



Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Contemporary Issues for Children and Families

Unit code: DF56 34

Unit purpose: To enable candidates to develop research skills in investigating current issues affecting family life in Scotland. Candidates will be able to gain in-depth knowledge and understanding of factors influencing the growth and development of children and young people in Scotland and the wide range of contemporary child-rearing practices and family dynamics.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

- ◆ Investigate social and cultural issues currently relevant to children and families living in Scotland
- ◆ Identify and demonstrate knowledge of current social and cultural issues relevant to children and families
- ◆ Be able to express informed and objective opinions in relation to social and cultural issues relevant to children and families
- ◆ Use a range of standard applications to present the investigation
- ◆ Use appropriate referencing

Credit value: 1 HN Credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7*)

**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.*

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: It is envisaged that candidates would have previous experience of working with children and young people and an awareness of the current issues that affect family life in Scotland.

Some knowledge and experience of research is also recommended

Core Skills: There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or a Core Skill component in this Unit. However there may be opportunities to develop the Core Skills of Communication, Problem Solving and Information Technology to levels required by occupations in early education and childcare or progression pathways supported by the HNC Early Education and Childcare.

General information for centre (cont)

Context for delivery: If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

Assessment: For Outcomes 1 and 2 candidates could carry out an investigation supported by a written report.

For Outcome 3, candidates may use a case study to identify, discuss and evaluate the impact of social policy on children and families.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

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The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, Knowledge and/or Skills, and Evidence Requirements are mandatory.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the Knowledge and/or Skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Outcome 1

Investigate social and cultural issues currently relevant to children and families living in Scotland.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Use appropriate research skills
- ◆ Identify and demonstrate knowledge of current social and cultural issues relevant to children and families
- ◆ Be able to express informed and objective opinions in relation to a minimum of two social and two cultural issues relevant to children and families
- ◆ Use a range of standard applications to present the investigation
- ◆ Use appropriate referencing

Outcome 2

Analyse factors that influence contemporary childhood and family life in Scotland.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Use appropriate research skills
- ◆ Explore the concept of 'childhood' and 'family'
- ◆ Identify a range of factors that may influence contemporary childhood and family life
- ◆ Use analytical skills to examine the influence of two factors on contemporary childhood and family life
- ◆ Use a range of standard applications to present the concepts, factors and analysis
- ◆ Use appropriate referencing

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Contemporary Issues for Children and Families

Outcome 3

Evaluate an area of current social policy that affects the family in Scotland.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Use appropriate research skills
- ◆ Identify and demonstrate an understanding of a range of current social policies that affect the family
- ◆ Select one current social policy and examine how this affects the family
- ◆ Use evaluative skills to present an argument for or in opposition to the selected social policy and its effects on the family
- ◆ Use a range of standard applications to present the evaluation
- ◆ Use appropriate referencing

Evidence Requirements for the Unit:

Candidates will need to gather evidence to demonstrate that they:

- ◆ Can identify relevant cultural and social issues for families
- ◆ Are able to express informed and objective opinions in relation to a minimum of two social and two cultural issues relevant to children and families in Scottish society
- ◆ Use research skills to consult and analyse a range of direct and indirect sources to gather information on chosen social/cultural issues
- ◆ Identify and demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of different family contexts and diversity in family life
- ◆ Use analytical skills to examine the impact social and cultural trends on family structures
- ◆ Investigate the impact of social and cultural trends on children's experience of childhood and family life
- ◆ Research a range of direct and indirect sources to identify areas of current social policy and the impact on different members of families

Assessment guidelines for the Unit:

Candidates will be expected to conduct an investigation into any two social and two cultural issues relevant to children, young people and their families in Scotland. This investigation must explore:

- ◆ The nature of these issues
- ◆ How the issues affect families' lives
- ◆ Identify specifically the impact of the issues on children and young people
- ◆ Identify how this impact could vary depending on the age/stage of the child/young person

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Contemporary Issues for Children and Families

The candidate should produce a written report which:

- ◆ Outlines the issues they have selected
- ◆ Presents background information on the selected issues
- ◆ Outlines of the current influence on children's lives
- ◆ Presents statistical information in an appropriate format

The candidate should conduct a survey of a sample of families which:

- ◆ Identifies and analyses at least two relevant influencing factors
- ◆ Evaluates the extent to which the factors would affect different aspects of childhood and family life

Candidates will relate at least one area of social policy to a case study and discuss the impact on different aspects of family life identifying any positive or negative influences. This assessment should take place under supervised open-book conditions.

Administrative Information

Unit code:	DF56 34
Unit title:	Contemporary Issues for Children and Families
Superclass category:	EE
Date of publication:	April 2004
Version:	02 (February 2012)
Source:	SQA

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Additions to support notes to align to current practice.	24/02/12

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Contemporary Issues for Children and Families

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 should have the opportunity to examine how different types of family develop and how social trends and cultural variations affect these. When looking at family types, cultural variations should be considered. Family types could include:

- ◆ Nuclear
- ◆ Extended
- ◆ Single parent
- ◆ Same sex
- ◆ Reconstituted
- ◆ Other family arrangements

Social trends to be considered could include:

- ◆ Employment patterns/women in employment
- ◆ Fathers as carers/paternity leaves/legislation
- ◆ Family-friendly working hours legislation/working practices/growth in flexible working patterns
- ◆ Availability of childcare
- ◆ Status of women
- ◆ Recreational drug use
- ◆ Parenting styles
- ◆ Children's rights and parental responsibilities
- ◆ Environmental issues
- ◆ Child poverty
- ◆ Health issues
- ◆ Housing issues
- ◆ Children/young people as 'carers'
- ◆ Immigration

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Contemporary Issues for Children and Families

Cultural variations may include:

- ◆ Generational differences/perceptions
- ◆ Cross-cultural relationships/partnerships
- ◆ Arranged marriages
- ◆ Cultural variations
- ◆ Sub-cultures
- ◆ Faith and religion

UNICEF. Behaviour and Social Change

http://origin-www.unicef.org/cbsc/index_42352.html

World Health Organisation

<http://www.who.int/en/>

Early Years Framework

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-people/Early-years-framework>

Effective Intervention Unit

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/05/19355/37072>

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/strategyandgovernance/uncrc/unitednationsarticles/uncrcarticles>

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Contemporary Issues for Children and Families

Outcome 2

Children's lives and the concept of 'childhood' in our society have been transformed in recent times. Candidates should be encouraged to reflect on changing attitudes towards and concepts of childhood within Scottish culture and taking a wider cross cultural perspective when appropriate.

The influencing factors in this Outcome may include some of the following:

- ◆ Changing status of childhood
- ◆ Changing attitudes to relationships, marriage, divorce and the diverse range of family Units
- ◆ Attitudes to sex, sexuality and sex education, teenage pregnancy rates
- ◆ Freedom to take calculated risks
- ◆ Peer pressure
- ◆ Substance use
- ◆ Enhanced perception/fear of crime
- ◆ Media
- ◆ Music and the Arts
- ◆ Power of advertising
- ◆ Play/toys and playthings
- ◆ Children's literature
- ◆ Gender differences
- ◆ Cultural practices and attitudes
- ◆ Body image
- ◆ Faith and Religion
- ◆ Influence of technology

Reducing Teenage Pregnancy NHS/LTS Guidance and Self-Assessment Tool

http://www.tlscotland.org.uk/Images/teenage%20pregnancy%20web_tcm4-593480.pdf

Sexual Health and Teenage Pregnancy

<http://www.isdscotland.org/isd/2071.html>

National Children's Bureau 'Media portrayal of young people – Impact & Influences'

<http://childrens-research-centre.open.ac.uk/research/NCB%20final%20report.pdf>

Aberlour Childcare Trust 'Children and Young People,' mental health and substance abuse

<http://www.aberlour.org.uk/deliveringformentalhealthandsub.aspx>

'The Good Childhood' A National Enquiry – The Children's Society

http://www.childrensociety.org.uk/resources/documents/good%20childhood/Executive%20summary%20of%20launch%20report_2723_full.pdf

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Contemporary Issues for Children and Families

Outcome 3

As social policy within Scotland adapts and responds to changes in Scottish society it will be necessary to revise this list. Some of the areas of social policy/initiatives which might be examined include:

- ◆ Social inclusion strategy
- ◆ Childcare strategy
- ◆ Child poverty initiatives
- ◆ Health initiatives
- ◆ Integrated children's services and children's services plans
- ◆ Sure Start Initiative
- ◆ Lifelong Learning
- ◆ Partnerships with parents
- ◆ National grid for learning
- ◆ Children's rights legislation
- ◆ Benefit Strategy - family tax credit
- ◆ Youth Justice
- ◆ Asylum Seekers
- ◆ New community schools

Homelessness legislation – Delivering a Healthy Future Hall4
<http://www.isdscotland.org/isd/files/Hall4%20Guidance.pdf>

Child Poverty in Scotland
http://www.barnardos.org.uk/westminster_poverty_consultation.pdf

Sure Start
<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/earlyyears/surestart/whatsurestartdoes>

Equally Well
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/06/25104032/0>

Inclusion Agenda Scottish Government
http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/research/pdf_res_papers/rp00-15.pdf

GIRFEC
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/childrenservices/girfec/programme-overview>

Scottish Children's Commissioner for Children and Young People
<http://www.sccyp.org.uk/>

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Contemporary Issues for Children and Families

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

This is an investigative Unit where candidates carry out research into a range of direct and indirect national and local sources. Class/group discussion may enhance student understanding and promote their learning

The list of social and cultural issues is not exhaustive or mutually exclusive. It is more important that candidates can justify their decision and choice.

Open learning

This Unit could be developed for open learning mode of delivery.

For information on normal open learning arrangements, please refer to the SQA guide *Assessment and Quality Assurance of Open and Distance Learning (SQA, 2000)*.

Special needs

This Unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. Special needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering special alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment Arrangements (SQA, 2001)*.

General information for candidates

Unit title: Contemporary Issues for Children and Families

This Unit is intended to enable you to develop research skills in investigating current issues affecting family life in Scotland.

You will gain an in-depth knowledge and understanding of factors influencing the growth and development of children and young people in Scotland and the wide range of child rearing practices and family dynamics.

There will be two assessments for this Unit. The first assessment will cover Outcomes 1 and 2 and will be a research project and written report. The second will cover Outcome 3 and will take the form of a case study which will be undertaken in supervised conditions.