



Group Award Specification for:

Professional Development Award (PDA) in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10

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Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Qualification structure.....	2
	2.1 Structure.....	3
3	Aims of the qualification	3
	3.1 General aims of the qualification	3
	3.2 Specific aims of the qualification.....	4
4	Recommended entry to the qualification.....	4
	4.1 Core Skills entry profile.....	5
5	Mapping of qualification aims to Units	7
	5.1 Mapping of Core Skills development opportunities across the qualification	8
	5.2 Assessment Strategy for the qualification	9
6	Guidance on approaches to delivery and assessment.....	11
	6.1 Sequencing/integration of Units.....	12
	6.2 Recognition of Prior Learning	14
	6.4 Support materials	15
	6.5 Resource requirements	15
7	General information for centres	16
8	Glossary of terms	16
9	General information for learners.....	19
Appendix 1:	Framework of standards.....	21
Appendix 2:	Guidance on Occupational Competence of Practice Learning Assessors, Advisers and Internal Verifiers for Practice Learning qualifications at SCQF level 10.....	22

1 Introduction

The PDA in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10 supports the social services sector's commitment to promoting and supporting the involvement of other professionals, individuals who use services and carers, in the training and education of the workforce and to developing inter-professional learning and shared practice. The Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 gives the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) powers to approve courses for social service workers who are registered or registerable with them. The PDA in Practice Learning (Social Services) is placed at SCQF level 10 and approved by both SQA and SSSC. The contextualisation of the award for social services is achieved through the knowledge, skills and learning Outcomes contained within the Group Award.

The purpose of this document, previously known as the Arrangements Document is to:

- ◆ assist centres to implement, deliver and manage and assess the qualification
- ◆ provide a guide for new staff involved in offering the qualification
- ◆ inform course managers, practice teachers, learners, employers and HEIs of the aims and purpose of the qualification
- ◆ provide detail of the range of learners the qualification is relevant for

This PDA Practice Learning (Social Services) is a revision of the PDA Practice Learning (Social Services) validated in 2008. The revision was initiated as part of the desire to update the Units within the award to reflect the changing needs of the sector.

The timing of this review links to several developments in the Social Work Practice Learning including:

- ◆ the desire to bring greater clarity to the programme of learning for social work students and social work practice teachers
- ◆ the increasing changes of job roles within Social Work services
- ◆ the revision of the Honours Degree's in Social Work
- ◆ SQA revision of Professional Development Awards, in line with new improved design rules

Consultations held with representatives from across Scotland took account of all of these factors. As a result, this revised PDA Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10 offers learners the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills, which will enable them to:

- ◆ provide high level certificated Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- ◆ support or contribute to Practice Learning within the wider social services workforce
- ◆ gain new knowledge and skills to achieve the competence and confidence to deliver high quality student support through the development and critical evaluation of learning opportunities and environments
- ◆ provide a combination of off-the-job and practice-based learning

The framework makes the award suitable for full and part time learners wishing to develop or improve their knowledge and skills about Social Work Practice Learning, and/or to seek employment in this field. All learners will have the opportunity to develop their Core Skills throughout the course, the specifics of which are contained in the individual Unit descriptors.

Workplace Practice is of primary importance in the awards in Social Services and Social Work. Workplace Practice is assessed in the learner's place of work, practice competence is assessed through the achievement of the specific Units in the award.

In particular, the award equips learners with the skills, knowledge and understanding to provide practice learning opportunities for others, and to give appropriate support, feedback and assessment. This is achieved by:

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

2 Qualification structure

The PDA in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10 is intended for learners within social services who are registered or registerable with SSSC and who are involved in the professional development of staff and students 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 practice learning, whether that is social work, social care or other student support, and to more general learning of self and others within a work setting. Many prospective learners already support induction programmes, mentoring colleagues, contributing to in-house teaching and learning without any recognition, 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.

The Group Award is made up of 7 SQA Unit credits and comprises 64 SCQF credit points at level 10.

2.1 Structure

The qualification for the Group Award PDA Practice Learning (Social Services) comprises of the following Units at SCQF level 10.

In order to qualify for the full award learners must undertake all of the Unit credits made up as detailed below:

Mandatory Units

Code	Code	Unit title	SCQF level	SCQF credit points	SQA credit
HA6W	37	Support Learning in a Social Services Context	10	8	1
HA6T	37	Assessment of Learners	10	8	1
HA6R	37	Leadership for Learning	10	8	1
HA6P	37	Establish Effective Working Relationships	10	8	1
HA6N	37	Create an Environment for Learning	10	8	1
HA6V	37	Supervise and Facilitate Learning	10	8	1
HA6X	37	Evidence Based Practice in Social Services	10	16	2

The qualification is at SCQF level 10. This reflects the level of knowledge required to develop practice. This revised award will replace the 2008 PDA Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10.

3 Aims of the qualification

The principle aim of the PDA Practice Learning (Social Services) is to prepare learners to work effectively in the area of Social Work and Social Services practice learning across a range of social work and social care settings.

3.1 General aims of the qualification

The range of broad aims that are generally applicable to a PDA are:

- ◆ Developing transferable skills including Core Skills
- ◆ Developing personal effectiveness
- ◆ Developing critical and evaluative thinking
- ◆ Developing problem solving skill
- ◆ Enabling progression within SCQF including progression opportunities
- ◆ Providing opportunities for career planning and enhancing learners' employment prospects

3.2 Specific aims of the qualification

The main aim of the PDA Practice Learning (Social Services) is to provide an integrated course of values, skills, and knowledge, to equip learners to work effectively as social work practice educators. It also aims to provide an award to meet the needs of employers and the needs of the sector and to provide, continuing professional development opportunities.

The specific aims are:

- ◆ To enable learners to demonstrate an understanding of the values which underpin work in social work and social care settings
- ◆ To enable learners to understand how Legislation, National Care Standards, and SSSC Codes of Practice inform their practice
- ◆ To enable learners to integrate values, skills and knowledge effectively in a variety of social work and social care settings
- ◆ To enable learners to develop skills appropriate for working with a range of individual students
- ◆ To enable learners to have an individual and person centred focus in their practice
- ◆ To assist and encourage learners to practice in an anti-discriminatory manner
- ◆ To prepare their students for employment in social work/social care settings, and to develop the skills of existing social work/social care practitioners
- ◆ To enable learners to critically evaluate their own practice and that of others
- ◆ To enable learners to develop their knowledge of current legislation, policy, procedures and practice methods
- ◆ To enable learners to engage in continuing professional development

4 Recommended entry to the qualification

The following information, on prior knowledge skills experience or qualifications that provide suitable preparation for this qualification provided by the Qualification Design Team are for guidance only.

Applicants should be able to demonstrate the values and communication skills essential to social work practice. Communication skills may be demonstrated through achievement of: certificated courses, *Core Skills Communication* at Higher level, Higher English or other *Communication* Units at SCQF level 8 or 9. Applicants may be deemed to be at the appropriate level by a reference from employers and/or through verbal and/or written evidence at interview.

It is preferable, but not essential, that applicants have some experience of student supervision; this can be either, paid or voluntary as well as relevant qualifications recognised by SSSC.

Entry to this qualification is at the discretion of the centre.

4.1 Core Skills entry profile

The Core Skill entry profile provides a summary of the associated assessment activities that exemplify why a particular level has been recommended for this qualification.

The information should be used to identify if additional learning support needs to be put in place for learners whose Core Skills profile is below the recommended entry level or whether learners should be encouraged to do an alternative level or learning programme.

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills, or Core Skills components, in the Units contained in the PDA in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10. There may however be opportunities in the award to gather evidence up to the maximum level of SQA accreditation at SCQF level 6 for each of the Core Skills of *Working with Others*, *Problem Solving* and *Communication*. Learners participating in the PDA will develop a range of core and transferable skills to improve professional competencies, confidence and performance in supporting practice learning. Leading, organising and evaluating work and collaborating with a wide range of professionals is central to these awards, for example, oral and analytical communication skills will be practiced and developed through presentations, negotiations and collaborations with students, colleagues and other professionals.

Additionally, there may be opportunities to gather evidence for the Core Skill of *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* up to SCQF level 6 as it is expected technology will be used to research, critically analyse and present complex reports. Further IT skills, may also be developed, if a learner opts to submit assessment evidence in the form of an e-portfolio.

It is likely that learners who achieve the PDA in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10 have developed many elements of the Core Skills in *Communication* at SCQF level 6, *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 6 and *Working with Others* at SCQF level 6.

Additional skills developed by these awards, recognised as critical by employers, such as facilitation, multi-professional collaboration, and leadership are not precisely reflected in the SQA Core Skill specifications. All Units in the PDA require learners to work closely with students, developing and supporting the learning experience in collaboration with colleagues and other professionals.

An important outcome of this award for learners is the ability to apply and transfer a range of interpersonal, practical and management skills to different learning relationships and situations. These transferable skills will enable them to meet changing circumstances, whether arising from shifts in their own roles or from general changes in practice and the working environment.

Core Skill	Recommended SCQF entry profile	Associated assessment activities
Communication	5	Desktop Review Observed Practice Reflective Practice Assignment Observation of Practice Essay Critical Evaluation Reflective Account Product Evidence
Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	5	Desktop Review Product Evidence Critical Evaluation
Problem Solving	5	Desktop Review Observed Practice Reflective Practice Assignment Observation of Practice Essay Critical Evaluation Reflective Account Product Evidence
Working with Others	5	Desktop Review Observed Practice Reflective Practice Assignment Observation of Practice Essay Critical Evaluation Reflective Account Product Evidence

5 Mapping of qualification aims to Units

Code	Unit title	Aims										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
HA6W 37	Support Learning in a Social Services Context	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HA6T 37	Assessment of Learners	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HA6R 37	Leadership for Learning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HA6P 37	Establish Effective Working Relationships	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HA6X 37	Evidence Based Practice in Social Services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HA6N 37	Create an Environment for Learning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HA6V 37	Supervise and Facilitate Learning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

5.1 Mapping of Core Skills development opportunities across the qualification

Core Skills that will be developed in each Unit.

Unit code	Unit title	Communication			Numeracy		ICT		Problem Solving			Working with Others	
		Written (Reading)	Written (Writing)	Oral	Using Number	Using Graphical Information	Accessing Information	Providing/Creating Information	Critical Thinking	Planning and Organising	Reviewing and Evaluating	Working Co-operatively with Others	Reviewing Co-operative Contribution
HA6W 37	Support Learning in a Social Services Context	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HA6T 37	Assessment of Learners	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HA6R 37	Leadership for Learning	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HA6P 37	Establish Effective Working Relationships	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HA6X 37	Evidence Based Practice in Social Services	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HA6N 37	Create an Environment for Learning	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HA6V 37	Supervise and Facilitate Learning	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

5.2 Assessment Strategy for the qualification

Unit	Assessment				
	Assessment Task	Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3	Outcome 4
Support Learning in a Social Services Context	Desktop Review and Observed Practice	Critically analyse the skills, knowledge and values that underpin good practice.	Support learners to act within the responsibility, accountability and authority of their role.		
Assessment of Learners	Reflective Practice Assignment and Observation of Practice	Assess learners through use of ethical and robust processes.	Demonstrate accountability for assessment decisions.		
Leadership for Learning	Essay	Demonstrate practice leadership and expertise.	Apply and critically evaluate appropriate leadership skills to enable provision of comprehensive learning programmes in practice.		
Establish Effective Working Relationships	Critical Evaluation	Establish collaborative relationships to support learning in inter-professional contexts.	Develop safe and effective relationships with learners.	Support learners to develop effective working relationships.	

Unit	Assessment				
	Assessment Task	Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3	Outcome 4
Evidence Based Practice in Social Services	Critical Evaluation, Reflective Account Observation of Practice and Product Evidence	Critically evaluate evidence based methods of practice in the social services context.	Critically evaluate learning models in the social services practice context.	Critically analyse and evaluate research findings and literature relevant to providing support for learners.	Contribute to the development of evidence informed practice learning.
Create an Environment for Learning	Critical Evaluation	Contribute to the creation of a learning environment.	Apply critical understanding to models and methods of learning.	Evidence understanding of ethical practice.	
Supervise and Facilitate Learning	Critical Evaluative Essay	Demonstrate use of a range of skills to supervise and facilitate learning.	Enable learners to develop skills of reflective and critically analytical practice.		

6 Guidance on approaches to delivery and assessment

Delivery of the award provides a combination of work-place learning, research and practical experiences.

The award should be delivered through partnerships comprising of 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 and be using a collaboration of national, regional and/or local training providers.

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

- ◆ articulate with related 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

The award involves learners in a significant amount of experiential learning. They are required to take responsibility for their actions, critically analyse and reflect on this experience and to be able to make conclusions for their future behaviour and development.

Given the award is practice based centres should set timescales for completion that are flexible and suit the requirements of the individual learner and their professional area.

Although centres can choose the order in which they deliver the majority of the Units Evidence Based Practice in Social Services should be the final Unit assessed as it is designed to run across the whole award and the assessment brings together the learning from the complete experience. 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.

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 their practical nature and of the occupational backgrounds of learners and their students.

- ◆ At the outset, centres should make learners aware of the requirements of the awards, including the need to gather evidence, critically analyse and evaluate and report on their experiences with their student.
- ◆ They should also inform learners at the outset about the type of evidence they have to provide in order to complete each individual Unit successfully and the award as a whole.
- ◆ It is likely that delivery of each Unit will consist of some initial orientation and briefing sessions after which learners manage their learning independently to a significant extent.
- ◆ Centres should make suitable arrangements to support and guide learners throughout. This could involve regular meetings with them on an individual basis or in groups or through e learning.

- ◆ Where direct observation of a learner's practice with a student or students 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.
- ◆ Learners may also require refreshment in writing evaluative, analytical, and reflective assignments and this can be done through meetings for this purpose early in the delivery of the award.
- ◆ Guidance may also be needed on, the shape and length of supportive statements from students or others on the learners' abilities and knowledge.

In summary, the award covers the following indicative content:

- ◆ methods of determining and interpreting own learning needs and the learning needs of others
- ◆ importance of appropriate mechanisms to engage effectively with individuals who use services and carers in relation to learning
- ◆ organisational structures and strategies to support learners within changing learning environments
- ◆ relevant current legislation, policy and guidance appropriate to the work setting
- ◆ relevant current policies and procedures appropriate to the work setting
- ◆ working effectively with difference and diversity in relation to students
- ◆ a range of learning strategies
- ◆ reflective practice
- ◆ supervisory processes
- ◆ meaning of evidence based practice and its relevance to learning
- ◆ what constitutes effective practice within own setting and how this can be evidenced
- ◆ role of evaluation within the wider learning context
- ◆ how to contribute to determining levels of competence against set standards
- ◆ different forms of assessment
- ◆ values inherent within relevant professional Codes of Practice
- ◆ own role within a wider learning context and environment
- ◆ accountability and responsibility issues associated with different roles within social services
- ◆ organisational systems and networks necessary to support students
- ◆ own leadership style and how this impacts on others
- ◆ own service and its context

6.1 Sequencing/integration of Units

Centres are encouraged to identify opportunities for the integration of assessments across all of the Units in the PDA, bearing in mind that assessment for Evidence Based Practice in Social Services is completed at the end of the Group Award.

Centres are encouraged to integrate assessments where the award is delivered as a complete package of learning. Each Unit specification details the Evidence Requirements and assessment guidelines where Units are taught and assessed on an individual basis for example as Continuous Professional Development.

The award provides a number of opportunities for developing a range of assessment methods. Assessment operates through a blend of results from learning activities and collections of evidence. It is continuous, pragmatic and based on learning 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 their learners.

The key principles of assessment for the award should be:

- ◆ objective, fair and equitable
- ◆ quality assured — internally and externally
- ◆ understandable, transparent and in a format appropriate to the learner
- ◆ 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 award
- ◆ incremental and developmental
- ◆ redeemable (providing opportunity for reassessment)
- ◆ efficient and manageable (ie cost, time and resources)

Additionally, assessments 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 the award is on the development of competence to use a wide range of principal skills, some specialised skills and advanced applications to achieve Unit Outcomes. These are suitable for holistic assessment covering the Outcomes of each of the Units in the award and the recommended assessment mechanism is a collection of practice evidence.

The collection of evidence approach allows learners flexibility in relation to evidence gathering and scope to present their evidence in a way that best fits with their learning needs and styles.

Learners 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 learners the evidence should be naturally occurring during the course of their day to day activity. Some learners may not be able to rely solely on naturally occurring evidence, in which case supplementary assessment activity such as role play or simulation can be set by centres. This approach reduces the need for contrived assessed activity in circumstances where Outcomes can be effectively evidenced in the learner's work. The approach encourages learners to reflect on the nature of what they do on a daily basis.

Centres should provide advice and guidance 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, 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. It is important to recognise that dependent on individual learner's needs other methods may be equally applicable.

Overall, this should encompass a demonstration of:

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

Practice evidence of ability to support learning may be drawn from, a variety of sources including feedback from peers, managers, learners, individuals who use services, carers and other professionals. This should be collated alongside, evidence of knowledge and understanding of the topics covered by the Units. It is important to recognise that dependent on individual learner needs, other methods may be equally applicable.

Specific guidance on assessment is provided in each Unit specification.

6.2 Recognition of Prior Learning

SQA recognises that learners gain knowledge and skills acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts.

In some instances, a full Group Award may be achieved through the recognition of prior learning. However, it is unlikely that a learner would have the appropriate prior learning and experience to meet all the requirements of a full Group Award.

The recognition of prior learning may **not** be used as a method of assessing in the following types of Units and assessments:

- ◆ Course and/or external assessments
- ◆ Other integrative assessment Units
- ◆ Where there are specific health and safety requirements
- ◆ Where there are regulatory, professional or other statutory requirements
- ◆ Where otherwise specified in an Assessment Strategy

More information and guidance on the *Recognition of Prior Learning* (RPL) may be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk.

The following sub-sections outline how existing SQA Unit(s) may contribute to this Group Award. Additionally, they also outline how this Group Award may be recognised for professional and articulation purposes.

6.2.1 Articulation and/or progression

Due to the level of this award there are no articulation/progression opportunities within Practice Learning.

6.2.2 Professional recognition

The award is subject to approval by the Scottish Social Services Council and recognised as a Practice Teacher qualification in Social Work Practice settings.

6.2.3 Transitional Arrangements

Due to the significant changes introduced in this award, there are no transitional arrangements opportunities.

6.3 Opportunities for e-assessment

It is possible part or all of the taught programme could be delivered by e learning however opportunities for e-assessment are limited due to the level of integration and the nature of the delivery of care to individuals.

The Units should be delivered primarily on a face to face and basis in a workplace setting. The nature of the qualification does not make it suitable for full distance or e learning as much of the focus within the Units is based on team and collaborative working practices. However, there is scope to use online portfolio building tools as a means for learners to gather evidence for some assessments; this will be at the discretion of the centre.

6.4 Support materials

There are no assessment support packs for the PDA Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10.

6.5 Resource requirements

It is recommended centres have appropriate current knowledge and understanding of Social Work Services in order to deliver this PDA. Centre staff should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the Unit contents and have current relevant evidence of CPD. They should hold also a qualification relevant to the areas of the award they will deliver.

Those delivering assessment and internal verification for the Units contained in the award are required to be qualified in line with the assessment strategy for Social Work Practice Learning.

The Award Guidance requires those who are working predominantly within the social work sector to hold a registerable qualification for the area and level of practice to be assessed, and that is accepted for registration with the SSSC.

It is the responsibility of the centre, to ensure that assessors have achieved, or are working towards, a registerable qualification as defined by SSSC, in the area of practice they are assessing. In addition, the assessor must hold qualifications equivalent to, or above, the level of award they are assessing and in the relevant area of practice.

The SSSC website provides a list of registerable qualifications for each area of practice.

Centres should be equipped with the relevant equipment/resources to meet the in-room training delivery. In order to meet the practical element of the course centres must be able to provide appropriate student experience for learners.

7 General information for centres

Equality and inclusion

The Unit specifications making up this Group Award have been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners will be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence. Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

Internal and external verification

All assessments used within this/these qualification(s) should be internally verified, using the appropriate policy within the centre and the guidelines set by SQA.

External verification will be carried out by SQA to ensure that internal assessment is within the national guidelines for these qualifications.

Further information on internal and external verification can be found in *SQA's Guide to Assessment* (www.sqa.org.uk/GuideToAssessment).

8 Glossary of terms

Embedded Core Skills: is where the assessment evidence for the Unit also includes full evidence for complete Core Skill or Core Skill components. A learner successfully completing the Unit will be automatically certificated for the Core Skill. (This depends on the Unit having been successfully audited and validated for Core Skills certification.)

Finish date: The end of a Group Award's lapsing period is known as the finish date. After the finish date, the Group Award will no longer be live and the following applies:

- ◆ learners may not be entered for the Group Award
- ◆ the Group Award will continue to exist only as an archive record on the Awards Processing System (APS)

Lapsing date: When a Group Award is entered into its lapsing period, the following will apply:

- ◆ the Group Award will be deleted from the relevant catalogue
- ◆ the Group Award specification will remain until the qualification reaches its finish date at which point it will be removed from SQA's website and archived
- ◆ no new centres may be approved to offer the Group Award
- ◆ centres should only enter learners whom they expect to complete the Group Award during the defined lapsing period

SQA credit value: The credit value allocated to a Unit gives an indication of the contribution the Unit makes to an SQA Group Award. An SQA credit value of 1 given to an SQA Unit represents approximately 40 hours of programmed learning, teaching and assessment.

SCQF: The Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) provides the national common framework for describing all relevant programmes of learning and qualifications in Scotland. SCQF terminology is used 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 credit points: SCQF credit points provide a means of describing and comparing the amount of learning that is required to complete a qualification at a given level of the Framework. One National Unit credit is equivalent to 6 SCQF credit points. One National Unit credit at Advanced Higher and one Higher National Unit credit (irrespective of level) is equivalent to 8 SCQF credit points.

SCQF levels: The level a qualification is assigned within the framework is an indication of how hard it is to achieve. The SCQF covers 12 levels of learning. HNCs and HNDs are available at SCQF levels 7 and 8 respectively. Higher National Units will normally be at levels 6–9 and Graded Units will be at level 7 and 8. National Qualification Group Awards are available at SCQF levels 2–6 and will normally be made up of National Units which are available from SCQF levels 2–7.

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

Signposted Core Skills: refers to opportunities to develop Core Skills arise in learning and teaching but are not automatically certificated.

9 General information for learners

This section will help you decide whether this is the qualification for you by explaining what the qualification is about, what you should know or be able to do before you start, what you will need to do during the qualification and opportunities for further learning and employment.

The PDA in 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. The award aims 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 this award, you have to successfully complete all of the Units. Collectively these Units cover a range of professional skills and knowledge relating to the following topics:

- ◆ methods of determining and interpreting your own learning needs and the learning needs of others
- ◆ the importance of appropriate mechanisms to engage effectively with individuals using services and carers in relation to learning
- ◆ organisational structures and strategies to support students within changing learning environments
- ◆ relevant current legislation, policy and guidance appropriate to work setting
- ◆ factors associated with students integrating into the practice setting
- ◆ working effectively with difference and diversity in relation to students
- ◆ a range of learning strategies
- ◆ reflective practice
- ◆ supervisory processes
- ◆ the meaning of evidence based practice and its relevance to learning
- ◆ what constitutes effective practice within own setting and how this can be evidenced
- ◆ the role of evaluation within the wider learning context
- ◆ how to contribute to determining levels of competence against set standards
- ◆ different forms of assessment
- ◆ values inherent within relevant professional Codes of Practice
- ◆ your role within a wider learning context and environment
- ◆ accountability and responsibility issues associated with different roles within social services
- ◆ organisational systems and networks necessary to support students
- ◆ your own leadership style and how this impacts on others
- ◆ your own service and its context

On successful completion of the award, you will:

- ◆ understand and use mechanisms to support your student and the collective learning of others using a range of method
- ◆ evidence the skill and ability to support the development of a learning culture 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

In order to evidence the above you will also be:

- ◆ directly observed interacting with the student
- ◆ evidencing your ability to support learning, through competent use of a wide range of skills and advanced application
- ◆ demonstrating your work competence in the context of your employment across health, education and social services
- ◆ involved in work with individual students and/or groups of students, for example through the facilitation of group supervision, or planning, delivering and/or evaluating training events
- ◆ producing evidence of different types, covering both product, and process.
- ◆ advised about the specific work you need to undertake to evidence the requirements for each Unit in your award

The Group Award comprises seven Units of study namely:

Support Learning in a Social Services Context
Assessment of Learners
Leadership for Learning
Establish Effective Working Relationships
Create and Environment for Learning
Supervise and Facilitate Learning
Evidence Based Practice in Social Services

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 learners would be required to provide evidence in order to achieve the PLQ(SS).

The PDA in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10 has 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 inter professional 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: 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	<p>One of the following:</p> <p>Degree in Social Work, DipSW, CQSW, CSS, SVQ Care 4, SVQ 4 Social Services and Healthcare, Degree in Community Education, Allied Health Professional qualification RGN, RMN (or other relevant nursing qualification) Day Care of Children Award (level 10), Teaching qualification or <i>other relevant qualification to be agreed via SQA</i></p> <p><i>and any of the above plus</i></p> <p>An award or evidence of substantial training which centrally focuses on the facilitation and assessment of learning at SCQF level 10 or above (eg Practice Teaching Award/Training programme, SVQ 4 Learning and Development.</p> <p>Registration with, or eligibility to be registered with, a Professional Body.</p>	
Experience	<p>A minimum of 2 year's experience in a social services setting.</p> <p>Evidence of competence in providing supervision in a relevant professional context.</p> <p>Knowledge and understanding of the PLQ(SS) standards.</p> <p>Knowledge of the Standards in Social Work Education (SiSWE) or the standards on which the learner is being assessed.</p> <p>Experience of working within the SSSC Codes of Practice.</p> <p>Experience of supporting learning and development in the workplace.</p>	

Internal Verifiers

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