

## National Unit Specification: general information

**UNIT**                      Experiential Approaches to Early Education and Childcare  
(Higher)

**NUMBER**                DM5N 12

### COURSE

#### SUMMARY

This Unit requires candidates to demonstrate the skills required to support the planning, implementation and evaluation of appropriate experiences within an early education and childcare setting. Whilst working with children aged 0-12 years, candidates will have an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of ways of operating within a team and evaluate their performance as part of that team.

This Unit is a mandatory placement Unit in the *National Certificate Group Award: Early Education and Childcare* but 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 level 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 Carry out the roles and responsibilities required to work as part of a team in a selected work placement experience within the early education and childcare sector.
- 2 Whilst working with children under supervision, carry out observations to inform the planning of appropriate experiences within an early education and childcare setting.
- 3 Whilst working with children under supervision, support a range of appropriate experiences in accordance with policy and practice within an early education and childcare setting.
- 4 Review the effectiveness of own contribution to working as part of an early education and childcare team.

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### Administrative Information

**Superclass:**            GA

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## National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

**UNIT**            Experiential Approaches to Early Years Care and Education  
(Higher)

### RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Entry is at the discretion of the centre and there are a variety of prior learning experiences which are relevant to candidates wishing to undertake a Unit in early education and childcare. However, candidates would also normally benefit from having attained one of the following:

- ◆ Standard Grade at Credit level in any relevant subject
- ◆ a Course or Unit 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.

Candidates may have completed or are working towards completion of Units within the *NC 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

This Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

**Complete Core Skill for the Unit**

Working With Others    Int 2

Additional information about Core Skills is published in the *Catalogue of Core Skills in National Qualifications* (SQA, 2001).

## **National Unit Specification: statement of standards**

### **UNIT           Experiential Approaches to Early Years Care and Education (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**

Carry out the roles and responsibilities required to work as part of a team in a selected work placement experience within the early education and childcare sector.

##### **Performance criteria**

- a) Negotiate the nature and scope of the work placement experiences available prior to placement selection.
- b) Describe the functions of the early education and childcare team and its membership during the placement experience.
- c) Negotiate with team members within the chosen placement, the roles, responsibilities in placement and working methods considering available resources.

#### **OUTCOME 2**

Whilst working with children under supervision, carry out observations to inform the planning of appropriate experiences within an early education and childcare setting.

##### **Performance criteria**

- a) Demonstrate, whilst working with children, the use of observational methods and skills to gather information.
- b) Evaluate the information gathered through observational methods to inform the planning of appropriate experiences within an early education and childcare setting.

#### **OUTCOME 3**

Whilst working under supervision with children, support a range of appropriate experiences in accordance with policy and practice within an early education and childcare setting.

##### **Performance criteria**

- a) Be involved in planning a range of experiences in accordance with policy and practice within an early education and childcare setting.
- b) Support the implementation of a range of experiences in accordance with policy and practice within an early education and childcare setting.
- c) Be involved in the evaluation of a range of implemented experiences in accordance with policy and practice within an early education and childcare setting.
- d) Whilst supporting a range of experiences in accordance with policy and practice within an early education and childcare setting, demonstrate working co-operatively with other members of the team.

## National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

**UNIT**            Experiential Approaches to Early Years Care and Education  
(Higher)

### **OUTCOME 4**

Review the effectiveness of own contribution to working as part of an early education and childcare team.

#### **Performance criteria**

- a) Gather and present information on own contribution to the work of the early education and childcare team.
- b) Evaluate own success as part of the early education and childcare team using supporting information.
- c) Clearly and concisely explain ways of enhancing own future contribution to the team.

### **EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE UNIT**

#### **Outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 4**

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

There should be a single folio of evidence for this unit based on information gathered and practical competencies demonstrated within 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*. This folio should be gathered from one or two work placements within the age range of 0-12. This folio should be evidenced by the candidate's workplace supervisor. The supervisor must be eligible for registration at practitioner level with the SSSC.

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.

#### **Outcome 1**

It is important that the following activities undertaken by the candidate are included in the assessment:

- ◆ analysing the nature and type of the early education and childcare work placement experience to include:
  - a) a short description of the placement identifying the team membership, children's age group and services offered
  - b) identification of the aims/purpose of the team
  - c) identification of the aims of the candidate undertaking a placement within an early education and childcare setting
- ◆ negotiating roles and responsibilities as part of an early education and childcare team

#### **Outcome 2**

Evidence of a range of observational methods is required such as time sampling, frequency sampling, duration sampling, participant and non-participant observations. Observational methods selected must be appropriate to the needs of the child and the contingencies of the setting. Both formal and informal observations should be considered appropriate, particularly when working within the age range 0-3 years or within a playwork setting.

## National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

### UNIT            Experiential Approaches to Early Years Care and Education (Higher)

#### Outcome 3

Evidence should include **three** examples of opportunities taken by the candidate to promote the care, development and learning of children in accordance with current recognised policy and practice. The experiences should be appropriate for the age and developmental stage of the children. These should include evidence of each of the following:

- ◆ planning,
- ◆ implementation
- ◆ evaluation
- ◆ working co-operatively e.g:
  - a) anticipating the needs of others
  - b) keeping others informed of progress and difficulties and the implications of these
  - c) contributing to group decisions
  - d) using working methods consistent with available resources

The activities should be appropriate for the age and developmental stage of the children.

#### Outcome 4

It is important the following activities undertaken by the candidate are included in the assessment:

- ◆ a detailed evaluation of the candidate's contribution to an early education and childcare team which should include at least two of the following:
  - a) anticipating the needs of others
  - b) providing support to others
  - c) contributing effectively to team decisions
  - d) keeping others informed of progress and difficulties and the implications of these
  - e) contributing to tasks of the group satisfactorily
  - f) showing the strengths and weaknesses of own contribution
  - g) demonstrating an ability to negotiate within own role and with regard to responsibilities and working methods
- ◆ the evaluation should be justified by information gathered and presented by the candidate
- ◆ identification of ways to enhance own contribution in the future.

## National Unit Specification: support notes

### UNIT            Experiential Approaches to Early Years Care and Education (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. Where the assessment for this Unit is integrated with other Units from the *NC Group Award: Early Education and Childcare*, time allocated to placement should not be reduced.

#### **GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT**

Candidates will gain an understanding of:

- ◆ The roles and responsibilities required to work as part of an early education and childcare team
- ◆ The effectiveness of their own contribution to the work of an early education and childcare team
- ◆ The practical competencies required for working with children in an early education and childcare setting
- ◆ The actual role of the adult in observing, planning, implementing and evaluating early education and childcare experiences in accordance with policy and practice within an early education and childcare setting
- ◆ The practical aspects of planning, implementing and evaluating experiences for children in accordance with policy and practice within an early education and childcare setting.

Essentially this Unit is designed to provide meaningful contextualisation for other related Units, both mandatory and optional, within the *NC Group Award: Early Education and Childcare (Higher)*. The main focus of the Unit is on the demonstration of practical competences in working with children as a member of an early education and childcare team. Candidates should demonstrate, effectively and practically, ways of linking knowledge and understanding of the child's developmental needs with the provision of appropriate care and educational experiences in a suitable practical setting. It is important that demonstration of knowledge takes into account the needs of all children and candidates should be clearly able to demonstrate anti-discriminatory practice.. As the placement progresses, candidates should be able to review their effectiveness in working as part of the early education and childcare team.

#### **Outcome 1**

- ◆ Initially some input will be the nature and type of early education and childcare work placement experiences
- ◆ advantages/disadvantages of team working
- ◆ the types of teams in early education and childcare settings
- ◆ the membership of different teams
- ◆ the range of tasks of teams in different settings
- ◆ the various communication links used by team's e.g. day books, log books, case records, staff and team meetings, helpful to cover:

#### **Outcome 2**

Candidates should get the opportunity to try a range of formal and informal observational methods appropriate to the setting or as detailed below:

- ◆ participant and non-participant observations
- ◆ time sampling
- ◆ frequency sampling
- ◆ duration sampling.

## National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

### UNIT            Experiential Approaches to Early Years Care and Education (Higher)

Other observational methods could be used, particularly for candidates working with young children, children with additional support needs or within the play work sector.

Candidates may be given the opportunity to work using a range of recording mechanisms e.g. standard checklists/grids, against specific indicators, diaries, log books, planning sheets. The importance of accurate recording and the difference between recording events/activity and analysis of what is seen should be emphasised to candidates.

Candidates should also get the opportunity to demonstrate skills that the individual should possess in order to undertake effective observation. These could include the individual:

- ◆ being relaxed enough to listen to what is going on and to allow plenty of time
- ◆ having the confidence to be ‘anchored’ in one area if appropriate
- ◆ being unobtrusive in non-participant observation
- ◆ being natural in participant observation
- ◆ being confident enough to intervene or not, as appropriate
- ◆ being non-judgemental
- ◆ being objective
- ◆ being realistic and consistent
- ◆ being flexible
- ◆ having the ability to share/gather information from other team members/significant others
- ◆ recording accurately

Candidates could then be given the opportunity to evaluate and analyse the observations and comment on how this may influence future planning for a child or group of children. It would be desirable if the candidate had the opportunity to actively participate in the planning process adopted within the setting.

#### **Outcome 3**

Candidates should get the opportunity to support, under supervision, the complete cycle of planning. Where appropriate, consideration should be given to the components of nationally recognised curriculum and policies. They should focus on their contribution to providing appropriate experiences for children. Candidates should be involved in the planning and implementation of a range of experiences appropriate to the age range within the setting. Where appropriate candidates should have experiences across two of the following age ranges, 0-3, 3-5, 5-8, 8-12.

Having been involved in the implementation of experiences, the candidates should then get the opportunity to be involved in the evaluation of the experiences in relation to the benefits to the child/children in relation to policy and practice within an early education and childcare setting. Candidates should also reflect on their own performance during planning, and implementation.

Understanding the need for flexibility of approach to working with children should also be demonstrated throughout this outcome and attention should be given to the needs of children with additional support needs, cultural diversity, gender stereotyping and parental wishes.

## **National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)**

### **UNIT           Experiential Approaches to Early Years Care and Education (Higher)**

Candidates who have had experience of team working in a work placement(s) in early education and childcare settings will be able to draw from these experiences in class discussions. The task and the team will vary from placement to placement. The candidate and tutor together with the placement supervisor will negotiate the role of the candidate in a team in their placement. It should be emphasised that the candidate is not expected to carry out tasks without direct supervision. This role will vary from one placement to the next but should be clearly defined. It is expected that the placement supervisor should be eligible for registration with the SSSC at practitioner level.

#### **Outcome 4**

The make up of the recording system used in the placement should include methods of collecting evidence of the candidate's contribution to working as part of a team. Contributions could include:

- anticipating the needs of others
- providing support to others
- contributing effectively to team decisions
- keeping others informed of progress and difficulties and implications of these
- contributing to tasks of the group satisfactorily
- demonstrating an ability to negotiate within own role and with regard to responsibilities and working methods.

Candidates should be helped to review their contribution to the team by identifying both strengths and weaknesses and identifying ways of improving their own contribution.

## **National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)**

**UNIT**            Experiential Approaches to Early Years Care and Education  
(Higher)

### **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 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 state, private and voluntary sectors. Candidates should have enough time in placement to ensure that all 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 candidates 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.

### **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).