

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Supporting Playwork Practice: Workplace Experience
(Higher)

CODE DM69 12

COURSE

SUMMARY

This Unit is intended to allow candidates to demonstrate an effective contribution to quality playwork practice. It allows candidates to support the playwork value base, which underpins working with children aged between three and twelve years. The Unit allows the candidate to demonstrate the skills required to support quality playwork practice and to identify the benefits and value of playwork for children aged 3 to 12 years. The Unit allows the candidate to demonstrate professionalism when supporting playwork practice. Candidates are encouraged to evaluate their own skills and qualities, and to explore their role in contributing to best practice in all aspects of their work with children, aged three to twelve.

This Unit is an optional Unit in the *National Certificate Group Award: Early Education and Childcare (Higher)* but is also suitable for candidates wishing to study the Unit on its own although they should have a clear understanding of the underpinning knowledge required to support the practical competencies required for this Unit. The Unit is suitable for candidates who wish to gain employment, or may be employed, in the childcare and education sector working under supervision or to progress on to higher level early education and childcare qualifications. Candidates are required to have a suitable placement within a playwork setting for children within the age range 3-12 years.

OUTCOMES

1. Working under supervision within a playwork setting, demonstrate an understanding of playwork practice and the playwork value base.
2. Working under supervision within a playwork setting, support quality playwork practice with children aged three to twelve years.
3. Working under supervision within a playwork setting, demonstrate professional playwork practice.

Administrative Information

Superclass: GA

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RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre there are a variety of prior learning experiences which are relevant to candidates wishing to undertake this Unit.

However, candidates would also benefit if they had some knowledge and understanding of child development up to the age of 12 and an understanding of the basic principles of play.

They may also benefit from having attained one of the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ 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
- ◆ Scottish Group Award at Intermediate 2
- ◆ SVQ or SVQ Units at level 2 in a related subject.

CREDIT VALUE

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

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

CORE SKILLS

There is no automatic certification of core skills or core skills components in this Unit.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Supporting Playwork Practice: 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 within a playwork setting, demonstrate an understanding of playwork practice and the playwork value base.

Performance Criteria

- a) Working under supervision, support playwork values in a playwork setting.
- b) Working under supervision, work effectively within the current legislation, charters and national policies and standards from which these values are drawn.
- c) In consultation with others, identify the impact of this value base on playwork practice.

OUTCOME 2

Working under supervision within a playwork setting, support quality playwork practice with children aged three to twelve years.

Performance Criteria

- a) Working under supervision, assist with the identification of children's play needs.
- b) Working under supervision, support the provision of play opportunities which meet individual play needs of the child.
- c) Working under supervision, support the provision of play opportunities which facilitate the child's all-round development, well-being and sense of self.
- d) Support the provision of play spaces for a child's physical and emotional well-being.
- e) Support quality play for all children in the play setting.

OUTCOME 3

Working under supervision within a playwork setting, demonstrate professional playwork practice.

Performance Criteria

- a) Working under supervision, demonstrate professional practice as 'facilitator of play'.
- b) Working with others, support 'child centred' play spaces and play opportunities.
- c) In consultation with others, reflect on own practice and contribute to the improvements in own and playwork practice.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

To achieve this Unit, each candidate will need evidence to demonstrate his/her practice for Outcomes 1, 2 and 3. The Unit can be assessed using a holistic assessment covering all three Outcomes or can be assessed as part of the mandatory placement section of the *National Certificate Group Award: Early Education and Childcare (Higher)*. This evidence should be gathered throughout the time spent in placement and is exemplified by the NAB material for this Unit.

Candidates will need to show that they can:

- ◆ work within the value base for playwork practice
- ◆ demonstrate the role of the adult as a playwork professional
- ◆ support the provision of quality playwork settings, play spaces and play opportunities
- ◆ demonstrate the skills and qualities of the adult to support the values of playwork
- ◆ support child centred playwork practice for the benefit of children aged 3 to 12 years.

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

The evidence for this should be a folio of evidence based on the candidate's experience within a playwork setting. Where possible the evidence should be gathered from one placement but the candidate may work across the age ranges 3-5 years, 5-8 years, 8-12 years. This folio should be evidenced by the candidate's workplace supervisor. The supervisor must be eligible for registration at practitioner level with the Scottish Social Services Council.

Outcomes 2 and 3 should be integrated in a record of personal involvement. These should be signed and dated by the supervisor as verification of actual practice, and marked by centre staff. These records of involvement should provide evidence of the candidate's contribution to the planning, implementation and evaluation of play experiences whilst working under supervision. These records of personal involvement should be carried out throughout the placement and should reflect the values of playwork.

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.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Supporting Playwork Practice: 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 40 hours.

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

Outcome 1

Candidates will need to demonstrate practice which adheres to:

- ◆ current values of playwork practice
- ◆ current and relevant legislation, for example, Children (Scotland) Act 2001
- ◆ charters, national policies and quality standards, for example, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the National Care Standards, The New Charter for Children's Play, Skills Active Playwork Standards.

Candidates must have the opportunity to demonstrate that their practice is underpinned by the playwork value base whilst working with children, aged three to twelve years. They should support these values in practice:

- ◆ All children have the right to play and that play is essential for a child's well-being.
- ◆ The child is at the centre of all playwork practice.
- ◆ Playwork should empower children and support their needs, rights and views.
- ◆ Children have the right to make choices in play and that these should be supported by the adult.
- ◆ Individuality, differences and diversity should be valued and celebrated.
- ◆ Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice must be promoted.
- ◆ Teamwork is essential in supporting quality playwork practice.
- ◆ Play involves exploration, risk and challenge.
- ◆ The health and safety of the child must be paramount in any playwork practice.
- ◆ Confidentiality and agreements about confidential information are respected, unless a child's well-being is at stake.
- ◆ Partnership with parents/carers, colleagues and other professionals should be fostered.
- ◆ Reflecting on, evaluating and improving practice are essential for maintaining quality playwork provision.

Candidates should be given opportunities to reflect on what this value base means in practice. Candidates should reflect on their own values and practice, in relation to playwork values.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Supporting Playwork Practice: Workplace Experience (Higher)

Outcome 2

For Outcome 2 candidates need to demonstrate their ability and understanding of their role as ‘facilitator of play’. This should include reflection on this role of supporting children’s play choices; allowing children to direct their own play; and the candidate’s understanding of children’s innate desire to play, regardless of adult support.

Candidates should be an observer of a child’s play, and show an awareness of children’s play cues, and then use this understanding to support and facilitate the development of play.

Candidates should demonstrate the understanding that they have a choice to intervene or not intervene in a child’s play and that this can have positive or negative impacts on that play frame. The candidate must be sensitive to the children, their play and their play cues, in order to positively support and facilitate quality play.

The candidates should support play spaces and play opportunities, within their workplace experience. This means that the candidates must be given opportunities to work within a playwork setting, support the play practice, and reflect on the value of meeting children’s play needs. Playwork settings can include mobile play provision, open access play provision, out of school care.

Candidates must identify ‘play spaces’ that meet children’s play needs, i.e. open spaces, dens, dressing up areas, climbing frames, trees, among others. Candidates should have the opportunity to support a wide variety of play opportunities that should be available to children, i.e. physical play, environmental play, creative play, cultural play, imaginative play. They should identify quality playwork practice and play spaces, which are stimulating, challenging and enabling environments for children.

Candidates should maintain professional standards at all times as they should be positive role models for children. Children absorb attitudes and values from the people, experiences and situations that they come into contact with. Candidates should treat all children as individuals and show respect for children at all times. Candidates should uphold the rights of the child, value and celebrate diversity and uphold the other values of playwork.

In all demonstrations of play and playwork practice, the candidate should continually work within the playwork value base in order to support the children and facilitate their play. Candidates should work within a clear definition of quality playwork practice, i.e play that is defined by the child’s and not the adults’ experience.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Supporting Playwork Practice : Workplace Experience (Higher)

Outcome 3

For Outcome 3, candidates need to support quality child-centred playwork practice for the benefit of children aged 3 to 12 years. They should have an understanding of developmental factors affecting children aged three to twelve, and how these factors can support, positively or negatively, a child's progress.

Candidates need to support the identification of individual play needs, through informal observations of children at play, awareness of play cues, and understanding of the benefits of play.

In the identification of individual play needs, candidates may identify problems associated with lack of play for children 3 to 12 years. They should then support the playwork practice which supports the individual child.

Candidates need to identify the positive impact on a child's confidence and self-esteem of playwork. The candidate should support the provision of playwork which allows children to try out new experiences and develop skills in a manner that meets their individual needs. These challenges should support and develop self confidence and their sense of self-esteem and self-worth. The candidate should show sensitivity when identifying play cues and an awareness of each individual child. They should support each child to extend their play experience at their own pace and in their own way through their own positive choices.

Candidates should be given the opportunity to support play opportunities which have benefits of playwork for a child's social and emotional well-being and on their developing sense of self-identity. Candidates need to identify the value of playwork in supporting a child through developmental stages and of helping the child's growing sense of self and personal identify.

Candidates should begin to show an understanding of the 'therapeutic' nature of playwork, in that it allows children to explore and express their feelings through play, and in allowing the child to develop understanding of the world around them and of their own experiences.

Candidates should be given the opportunity to support play opportunities which benefit the child's cognitive and language development. The candidates should support children to make positive choices in play, set their own goals and targets, be involved in discussions with their peer group, solve problems, work as part of a team, agree rules, rise to challenges, and develop thinking skills. Candidates should be able to identify the positive benefits for cognitive and language development.

Candidates should support the provision of play spaces which have a positive impact on the child's physical well-being. They should support opportunities for children to take part in physical activity during play.

The candidate must ensure that any play practice be available to all children and should offer variety and choice to all. The candidate must support playwork practice for individuals in both small and large groups.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Supporting Playwork Practice: Workplace Experience (Higher)

Candidates should ensure that the child is at the centre of the playwork process and should support, where possible, positive outcomes for children from the playwork process. The candidate should understand that these extend into all areas of the child's life and experience; support the child's emotional well-being; the child's impact on the environments surrounding them; the child's sense of self-identity and their place in the world; and in the child's ability to cope with the many changes and challenges they face in their life.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

This Unit is included in the framework of the *National Certificate Group Award: Early Education and Childcare*. It is recommended that it should be delivered within the context of this qualification and can be integrated with the mandatory workplace practice Units. This Unit should be delivered alongside the Unit *Supporting Playwork Practice (Higher)*, as this provides candidates with the knowledge requirement for this Unit. The two Units can be delivered together to support the process of continuous professional development of support practitioners within early education and childcare workforce.

It is important to emphasise that this Unit involves the demonstration of practical competences and the application of knowledge and understanding in the work setting. For this, regular tutorial meetings with candidates which explore aspects of workplace practice and which support candidates in the process of self-evaluation and recording of evidence (e.g. log reporting) will be essential. A combination of tutorial support and placement supervision would facilitate candidates' progress through the Unit. A named workplace supervisor should monitor candidate progress in partnership with tutor(s). It is also essential that delivering centres regularly meet with supervisors to aid understanding and establish candidate progress. Written materials in the form of structured log books, task/project sheets and evaluation records and questions, reports on progress could also be used to ensure effective progress throughout the Unit.

Centres should continue to offer placement experiences to candidates according to principles of best practice or in an appropriate setting. It is suggested that candidates would benefit from experiencing working within the playwork sector with children from across the age range 3-12 years. Placements could be offered to candidates across playwork settings, including the local authority, private and voluntary sectors. Centres should ensure that placements offer high quality playwork practice, based on the underpinning values. This could be assured by using settings that have agreements with local Childcare Partnerships. 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.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Supporting Playwork Practice: Workplace Experience (Higher)

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

The assessment for this Unit is laid out clearly in the Evidence Requirements section of the Statement of Standards of this specification. The standard to be applied is exemplified in the National Assessment Bank item for this Unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this Unit, they should be of a comparable standard. Assessment should always be carried out under supervision. If centres devise their own instruments of assessment, candidates will need to gather evidence to show that under supervision, they can:

- ◆ Work within the value base for playwork practice
- ◆ Demonstrate the role of the adult as a playwork professional
- ◆ Support the provision of quality playwork settings, play spaces and play opportunities
- ◆ Demonstrate the skills and qualities of the adult to support the values of playwork
- ◆ Support child centred playwork practice for the benefit of children aged 3 to 12 years.

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).