

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Developing An Understanding of Working with Children:
Workplace Experience (Higher)

CODE DM5M 12

COURSE

SUMMARY

This Unit is intended for candidates who will assist in work with children (0 to 12 years) and families in an early education and childcare setting. It is designed to enable candidates, whilst working under supervision in an early education and childcare setting with children within the age range 0-12 years, to demonstrate an effective contribution to the care, learning and development of children. It will enable candidates to demonstrate an understanding of the values and principles that underpin work with children and to enable them to support child centred practice. Candidates will be encouraged to evaluate their own skills and qualities in a childcare setting and to explore their role in contributing to the work of the team to ensure professionalism and best practice in all aspects of their work with children.

This Unit is a mandatory Unit in the *NC Group Award: Early Education and Childcare* but is also suitable for candidates wishing to study the Unit on its own or as part of other awards. 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 onto higher early education and childcare qualifications. Candidates are required to have a work placement within a suitable early education and childcare setting to complete this Unit.

OUTCOMES

1. Working under supervision, demonstrate the principles and values that underpin working with children.
2. Working under supervision, support child-centred practice.
3. Working under supervision, demonstrate skills and qualities necessary for working in an early education and childcare setting.
4. Work effectively as a reflective practitioner.

Administrative Information

Superclass: GA

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

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RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained, or be working towards the completion of *Unit: Developing An Understanding Of Working With Children*. It is expected that candidates will have a clear understanding of the developmental need of children aged birth to twelve years. In addition, candidates would normally be expected to have attained one of the following, or equivalent:

- Standard Grade at Credit level English and/or 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.

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 Developing An Understanding of Working with Children: Workplace Experience (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

Working under supervision, demonstrate the principles and values that underpin working with children.

Performance Criteria

- a) Demonstrate in practice, the principles and values that underpin working with children.
- b) Work effectively within current and relevant legislation, charters and national policies and standards from which the principles and values are drawn.

OUTCOME 2

Working under supervision, support child centred practice.

Performance Criteria

- a) Whilst working within an early education and childcare setting, identify and support the needs of children aged birth to twelve years.
- b) Whilst working within an early education and childcare setting demonstrate positive relationships with children to support child-centred practice.
- c) Whilst working within an early education and childcare setting, demonstrate positive relationships with adults to support child-centred practice.
- d) Working under supervision, contribute to providing an enabling environment to support child-centred practice.

OUTCOME 3

Working under supervision, demonstrate skills and qualities necessary for working in an early education and childcare setting.

Performance Criteria

- a) Demonstrate skills and qualities that are needed to work with children.
- b) Demonstrate skills and qualities required to work effectively as part of a team in an early education and childcare setting.
- c) Identify personal skills and qualities that contribute to professional practice.

OUTCOME 4

Work effectively as a reflective practitioner.

Performance Criteria

- a) Reflect on own practice, based on values and principles that underpin working with children.
- b) Evaluate own skills and qualities in relation to professional practice.
- c) Contribute to reflective practice for the benefit of an early education and childcare setting.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Developing An Understanding of Working with Children:
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EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

To achieve this Unit, each candidate will need evidence to demonstrate his/her practical skills for all four Outcomes. The evidence for this Unit will be gathered throughout the placement and be authenticated by the candidate's workplace supervisor who must be eligible for registration with the SSSC at practitioner level. Candidates will be expected to provide folio evidence that provides information, explanations and examples from practice which relate to:

- Values and principles of working with children
- Child-centred practice
- Personal and professional skills and qualities
- Becoming a reflective practitioner.

These should be demonstrated on at least six occasions, four must be examples of working with children, the other two should demonstrate professional practice within the early education and childcare setting, for example, working with team members, providing a child-centred play space/environment, contributing to team meetings.

Specific Advice: the folio should include:

- ◆ Personal Skills Analysis
- ◆ Three Reflective Evaluations of Practice – based on values and principles; child-centred practice; personal and professional skills and qualities. This should include contributions to reflective practice within a early education and childcare setting
- ◆ Professional development plan.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Developing An Understanding of Working with Children: Workplace Experience (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

Candidates must have the opportunity to demonstrate that their practice is underpinned by the values and principles of work with children.

They should support these values in practice in an early education and childcare setting:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children have the right to play.
- The needs, rights and views of the child are at the centre of all practice and provision.
- Individuality, differences and diversity should be valued and celebrated.
- Care, learning, development and play are interwoven.
- Equality of opportunity and anti discriminatory practice must be promoted.
- Parents and families are partners in the care, learning and development of their child.
- Teamwork is essential in supporting children's care, learning and development.
- Confidentiality and agreements about confidential information are respected, unless a child's well-being is at stake.

Candidates will need to be able to work within:

- current and relevant legislation
- current and relevant charters, national policies and quality standards, for example, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the National Care Standards: early education and childcare, as well as the SSSC Code of Practice for Social Service Workers
- policies, standards and procedures that apply to individual settings.

Outcome 2

Candidates should support 'child-centred practice' in an early education and childcare setting; they should demonstrate that they put the child at the centre of their professional practice, they consider that the child's wellbeing is paramount, and that they support the child's individual needs for play, care, learning and development.

Candidates need to demonstrate an awareness of, and support for the needs of children. They should show respect for all children's individuality, and treat each child with respect and dignity, at all times. The candidate must ensure that their practice is appropriate and relevant to the needs of each child, in terms of ability, aptitude, motivation, social and cultural background.

Candidates must demonstrate the ability to adapt their role and behaviour in response to children's requirements and to support a flexible range of strategies to meet children's care, learning and development needs.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Developing An Understanding of Working with Children: Workplace Experience (Higher)

Candidates must work within the requirements of the policies and standards that relate to the early education and childcare setting and adhere to agreed procedures, including policies and procedures relating to protecting children from abuse, supporting children with additional needs; promoting equal opportunities; handling and reporting accidents and incidents, maintaining a safe and hygienic environment, etc.

Candidates must develop and maintain positive relationships with children, so that their care, learning and development needs are met in ways which support the child's individuality and enable them to make choices, to feel safe but not over protected and to realise their potential.

Candidates should demonstrate the processes of formal and informal observation; of talking to and listening to children in their every day work, identifying play cues, and giving feedback to parents/carers and colleagues on their findings, so that the provision of learning and development opportunities ensures that the child's needs, interests and concerns are kept at the centre of practice.

Candidates will demonstrate some of the skills essential for working with children and should be able to provide examples from practice that demonstrate the ways in which the candidate has contributed to a child's care, learning and development.

Candidates should be given opportunities in practice to support team working in terms of planning, observation and evaluation. They should have opportunities to support:

- the identification of individual and group needs
- the effective use of available resources
- the care, learning and development needs of children
- the identification of future needs
- improvements in practice
- objective assessment and feedback to parents/carers.

Candidates should support the building of positive relationships - with children, parents and families and other adults. They should be able to use some of the skills required in building positive relationships and demonstrate positive communication skills, both verbal and non-verbal i.e. listening, responding and providing feedback.

Candidates should have opportunities, in practice, to support the provision of an 'enabling' environment for children. This means building on the identification of the needs of children, supporting positive relationships with children and adults, and working within values and principles, policies and procedures to support the provision of an environment which is centred round the child, their play and individual needs. An environment, which provides for example, fun, playspaces, developmental experiences, and challenge. These enabling environments should be accessible and supportive for all children.

Outcome 3

Candidates should be able to demonstrate some of the skills and qualities that are needed to work in an early education and childcare setting. Candidates should demonstrate skills and qualities required to work with children, to work as part of a team, and for on-going professional practice.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Developing An Understanding of Working with Children: Workplace Experience (Higher)

In their practice, candidates should support and build positive relationships with children; parents/carers and families, colleagues and other adults. They should be able to demonstrate some of the skills and qualities required to do this, for example:

- expressing self clearly
- listening attentively
- offering support and encouragement
- asking questions and seeking clarification
- sharing information and receiving feedback
- co-operating and working with others.

The candidate should be able to demonstrate some of the personal and professional qualities and attributes required, such as openness and honesty, reliability and trustworthiness, interest and enthusiasm, patience and tolerance, sensitivity and empathy. The candidate should be respectful and welcoming to individuals, to value diversity and be mindful of the confidentiality of information, unless a child's well-being is at risk.

Candidates should demonstrate the ability to support team working. They should demonstrate some of the skills and qualities that are essential for good team working. They should:

- ◆ be able to identify and value the variety of skills and qualities, which compliment and enhance the whole team
- ◆ be given opportunities to be involved in the on-going communication within the team
- ◆ be aware of the need to follow procedures
- ◆ have a good attendance and time-keeping record
- ◆ have the opportunity to demonstrate these skills and qualities in relation to supporting children.

Candidates should use these qualities and skills in everyday professional practice. For example:

- ◆ greeting the children and parents/carers
- ◆ contributing to team meetings
- ◆ sharing information
- ◆ acknowledging people's feelings
- ◆ encouraging self esteem and positive behaviour
- ◆ treating all people with respect
- ◆ ensuring resources reflect all sections of society
- ◆ adhering to policies within the setting.

Candidates must demonstrate the skills that are fundamental to their professional practice, i.e. the recognition that all children and adults must be treated and respected as individuals irrespective of origin, race, status, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion or contribution to society.

Candidates should not allow any personal prejudices and bias to colour or influence their relationships with children and adults. Their professional practice should not be affected, for example candidates should not display: stereotyping, gender bias, unfair/unequal treatment. They should demonstrate equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice in all aspects of their work with children.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT **Developing An Understanding of Working with Children: Workplace Experience (Higher)**

Candidates should be given opportunity to explore a range of skills and qualities within an early education and childcare setting. They should have the opportunity to identify and make improvements to those skills and qualities they already possess, and be given the opportunity to develop others. Candidates should show an on-going awareness of new ideas and experiences and the need for continuous professional development can be emphasised.

Outcome 4

Candidates should have the opportunity to experience and evaluate the importance of reflective practice, and they should have the opportunities to develop as a 'reflective practitioner'.

Candidates should experience and use the learning and development cycle, i.e: plan, implement and evaluate, in order to establish the value of becoming a reflective practitioner. They should understand the process of reflection as an integral part of their work with children and that taking stock, thinking about and modifying attitudes and behaviour are critical to becoming an effective practitioner.

Candidates should have the opportunity to experience a variety of methods of reflective practice, both formal and informal, i.e. through observation, listening to children, feedback from children and adults, group discussion, team meetings, appraisal systems. They need to demonstrate reflective practice, based on their own practice in an honest and reflective way on their own skills and qualities, and be able to feedback on these.

The candidates should be encouraged to reflect on their own attitudes and values as they learn about the principles and values that underpin work with children. They should display an understanding of the similarities and differences between different parts of the early education and childcare sector and be aware of the implications this may have on their practice. Candidates should display positive attitudes and values, and relate to and treat children in a positive manner which supports the values and principles. Candidates must understand that this will influence how children treat and relate to others.

Candidates should evaluate and analyse their own attitudes, skills and qualities, in a personal skills analysis. They should identify their strengths and areas for development and plan action areas for building on these and to consider action areas for building on their strengths and minimising weaknesses, through a personal development plan.

The candidate should understand the importance of continuous professional development, which should be emphasised as a means of developing personal effectiveness, improving practice, offering career progression and maintaining credibility as a professional worker with children. Candidates should be encouraged to identify the staff structure within their setting as it relates to the requirements of the Scottish Social Services Council.

Candidates must work effectively within a team. They should carry out duties and commitments as agreed within the team. They should contribute to effective teamwork, and identify improvements and benefits to self, other team members and overall practice. They should be able to use the processes of communication, involvement and motivation, information sharing and developing the trust and support of colleagues.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Developing An Understanding of Working with Children: Workplace Experience (Higher)

Candidates should have the opportunity to reflect on their practice and the overall practice in an early education and childcare setting. For example benefits of this might include:

- individual and group needs being identified more clearly
- children's needs are met
- improvements to practice through the sharing of information and insights
- better planning for child-centred practice and evaluation of provision
- individuals and the team achieving their full potential by sharing, matching tasks and responsibilities among the team
- enhance knowledge and a deepening understanding of the work through shared learning.

The Candidate must maintain standards of professional behaviour at all times.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

It is important to emphasise that the 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 (log reporting etc) will be essential. A combination of tutorial support and placement supervision would facilitate candidates' progress through the Unit. These meetings should be taken from the time allocated to the Unit but should not exceed the time spent by the candidate in placement. A named workplace supervisor should monitor candidate progress in partnership with the tutor(s). It is also essential that delivering centres regularly meet with supervisors to aid understanding and establish candidate progress.

Centres should continue to offer placement experiences to candidates according to local custom and practice. 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 spend a full-day in placement. 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.

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 *NC Group Award: Early Education and Childcare*.

Written materials in the form of structured log books, task/project sheets and evaluation records and questions, reports on progress, could also be used to ensure effective progress throughout the Unit.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Developing An Understanding of Working with Children: Workplace Experience (Higher)

Candidates will be expected to provide folio evidence that provides information, explanations and practice examples about:

- Values and principles of working with children
- Child-centred practice
- Personal and professional skills and qualities
- Becoming a reflective practitioner.

CANDIDATES WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

This Unit 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 document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (SQA, 2004).