
6.5	Integration of assessment	20
6.6	Open learning/online learning	20
7	General information for centres.....	20
7.1	Candidates with disabilities and/or additional support needs.....	20
7.2	Internal and external verification.....	20
8	General information for candidates	21
9	Appendices	22
	Appendix 1: Framework of standards	23
	Appendix 2: Assessment Integration Opportunities	24
	Appendix 3: Guidance on Occupational Competence of Practice Learning Assessors, Advisers and Internal Verifiers for Practice Learning qualifications at SCQF level 10	26
	Appendix 4: Glossary of terms.....	27
	Appendix 5: Flowchart of Credit Transfer and RPL process	28

1 Introduction

This is the Arrangements Document for the following two Group Awards which were validated in June 2007:

- ◆ Professional Development Award in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10 (G8K8 50)
- ◆ Professional Development Award in Practice Learning at SCQF level 10 (G8K7 50)

These two distinct awards meet the differing requirements of two candidate groups:

- ◆ social service workers who are registered or registerable with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)
- ◆ professionals who do not meet the criteria for registration with the SSSC, but who have a valuable contribution to make to the learning and development of learners within the wider social services context

This document includes background information on the development of the awards, their aims, guidance on access, details of the award structures and guidance on delivery.

Both Professional Development Awards (PDAs) provide candidates with the skills, knowledge and understanding to achieve high quality ethical interventions, positive learning Outcomes, and allow them to contribute to the development of learning cultures. They enable candidates to develop and critically evaluate learning opportunities and be responsible for formal assessment across a wide range of social services settings.

2 Rationale for the Awards

2.1 Rationale

In early 2005 the Scottish Practice Learning Project (SPLP), a Scottish Executive funded joint initiative of the Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education (SIESWE) and the SSSC, was asked to develop new, unitised qualifications to replace the Practice Teaching Award (PTA). The requirement to develop these new qualifications was set out in *Confidence in Practice Learning* (Scottish Executive, 2004) and reflects consultations on the reform of the Practice Teaching Award carried out by the SSSC in 2003.

The SPLP commissioned the development of the new qualifications to SIESWE. SIESWE undertook the work on the basis of a commissioning document which included a specification setting out the parameters of the new qualifications. The specification stated that the aim of the qualifications would be to equip individuals who support the professional development and learning of others in the social services with the skills, knowledge and understanding to achieve high quality ethical interventions and positive learning Outcomes, and contribute to the development of learning cultures.

A framework for the new Practice Learning Qualifications was developed collaboratively in consultation with universities and colleges, employers from voluntary, statutory and private organisations, the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), service users, carers and the Scottish Organisation for Practice Teaching (SCOPT). Wide ranging consultation and participative workshops took place during June to December 2005. Activities included:

- ◆ management team meetings
- ◆ access to and communication through Blackboard, a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)
- ◆ establishment of task teams
- ◆ focus groups
- ◆ distribution of a consultation document
- ◆ consultation events

The Practice Learning Qualification (PLQ) framework was completed in December 2005 and revised in August 2006. It was designed to be sufficiently prescriptive in core areas so as to ensure the existence of a national suite of qualifications while being flexible enough to enable providers (academic and employer partnerships under the auspices of the four Learning Networks, national, regional and/or local training providers) to utilise their specific strengths and preferences in delivering the qualifications.

The PLQ framework was accepted by stakeholders and the SSSC and funding for further development was agreed by the Scottish Executive in 2006. A National Short Life Working Group (NSLWG) representing interested stakeholders was set up and agreement reached that SQA would be the awarding body for Stages 1, 2 and 3 of the PLQ and PLQ(SS) with delivery through the Learning Networks. The NSLWG has continued to work on developing core aspects of the qualifications under the guidance of the SSSC. SQA is represented on the NSLWG.

In developing the PLQ framework it was recognised that there was a need for two distinct awards to meet the differing requirements of two potential candidate groups:

- ◆ social service workers who are registered or registerable with SSSC
- ◆ professionals who do not meet the criteria for registration with the SSSC, but who have a valuable contribution to make to the learning and development of learners within the wider social services context

The Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 gives the SSSC powers to approve courses for social service workers who are registered or registerable with SSSC. The PDA in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10 approved by the SSSC, is for learners meeting these SSSC requirements.

The PDA in Practice Learning at SCQF level 10 supports the social service sector's commitment to promoting and supporting the involvement of other professionals, service users and carers in the training and education of the workforce and to inter-professional learning and shared practice. This award is for learners not able to undertake the PDA in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10 approved by the SSSC, as they are not members of the registered or registerable workforce.

Each PDA progresses according to the qualification's SCQF level and incorporates SCQF terms of reference. As such, these awards have been developed at SCQF level 10, in order to take into account the critical evaluative, analytical and reflective abilities required for a practice learner in the social services to develop professionally. The awards sit higher within the progressive PLQ development (ie PLQs will exist at SCQF levels 7 to 11) to reflect the enhanced contribution practice learners at this level are expected to make in their social services or related field. (Refer to 5.4 on articulation for further details about the progressive SCQF nature of the awards.)

The Professional Development Award in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10 is the first new qualification to gain approval by the SSSC. It is differentiated from the PDA in Practice Learning at SCQF level 10 through the entry requirements and the contextualisation within a social services setting of two of the eight Units. The contextualisation for social services is achieved through the knowledge, skills and learning Outcomes of the following Units:

- ◆ F1WF 37 *Evidence Based Practice in Social Services*
- ◆ F1W9 37 *Support Learning in a Social Services Practice Context*

The PDA in Practice Learning at SCQF level 10 shares six common Units with the PDA in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10. In the PDA in Practice Learning at SCQF level 10, the two additional Units are stated in generic terms to allow for appropriate contextualisation depending on the background and role of the candidate:

- ◆ F1WE 37 *Evidence Based Practice*
- ◆ F1WJ 37 *Support Learning in a Practice Context*

Therefore, two parallel awards may be undertaken by different groups of workers or by service users and carers without barriers to access, in line with the vision of the PLQ framework and within the legal boundaries of the SSSC's role and responsibilities.

The PDAs in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10 and Practice Learning at SCQF level 10 are aligned with the framework of standards for practice learning and associated knowledge, skills and learning requirements at SCQF level 10 as presented in the revised submission to SSSC in August 2006 (see **Appendix 1** for a summary of the framework of standards). They retain the vision and aspirations contained in the original specification.

2.2 Target client groups

For both awards, examples of type of applicant include those who undertake the following roles with learners in social services and related settings:

- ◆ mentors and coach learners on formal and informal learning programmes
- ◆ those who are involved in assessment processes with learners and colleagues
- ◆ those who are involved in teaching and facilitating knowledge, skills and ethical approaches relevant to practice
- ◆ those who work with others to identify, organise, facilitate and support learning in the workplace
- ◆ those who use an innovative range of models of supervision

- ◆ those who have a role in quality assurance mechanisms associated with learning and development
- ◆ those who are concerned with Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Post Registration Training and Learning (PRTL) mechanisms within the workforce

The awards are appropriate for individuals who have a Practice Teaching Award but have not practiced for some time, or those who wish to become facilitators of learning. The awards recognises the wide contribution now made to learning by a range of different people and equips candidates with the knowledge and skills to collate, analyse and contribute to the assessment of learners' practice.

2.2.1 PDA in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10 (G8K8 50)

The PDA in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10 is intended for candidates within social services who are registered or registerable with SSSC and who are involved in the professional development of staff and learners within the social services workforce.

This award supports learning across the whole of the social services workforce. This means that the award is open to any SSSC registered or registerable member of staff who can both contribute to learning in the workplace, whether that be social work, social care, health care or other learner support, and to more general learning of their self and others within a work setting. Many people already support induction programmes, mentor colleagues, contribute to in-house teaching and learning without any recognition. Along with other awards within the Practice Learning (Social Services) PDA suite at different SCQF levels, this award gives recognition and credit to those who support both formal and informal learning and contribute to the development of learning cultures within their organisations.

2.2.2 PDA in Practice Learning at SCQF level 10 (G8K7 50)

This award is designed to support learning across the whole of the social services workforce. This means that the award is open to anyone who can both contribute to learning in the workplace, whether that be social work, social care, health care or other learner support, and to more general learning of their self and others within a work setting. Many people already support induction programmes, mentor colleagues, contribute to in-house teaching and learning without any recognition. The award is designed, along with other awards within the Practice Learning suite at different SCQF levels, to give recognition and credit to those who support both formal and informal learning and contribute to the development of learning cultures within their organisations. It follows that service users and carers are integral to this learning within social services, and subject to meeting entry requirements, this award is open to service users and carers as candidates.

2.3 Continuous professional development

Both PDAs provide high level Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to participants who support or contribute to learning within the wider social services workforce with the knowledge and skills to achieve the competence and confidence to deliver high quality learner support through the development and critical evaluation of learning opportunities and environments.

Candidates successfully completing these awards may be able to gain access to the Practice Learning Awards at SCQF level 11.

Achievement of either award offers an opportunity to candidates to progress to further professional qualifications. Further details are provided in 5.4.

2.4 Links to national standards

Both PDAs are aligned with the framework of standards for practice learning and associated knowledge, skills and learning requirements presented in *Practice Learning Qualifications and Practice Learning Qualifications (Social Services) Submission to SSSC* (August 2006). The framework of standards is explained in **Appendix 1**.

2.4.1 PDA in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10

The eight Units, and their Outcomes, within this award provide comprehensive coverage of the framework of standards. The mapping of the standards against the Units is shown in the table below.

	Standards	Unit titles	Outcomes
1	Establish effective working relationships	Establish Effective Working Relationships	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Establish effective professional and inter-professional working relationships to support learning whilst maintaining professional boundaries. 2 Use effective working relationships with learners to support them in the achievement of their learning objectives. 3 Support learners in exploring different working practices and the impact this may have on established professional roles.
2	Facilitate learning	Facilitate Learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Enable learners to develop their skills of critical reflection when applying theory to practice. 2 Use effective communication, facilitation and supervision skills to support learners' professional growth and personal development. 3 Facilitate and develop the ethos of inter-professional learning and working. 4 Select and apply approaches to learning that will assist learners to develop required knowledge, skills and values.
3	Assessment and accountability	Assessment of Learners	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Maintain effective professional boundaries during the assessment process. 2 Design and implement assessment frameworks in partnership with other members of the learning delivery team. 3 Understand and use a range of assessment strategies at different levels. 4 Demonstrate accountability for decisions that learners have met required standards of professional practice.

	Standards	Unit titles	Outcomes
4	Evaluate learning	Evaluate Learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Design of evaluation strategies to determine the effectiveness of practice learning experiences in collaboration with others. 2 Monitor and critically evaluate the effectiveness of learning programmes on an ongoing basis. 3 Critically evaluate the effectiveness of learning programmes in collaboration with others.
5	Create an environment for learning	Create an Environment for Learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Initiate the creation of optimum learning environments for learners, taking account of individual learner differences. 2 Negotiate, plan and manage change to ensure learners access opportunities to learn and work with other professions. 3 Work closely with others in a variety of education settings to adapt to change and inform development of learning programmes. 4 Ethically practice in a way which acknowledges power differences inherent within a learning situation.
6	Context of practice	Support Learning in a Social Services Practice Context	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Demonstrate a critical understanding of good practice in the application of legislation, policy and guidance relevant to social services. 2 Enable learners to act within the responsibility, accountability and authority of their professional role in a social services context. 3 Enable learners to develop critical awareness of the implications of legislation, policy and guidance for practice in social services.
7	Evidenced based practice	Evidenced Based Practice in Social Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Critically analyse current research and evidence relevant to supporting learners in a social services context. 2 Use appropriate research to facilitate the professional development of self and others in a social services context. 3 Disseminate findings from research and practice development in social services related fields in order to enhance the quality of learning experiences.

	Standards	Unit titles	Outcomes
8	Leadership	Leadership for Learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Demonstrate practice leadership and expertise. 2 Apply and critically evaluate appropriate leadership skills to enable provision of comprehensive learning programmes in practice. 3 Manage learner needs and learning requirements in the context of professional practice.

2.4.2 PDA in Practice Learning at SCQF level 10

The eight Units, and their Outcomes, within this award provide comprehensive coverage of the framework of standards. The mapping of the standards against the Units is shown in the table below.

	Standards	Unit titles	Outcomes
1	Establish effective working relationships	Establish Effective Working Relationships	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Establish effective professional and inter-professional working relationships to support learning whilst maintaining professional boundaries. 2 Use effective working relationships with learners to support them in the achievement of their learning objectives. 3 Support learners in exploring different working practices and the impact this may have on established professional roles.
2	Facilitate learning	Facilitate Learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Enable learners to develop their skills of critical reflection when applying theory to practice. 2 Use effective communication, facilitation and supervision skills to support learners' professional growth and personal development. 3 Facilitate and develop the ethos of inter-professional learning and working. 4 Select and apply approaches to learning that will assist learners to develop required knowledge, skills and values.
3	Assessment and accountability	Assessment of Learners	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Maintain effective professional boundaries during the assessment process. 2 Design and implement assessment frameworks in partnership with other members of the learning delivery team. 3 Understand and use a range of assessment strategies at different levels. 4 Demonstrate accountability for decisions that learners have met required standards of professional practice.

	Standards	Unit titles	Outcomes
4	Evaluate learning	Evaluate Learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Design of evaluation strategies to determine the effectiveness of practice learning experiences in collaboration with others. 2 Monitor and critically evaluate the effectiveness of learning programmes on an ongoing basis. 3 Critically evaluate the effectiveness of learning programmes in collaboration with others.
5	Create an environment for learning	Create an Environment for Learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Initiate the creation of optimum learning environments for learners, taking account of individual learner differences. 2 Negotiate, plan and manage change to ensure learners access opportunities to learn and work with other professions. 3 Work closely with others in a variety of education settings to adapt to change and inform development of learning programmes. 4 Ethically practice in a way which acknowledges power differences inherent within a learning situation.
6	Context of practice	Support Learning in the Practice Context	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Demonstrate a critical understanding of good practice in the application of legislation, policy and guidance. 2 Enable learners to act within the responsibility, accountability and authority of their professional role. 3 Enable learners to develop critical awareness of the implications of legislation, policy and guidance for practice.
7	Evidenced based practice	Evidenced Based Practice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Critically analyse current research and evidence relevant to supporting learners. 2 Use appropriate research to facilitate the professional development of self and others. 3 Disseminate findings from research and practice development in order to enhance the quality of learning experiences.
8	Leadership	Leadership for Learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Demonstrate practice leadership and expertise. 2 Apply and critically evaluate appropriate leadership skills to enable provision of comprehensive learning programmes in practice. 3 Manage learner needs and learning requirements in the context of professional practice.

3 Aims of the Awards

3.1 General aims

The overall aim of both PDAs is to equip individuals who support the professional development and learning of others within social services and related professions with the skills, knowledge and understanding to achieve high quality ethical interventions, positive learning Outcomes, and contribute to the development of learning cultures. The awards promote a competent, confident, flexible and diverse social services workforce.

In particular, the awards equip candidates with the skills, knowledge and understanding to develop and evaluate learning opportunities and be responsible for formal assessment across a wide range of social service settings.

This is achieved by:

- ◆ developing candidates' abilities to understand and use mechanisms to support the individual and collective learning of others using a range of methods
- ◆ developing candidates' skills and abilities in supporting the development of learning cultures within and across organisations
- ◆ developing candidates' competences in the provision and facilitation of learning opportunities within and across settings
- ◆ developing candidates' competences to formally assess the learning of others

Both the PDA in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10 and the PDA in Practice Learning at SCQF level 10 reflect the objectives of the specification drawn up by the Scottish Practice Learning Project (SPLP) and the vision of the paper, *Confidence in Practice Learning* (2004), by providing awards that are:

- ◆ 'accessible without compromising standards'

and

- ◆ 'available to workers from social services and other professionals and wider stakeholders involved in the professional development of staff and students within the social services workforce'

3.2 Specific aims

Each of the PDAs enables candidates to:

- 1 demonstrate effective relationship building skills
- 2 facilitate learning for a range of learners
- 3 contribute to the assessment process of learners
- 4 contribute appropriately to the ongoing evaluation of learning in practice
- 5 contribute to the creation of a learning environment
- 6 support learning based on relevant legislation, policy and guidance
- 7 demonstrate current knowledge of effective practice in own work setting
- 8 demonstrate appropriate leadership skills for supporting learners

3.3 Other aims

Both awards:

- ◆ reflect the importance of workforce development and practice learning for social services and related professions
- ◆ take account of developments in training and learning within the wider workforce
- ◆ link to initiatives aimed at supporting the learning of others within other professions
- ◆ link to related workplace assessment qualifications
- ◆ reflect the range of roles and tasks of those supporting learning in practice
- ◆ are an integral part of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for all staff
- ◆ facilitate the involvement of carers and service users in the design of learning events
- ◆ are delivered in partnership

4 Access to the Awards

Access to the Awards is determined by individual centres and forms part of their submission for approval to offer the award.

The PDA in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10 is only accessible to those who are registered or eligible for registration with SSSC because of the legal boundaries of the SSSC's powers to approve education and training for its own workforce.

Candidates who are not registered or registerable with SSSC, but are involved in practice learning and wish to access the award may be eligible to undertake the PDA in Practice Learning at SCQF level 10, which does not have this specific entry requirement. Candidates who are members of other professions or service users and carers are encouraged to undertake the PDA in Practice Learning at SCQF level 10.

Candidates for these awards should have well developed communication and interpersonal skills and be able to demonstrate their ability to critically review and consolidate knowledge, skills, practices and thinking in their disciplines. This may be demonstrated by relevant professional qualifications at SCQF level 9 (or equivalent) or above with relevant experience in a social services or other relevant setting.

Candidates should be aware that evidence of work or practice cited towards establishing entry criteria, or used towards assessment at any level, should not be outdated and should have acceptable currency. They would be expected to evidence supporting of learning eg buddying, supervising, mentoring, training, teaching. The evidence may be provided in a variety of formats eg personal statements, written tasks. Acceptance is at the discretion of the Centre.

Acceptance of relevant equivalent qualifications and experience is at the discretion of centres delivering the awards.

5 Structure of the Awards

5.1 Conditions of the Awards

Each Group Award is achieved on the successful attainment of all eight mandatory Units which are listed in the tables in 5.2 below. Each award comprises a total of eight SQA credits making up 64 SCQF credit points.

5.2 Framework

5.2.1 PDA in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10

Mandatory Unit title	Code	SCQF credit points	SCQF level	SQA credit value	Linked to specific aims
Assessment of Learners	HA6T 37*	8	10	1	3
Create an Environment for Learning	HA6N 37*	8	10	1	5
Establish Effective Working Relationships	HA6P 37*	8	10	1	1
Evidence Based Practice in Social Services	HA6X 37*	8	10	2	7
Supervise and Facilitate Learning	HA6V 37*	8	10	1	2
Leadership for Learning	HA6R 37*	8	10	1	8
Support Learning in a Social Services Practice Context	HA6W 37*	8	10	1	6
Total credits		64		8	

5.2.2 PDA in Practice Learning at SCQF level 10

Mandatory Unit title	Code	SCQF credit points	SCQF level	SQA credit value	Linked to specific aims
Assessment of Learners	HA6T 37*	8	10	1	3
Create an Environment for Learning	HA6N 37*	8	10	1	5
Establish Effective Working Relationships	HA6P 37*	8	10	1	1
Evidence Based Practice	F1WE 37	8	10	1	7
Supervise and Facilitate Learning	HA6V 37*	8	10	1	2
Leadership for Learning	HA6R 37*	8	10	1	8
Support Learning in a Practice Context	F1WJ 37	8	10	1	6
Total credits		64		8	

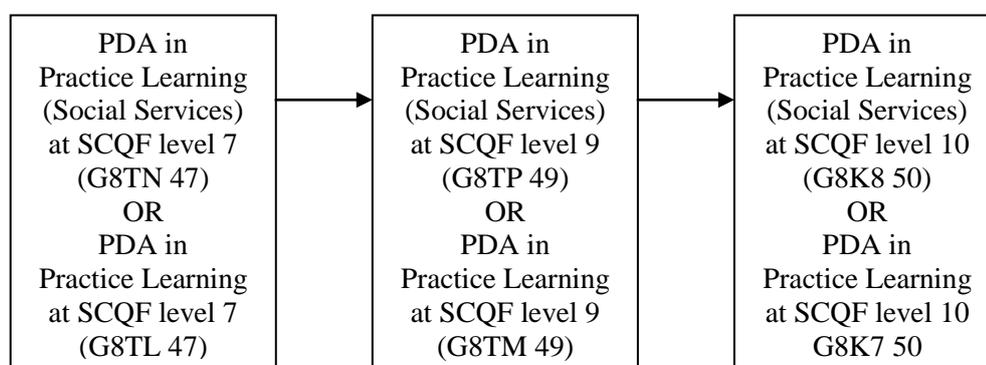
5.3 Mapping

The rightmost columns in the tables in 5.2 show how each Unit is linked to the specific aims listed in 3.2. The aims are directly related to the eight standards in the framework of standards for practice learning. The mapping of both awards against the framework of standards for practice learning is illustrated in the tables in section 2.4.

5.4 Articulation, professional recognition and credit transfer

5.4.1 Articulation

The eight standards for practice learning listed in **Appendix 1** are common across all the PDAs in Practice Learning at SCQF levels 7, 9 and 10. The framework of standards provides themes which develop as the SCQF level of the award increases. The knowledge, skills and learning requirements progress according to the award's SCQF level and incorporate SCQF terms of reference.



Candidates who have successfully completed the PDA in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 9 or the PDA in Practice Learning at SCQF level 9 may be able to progress to the PDA in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10 or the PDA in Practice Learning at SCQF level 10.

5.4.2 Recognition of prior learning and credit transfer

It is expected that centres delivering these awards implement clear credit transfer and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) mechanisms and policies. The document entitled *Guidelines for Credit Transfer and Recognition of Prior Learning* (SSSC 2007) provides guidance on the mechanisms, policies and support for the full range of Practice Learning qualifications at SCQF levels 7, 9, 10 and 11. It is based on SCQF guidance on RPL and credit transfer. Implementation of the guidelines helps ensure consistent RPL and Credit Transfer policies across Scotland. A flowchart of the Credit Transfer and RPL process is provided in **Appendix 5**.

The purpose of the guidelines is to assist providers in developing and operating processes of recognising prior learning within the suite of Practice Learning qualifications. The guidelines are applicable to the PDA in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10 and the PDA in Practice Learning at SCQF level 10. The abbreviation PLQ(SS)/PLQ is used in the guidelines to denote both qualifications.

The guidelines support staff with responsibility for the awards in relation to:

- ◆ programme development
- ◆ guidance
- ◆ delivery
- ◆ support
- ◆ assessment
- ◆ credit-rating of learning
- ◆ quality management
- ◆ external assessment
- ◆ external verification

The guidelines define what we mean by credit transfer and RPL and explain the ways in which these processes can be used within the Practice Learning PDAs. The guidelines provide guidance on the process of awarding credit for prior learning. In order to ensure quality, consistency and transparency, all providers should follow the same process.

Incorporating clear and effective policies and mechanisms for credit transfer and RPL within the delivery and assessment process for the awards is essential in terms of ensuring their flexibility, accessibility and inclusiveness. These guidelines support the objectives of the awards to:

- ◆ provide a framework which is accessible and flexible in order to reflect the individual's involvement in the learning process and his/her own learning needs
- ◆ recognise the prior learning achievements of those providing support to individuals, both accredited and informal

5.4.3 Professional recognition

Holders of the existing Practice Teaching Award (PTA) who are eligible for registration with the SSSC are deemed to have the equivalent of the PDA in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10. If a person in this category has not recently been active as a practice teacher, they should be encouraged to undertake the PDA in order to refresh their knowledge in the context of the new standards. If a person in this category wishes to achieve a Unit or number of Units within the PDA, they should either undertake the Unit(s), or seek the award of the Unit(s) resulting from a successful RPL/credit transfer claim.

A person who is eligible for registration with the SSSC and is accredited by their agency as a practice teacher but who does not hold the PTA, does not have the equivalent of the PDA in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10. People in this category should be encouraged to undertake the appropriate new qualification and, where appropriate, to make a credit claim towards the Unit Outcomes of the award.

A person who holds the PTA but is not eligible for SSSC registration is deemed to have the equivalent of the PDA in Practice Learning at SCQF level 10.

6 Approaches to delivery and assessment

6.1 Delivery

Delivery of the awards provides a combination of off-the-job and workbased learning.

These awards should be delivered through partnerships comprising employers, training providers and SQA approved centres. Centres delivering the PDA in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10 must also be approved by SSSC. For example, in Scotland it is likely that the awards are delivered through education and employer partnerships under the auspices of the four Learning Networks using a collaboration of national, regional and/or local training providers.

It is important that the awards are accessible to potential candidates without disadvantage resulting from geographical location or other structural factors. The awards should:

- ◆ articulate with related workplace assessment qualifications
- ◆ be flexible in delivery to allow comprehensive geographical access and participation, including by distance learning
- ◆ be delivered through education/provider and employer partnerships

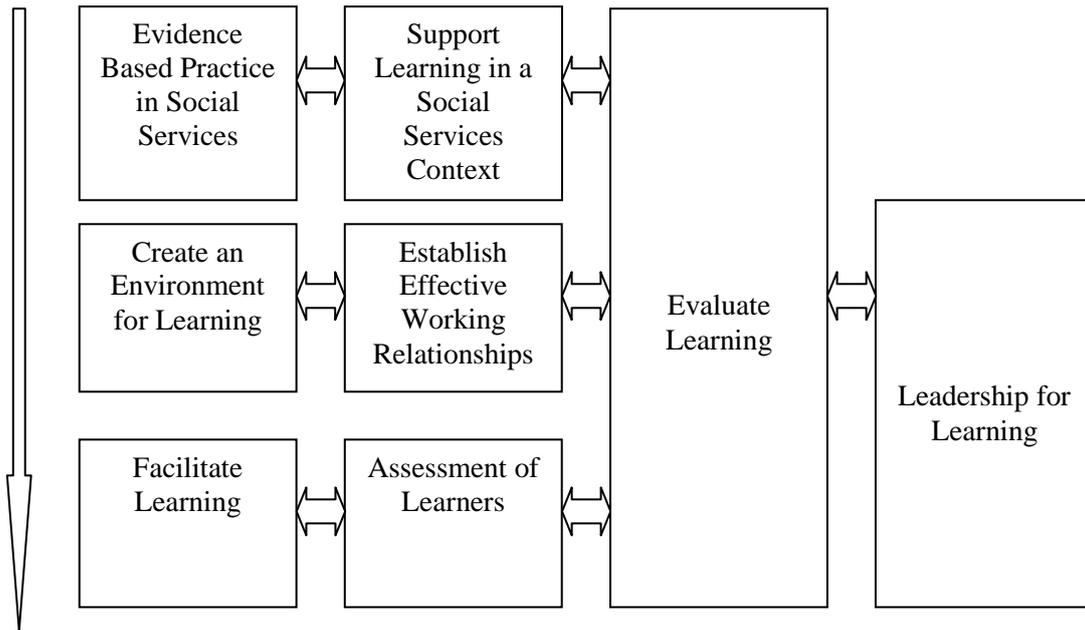
These awards involve candidates in a significant amount of experiential learning. Candidates are required to critically analyse and reflect on this experience and to be able to make conclusions for their future behaviour and development.

Given that these Group Awards are work based rather than full-time training courses, centres should set timescales for completion which are flexible and suit the requirements of the individual candidates and their professional areas.

Although centres can choose the order in which they deliver the Units, it is likely that there will be considerable integration of content and assessment. It is imperative that regardless of the extent of integration, the Evidence Requirements for each Unit are met in full.

There are many possible combinations of sequential and simultaneous delivery of Units in this award. One suggestion is represented in the diagram below.

PDA in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10 – one possible Unit delivery model:



A similar delivery model for the PDA in Practice Learning at SCQF level 10 can be applied.

The facilitation of learning for these awards should be through a range of approaches including face-to-face inputs, blended and other forms of directed and self-directed learning.

The delivery mechanisms adopted by centres should be flexible to allow comprehensive access and participation, including distance and e-learning. An Outcomes-based approach, centred round the learning needs of the individual, may best meet the requirement for flexible delivery. The delivery of the awards must take account of its practical nature and of the occupational backgrounds of candidates.

At the outset, centres should make candidates aware of the requirements of the awards, including the need to gather evidence, critically analyse and evaluate and report on their experiences. They should also inform candidates at the outset about the type of evidence they have to provide in order to complete the appropriate award and each individual Unit successfully. It is likely that delivery of each Unit consists of some initial orientation and briefing sessions after which candidates manage their learning independently to a significant extent. Centres should make suitable arrangements to support and guide candidates throughout. This could involve

regular meetings with candidates on an individual basis or in groups or through e-learning.

Where direct observation of a candidate's practice with a learner or learners is required, there is a need for preparation for the person observing as well as the person being observed, together with an outline of the expected report. Candidates may also require refreshment in writing evaluatively, analytically and reflectively and this can be done through meetings for this purpose early in the delivery of these awards. Guidance is also needed on the shape and length of supportive statements from learner(s) or others of the candidates' abilities and knowledge.

Each award comprises eight mandatory Units. The Unit specifications provide centres with details of learning Outcomes, Evidence Requirements and guidance on content, context, delivery and assessment. In summary, the awards cover the following indicative content:

- ◆ learning organisations
- ◆ organisational structures
- ◆ curriculum development and teaching methods
- ◆ process of change and role of change agent
- ◆ quality assurance including assessment frameworks and evaluation strategies
- ◆ theories of adult learning (models and methods)
- ◆ current legislation and national policy and guidance
- ◆ organisational policies and procedures
- ◆ research and evidence based practice
- ◆ power differentials associated with difference (diversity of learners) and avoidance of disadvantage
- ◆ reflective practice
- ◆ supervisory processes including working with individuals and groups
- ◆ leadership concepts and theories
- ◆ the debates and issues associated with achieving effective inter-professional collaboration

6.2 Learning materials

A wide range of generic learning materials are available to support both of these awards. The overall picture of this in terms of source, format and copyright is available on the SIESWE website at this link:

<http://www.sieswe.org/files/LearningExchangeNHSeLib070323.pdf>

This brings together previously unlinked materials and allows candidates easier access to materials developed in other areas.

The materials are across all of the Outcomes for Units in both awards and include a wide range of formats including paper, DVD and VHS, web pages, and PDF and Word documents.

Some materials are available through the Learning Exchange, which is a library of digital learning resources for social work education. New access arrangements mean that a wide range of teachers, practice educators and learners are able to source reusable learning objects and download relevant documents. Access can be obtained via an Athens password which can be sourced through arrangements made with the e-library of National Health Education for Scotland (NES) at www.elib.scot.nhs.uk and clicking on 'Need to register'.

Gaps in materials will be addressed over time and new materials and formats will be considered and commissioned as necessary.

6.3 Assessment

The awards take a holistic approach to assessment. There is an emphasis on assessing the whole Outcome or a combination of Outcomes across one or more Unit. Centres are encouraged to identify opportunities for integration of assessments across Units in the PDAs (see **Appendix 2** for some examples of possible assessment integration opportunities). Unit specifications detail the Evidence Requirements and assessment guidelines for each assessment event.

The awards provide a number of opportunities for developing a range of assessment methods. Assessment operates through a blend of results from workplace activities and collections of evidence. It is continuous, pragmatic and based on workplace outputs. As part of their individual learner management process centres should devise varied assessment strategies suited to the needs of the learning styles and professional environments of candidates.

Given the potential for integration, the use of ePortfolios in the assessment process should be encouraged.

The key principles of assessment for these awards are that they should be:

- ◆ objective, fair and equitable
- ◆ quality assured — internally and externally
- ◆ understandable, transparent and in a format appropriate to the candidate
- ◆ aligned and appropriate to the content of the Units and Outcomes at the relevant SCQF level
- ◆ proportionate while robust and demanding
- ◆ timely and ongoing throughout the delivery of the awards
- ◆ incremental and developmental
- ◆ redeemable (providing opportunity for reassessment)
- ◆ efficient and manageable (ie cost, time and resources)

Additionally, assessment should:

- ◆ model good assessment practice
- ◆ incorporate the flexibility to adapt to different learning styles
- ◆ include provision of a clear, accessible RPL process

The focus of these awards is on the development of competence to use a wide range of principal skills, some specialised skills and advanced applications to achieve Unit Outcomes. They are suitable for holistic assessment covering the Outcomes of all eight Units in each award and the recommended assessment mechanism is a collection of practice evidence.

The collection of evidence approach allows candidates flexibility in relation to evidence gathering and scope to present their evidence in a way that best fits with their learning needs and styles. Candidates can demonstrate that they have achieved the Unit Outcomes by gathering evidence and presenting it in the form of a collection of evidence. As far as possible for most candidates the evidence should be naturally occurring during the course of their day to day activity. Some candidates may not be able to rely solely on naturally occurring evidence, in which case supplementary assessment activity such as role play or simulation needs to be developed by centres. This approach reduces the need for contrived assessed activity in circumstances where Outcomes are effectively being evidenced in the candidate's work. The approach encourages candidates to reflect on the nature of what they do on a daily basis.

Centres should provide advice and guidance to candidates on the creation of a collection of evidence and on typical contents. The collection of evidence should be presented as a coherent and logical whole rather than a collection of disparate items of evidence and demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to each Outcome for each Unit. Essentially, the collection of evidence is a record of the learning journey undertaken by candidates.

Whilst it is recognised that the collection of evidence method is suitable for most candidates undertaking these awards, the individual Unit specifications do not require this as a mandatory approach. It is important to recognise that dependant on individual candidate needs other methods may be equally applicable.

Overall this should encompass a demonstration of:

- ◆ professional performance improvements that candidates have achieved as a result of participating in the learning and related practical activities
- ◆ candidates' ability to critically analyse and review their own and their learners experiences
- ◆ candidates' application of relevant theories, methodologies and standards

Candidates' practice evidence of their ability to support learning can be drawn from a variety of sources including feedback from peers, managers, learners, service users, carers and other professionals. This should be collated alongside evidence of candidates' knowledge and understanding of the topics covered by the Units. Also, within the collection of evidence candidates should provide a critically reflective narrative identifying their learning for the Units and reflecting on what they might have done differently and what they need to work on in the future. Centres should advise candidates about assessment requirements and encourage candidates to seek opportunities to generate evidence that would span more than one Outcome and/or more than one Unit. Combining evidence from several Units should be encouraged wherever possible. It gives candidates the chance to develop a more comprehensive record of their learning, but also highlights the close connections and relationships between the different strands involved in professional development. It may also enable candidates to make use of the same piece of evidence in different contexts.

6.4 Collection of evidence

The collection of evidence approach offers candidates flexibility in relation to evidence gathering against the Unit Outcomes. Each candidate's collection of evidence is unique. Although unique, all collections of evidence are expected to meet a set of minimum required content criteria as advised by the centre. Candidates are encouraged to offer fewer rather than more pieces of work to evidence several Outcomes. This is not intended to deter candidates from taking a rigorous approach to their assessment tasks but rather to allow them scope to focus their evidence. Each Unit contains specific and mandatory Evidence Requirements, but the type of evidence candidates present for assessment is not prescribed unless listed as an additional requirement.

It is likely that content may include items covering both product and process. Evidence of support for learning can be drawn from any context across health, education and social services and involve work with individual learners and/or groups, such as through the facilitation of group supervision, or planning, delivering and/or evaluating training events. Evidence can come in a variety of forms including an assignment, video, audio, oral presentation, witness statements etc.

It is a requirement that there is evidence of direct observation of the candidate's current practice with a learner or learners eg these may be in the form of witness statements from, for example, managers, colleagues, service users, the learners themselves or practitioners in other related disciplines. There is also an expectation that direct observation is carried out by an occupationally competent assessor. (See Appendix 3 for Guidance on Occupational Competence of Practice Learning Assessors, Advisers and Internal Verifiers)

Contents of a collection of evidence should include evidence of knowledge, values and skills and include some of the following, for example (centres advise on specific requirements):

- 1 candidate's reflective accounts of how they have met each of the Outcomes for each Unit
- 2 formal and informal feedback on practice from a learner or learners with whom the candidate has been working
- 3 formal and informal feedback on practice from, an appropriate, mentor, assessor, a service user, carer, peers, managers, and other professionals
- 4 self-assessment, including critical reflection by the candidate on feedback received
- 5 product evidence to specifically demonstrate knowledge gained. For example, assignments, reports, extracts of minutes, supervision notes and practice documents etc
- 6 critically reflective narrative of the learning from each Unit as a whole. This is the candidate's summary of how the evidence they have provided meets the Outcomes. It can include a clear map indicating where the evidence provided links to the Outcomes. It is likely that this also describes what they might have done differently and what they need to work on in the future

Whilst it is recognised that the collection of evidence method is suitable for most candidates undertaking these awards, the individual Unit specifications do not require this as a mandatory approach. It is important to recognise that dependant on individual candidate needs, other methods may be equally applicable.

6.5 Integration of assessment

The Units that make up the component parts of these awards lend themselves to integration of assessment. Examples of how this might be achieved are given in Appendix 2.

6.6 Open learning/online learning

Both of these PDAs can be delivered by Open/Distance learning as well as on an online basis.

It is expected that centres delivering this award would deploy a blended solution which might include elements of e-Learning or other flexible methods of delivery.

In this context, planning and resources are required for candidate support, assessment and quality assurance. A combination of new and traditional authentication tools may have to be devised for assessment and re-assessment purposes. For further information and advice, please see *Assessment and Quality Assurance for Open and Distance Learning* (SQA, February 2001 — publication code A1030). www.sqa.org.uk

7 General information for centres

7.1 Candidates with disabilities and/or additional support needs

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. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (www.sqa.org.uk).

7.2 Internal and external verification

All instruments of assessment used within these Group Awards should be internally verified, using the appropriate policy within the centre and the guidelines set by SQA.

External verification is carried out by SQA to ensure that internal assessment is within the national guidelines for these qualifications. External verification for these awards takes the form of central verification, in order to ensure effective benchmarking and standard setting across the course providers and Learning Networks.

Guidance on the occupational competence of Practice Learning assessors, advisers and internal verifiers is provided in Appendix 3.

Further information on internal and external moderation can be found in SQA's *Guide to Assessment and Quality Assurance for Colleges of Further Education* (www.sqa.org.uk).

8 General information for candidates

Each of the PDAs in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10 and Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10 is designed to equip you with the skills, knowledge and understanding to achieve high quality ethical interventions, positive learning Outcomes, and allow you to contribute to the development of learning cultures. Both awards aim to help you to develop and critically evaluate learning opportunities and be responsible for formal assessment across a wide range of social services settings.

To achieve one of these awards you have to achieve eight Units. Collectively these Units cover a range of professional skills and knowledge relating to the following topics:

- ◆ learning organisations
- ◆ organisational structures
- ◆ curriculum development and teaching methods
- ◆ process of change and role of change agent
- ◆ quality assurance including assessment frameworks and evaluation strategies
- ◆ theories of adult learning (models and methods)
- ◆ current legislation and national policy and guidance
- ◆ organisational policies and procedures
- ◆ research and evidence based practice
- ◆ power differentials associated with difference (diversity of learners) and avoidance of disadvantage
- ◆ reflective practice
- ◆ supervisory processes including working with individuals and groups
- ◆ leadership concepts and theories
- ◆ the debates and issues associated with achieving effective inter-professional collaboration

On successful completion of one of these awards, you will:

- ◆ understand and use mechanisms to support the individual and collective learning of others using a range of methods
- ◆ have the skills and abilities to support the development of learning cultures within and across organisations
- ◆ be competent in the provision and facilitation of learning opportunities within and across settings
- ◆ be competent in the formal assessment of the learning of others

The assessment for these awards requires you to produce evidence of your ability to support learning through competent use of a wide range of skills and advanced applications. It is important that you collect this evidence from your ongoing practice with learners and build a collection of evidence of your work. This tool should offer you flexibility in relation to evidence gathering against each Outcome for each Unit. Your collection of evidence will be unique, although it will be expected to meet a set of minimum required content criteria as advised by the centre and will include evidence of knowledge, values and skills. You can use evidence from any context across health, education and social services and involve work with individual learners and/or groups, such as through the facilitation of group supervision, or planning, delivering and/or evaluating training events.

Your evidence is likely to consist of several different types of item covering both product and process. Centres will advise you about any specific requirements. Some examples of items of evidence you might provide are:

- ◆ critically reflective accounts of how you have met each Unit Outcome.
- ◆ witness testimony from others involved in the learning process (learners, colleagues, service users, assessors, other professionals, university or college tutors etc)
- ◆ product evidence to specifically demonstrate knowledge gained. For example, assignments, reports, extracts of minutes, supervision notes and practice documents etc
- ◆ a critically reflective narrative of learning from each Unit as a whole
- ◆ video, audio, oral presentations
- ◆ role play and simulations

If you undertake a full Group Award, you may be able to present evidence for more than one Unit at the same time. In this way, you can provide a much fuller record of several interconnected aspects of your personal development. It is possible, therefore, to demonstrate competence in parts of a Unit and use the evidence generated to gain credit for another Unit.

9 Appendices

Appendix 1: Framework of standards

Appendix 2: Assessment Integration Opportunities

Appendix 3: Guidance on Occupational Competence of Practice Learning
Assessors, Advisers and Internal Verifiers for Practice Learning
qualifications at SCQF level 10

Appendix 4: Glossary of terms

Appendix 5: Flowchart of Credit Transfer and RPL process

Appendix 1: Framework of standards

From the literature and existing standards, four broad approaches to defining standards in tertiary education teaching can be identified: norm referenced, competency based, criterion based and descriptor based. The latter approach is consistent with recent advances in defining standards in learner assessment in higher education. This approach was adopted by SIESWE for the development of a framework of practice learning standards, as presented in the submission to SSSC (December 2005, revised August 2006), that candidates would be required to provide evidence in order to achieve the PLQ. In creating the framework of standards, close reference was made to the model recently developed by the Nursing and Midwifery Council in its Consultation on a Standard to Support Learning and Assessment in Practice, 2004.

Both the PDA in Practice Learning (Social services) at SCQF level 10 and the PDA in Practice Learning at SCQF level 10 have been developed in line with the framework of standards and associated knowledge, skills and learning requirements as represented by SIESWE and accepted by SSSC. The framework of standards for practice learning is presented in the table below.

The significance of professional values is signposted throughout the framework of standards by reference to relevant professional Codes of Practice.

Framework of standards for practice learning		
1	Establish effective working relationships	Demonstrate effective relationship building skills sufficient to support learning as part of a wider interprofessional context for a range of learners in practice learning environments.
2	Facilitate learning	Facilitate learning for a range of learners, encouraging learning opportunities and providing support to maximise individual potential and innovation.
3	Assessment and accountability	Contribute to the assessment process of learners, taking the SSSC and other relevant professional Codes of Practice into account and using appropriate assessment frameworks.
4	Evaluate learning	Contribute appropriately to the ongoing evaluation of learning in practice.
5	Create an environment for learning	Contribute to the creation of a learning environment that enables and supports learning for self and others and where practice is valued and developed.
6	Context of practice	Support learning based on relevant legislation, policy and guidance.
7	Evidenced based practice	Demonstrate current knowledge of effective practice in own work setting to support learners and contribute to the further development of the research and evidence-base for practice.
8	Leadership	Demonstrate appropriate leadership skills for supporting learners within practice settings.

Appendix 2: Assessment Integration Opportunities

Both PDAs offer a number of opportunities to take an integrated approach to the generation of evidence to match the assessment process of the individual Units. A collection of evidence can help facilitate such integration. In particular, it would be appropriate to encourage candidates to construct and use an e-portfolio in the management of their assessment process.

The tables below detail a number of illustrative examples where the evidence generated from a candidate's workbased activities can be used to satisfy the requirements of a number of Outcomes/Units. The examples below should not be seen as prescriptive and exhaustive and individual delivering centres are encouraged to work with candidates on an individual basis to identify an integrative approach to the gathering and presenting of evidence.

1 Ethical practice

Units	Examples of activities that can be linked to produce evidence for a number of Outcomes/Units
Create an Environment for Learning	Outcome 4 requires candidates to practice ethically in a way which acknowledges power differences inherent within a learning situation.
Establish Effective Working Relationships	Outcome 1 requires candidates to apply ethics and values to maintain professional boundaries within professional and inter-professional relationships to support learning.
Assessment of Learning	Outcome 1 requires candidates to address issues of equality, fairness and ethical practice in assessment processes.
Leadership for Learning	Outcome 1 requires candidates to demonstrate ethical and non-oppressive practice as leaders.

2 Adult learning theories

Units	Examples of activities that can be linked to produce evidence for a number of Outcomes/Units
Create an Environment for Learning	Outcome 1 requires candidates to consider appropriate teaching and learning styles in creating a learning environment.
Establish Effective Working Relationships	Outcome 2 requires candidates to support learners to achieve their objectives.
Facilitate Learning	Outcome 4 requires candidates to select and apply approaches to learning that will assist learners to develop required knowledge, skills and values.

3 Inter-professional collaboration

Units	Examples of activities that can be linked to produce evidence for a number of Outcomes/Units
Create an Environment for Learning	Outcome 3 requires candidates to work closely with other education professionals in the development of learning programmes.
Establish Effective Working Relationships	Outcome 1 requires candidates to establish effective inter-professional working relationships.
Facilitate Learning	Outcome 3 requires candidates to facilitate and develop the ethos of inter professional learning and working.
Assessment of Learning	Outcome 2 requires candidates to work in partnership with other professionals in the design and implementation of assessment frameworks.
Evaluate Learning	Outcome 3 requires candidates to collaborate with others in the evaluation of the effectiveness of learning programmes.

4 Barriers to learning

Units	Examples of activities that can be linked to produce evidence for a number of Outcomes/Units
Establish Effective Working Relationships	Outcomes 1 and 2 require candidates to address factors which impact on the effectiveness of their relationships with learners and other professionals.
Facilitate Learning	Outcomes 2, 3 and 4 require candidates to address factors which impact on facilitating learning in their communications, work with other professionals and in support of learners' learning.
Leadership for Learning	Outcome 3 requires candidates to overcome barriers to learning in managing learner needs.

Appendix 3: Guidance on Occupational Competence of Practice Learning Assessors, Advisers and Internal Verifiers for Practice Learning qualifications at SCQF level 10

The following gives guidance on the qualifications and experience required by Assessors, Mentors and Internal Verifiers for these awards.

	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ One of the following : Degree in Social Work, DipSW, CQSW, CSS, SVQ Care 4, Degree in Community Education, Allied Health Professional qualification RGN, RMN (or other relevant nursing qualification) Day Care of Children Award (level 9), Teaching qualification or <i>other relevant qualification to be agreed via SQA</i> <i>And any of the above plus</i> ◆ An Award or evidence of substantial training which centrally focuses on the facilitation and assessment of learning at SCQF level 9 or above (eg Practice Teaching Award/Training programme, SVQ Learning and Development 4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Registration with, or eligibility to be registered with, a Professional Body
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ A minimum of 2 years experience in a social services setting ◆ Evidence of competence in providing supervision in a relevant professional context ◆ Knowledge and understanding of the PLQ(SS) standards ◆ Knowledge of the standards on which the learner is being assessed [eg Standards in Social Work Education (SiSWE)] ◆ Experience of working within the SSSC Codes of Practice ◆ Experience of supporting learning and development in the workplace 	

Internal Verifiers

The Internal Verifier should have qualifications and/or experience equivalent to or above that of the Assessor.

Appendix 4: Glossary of terms

Candidate — The person undertaking the PDA.

Learner — The person whose practice learning is being supported by the PDA candidate.

Learning Network — The four Learning Networks currently being established on a regional basis by the Scottish Practice Learning Project (a Scottish Executive funded joint initiative of SIESWE and SSSC).

NSLWG — National Short Life Working Group. Group overseeing development of the PLQ at national level and representing key stakeholders.

Outcome — The description of an Outcome to be achieved by candidates in an SQA Unit.

PDA — Professional Development Award, a vocational qualification contributing to continuous professional development for employed participants.

PLQ — Practice Learning Qualification. **PLQ(SS)** Practice Learning Qualification (Social Services).

PRTL — Post Registration Training and Learning.

PTA — Practice Teaching Award.

RPL — Recognition of Prior Learning.

SCOPT — Scottish Organisation for Practice Teaching.

SCQF — This stands for the Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework, which is a new way of speaking about qualifications and how they inter-relate. We use SCQF terminology throughout this guide to refer to credits and levels. For further information on the SCQF visit the SCQF website at www.scqf.org.uk.

SCQF credits — One SQA HN credit is equivalent to eight SCQF credit points. This applies to all HN Units, irrespective of their level.

SCQF levels — The SCQF covers 12 levels of learning. PDA Group Awards and Units will normally be at SCQF levels 6-12.

SIESWE — Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education, known in the sector as The Institute.

SPLP — Scottish Practice Learning Project.

SSSC — Scottish Social Services Council.

Qualification Design Team (QDT) — The QDT works in conjunction with a Qualification Manager/Development Manager to steer the development of the HNC/D from its inception/revision through to validation. The group is made up of key stakeholders representing the interests of centres, employers, universities and other relevant organisations.

Unit — Units contain vocational/subject content and are designed to test a specific set of knowledge and skills.

Appendix 5: Flowchart of Credit Transfer and RPL process

