

Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Working with Problematic Substance Use

Unit code: DH3R 35

Unit purpose: This unit is designed to enable candidates to understand the legal and societal issues relating to problematic substance use, and to understand the role of the social care worker in helping individuals manage and control problematic substance use. It is concerned with the use of a wide range of legal and illegal substances, in all social groupings.

This Unit prepares candidates for this role by providing underpinning knowledge in relation to the legal context for problematic substance use, the main categories of substance and their physical and behavioural effects on people. It also considers the societal and individual factors that can contribute to problematic substance use. It also enables them to apply skills and knowledge relevant to general social care practice, and problematic substance use in particular, to the development of appropriate support and interventions.

It is primarily intended for candidates who are working, or intend to work, in the field of problematic substance use.

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

- ◆ Explain the factors surrounding problematic substance use
- ◆ Describe and define problematic substance use
- ◆ Describe ways in which workers can assist individuals and families to manage and control problematic substance use

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

**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: Candidates should have good communication skills, and should have an understanding of general social care practice and theory. Prior experience in the field of problematic substance use is desirable but not essential. This unit requires knowledge of general social care practice, theory and skills, and completion of the mandatory units of the HNC in Social Care (or equivalent) would be advantageous, but not essential.

General information for centres (cont)

Core skills: There may be opportunities to gather evidence towards core skills in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of core skills or core skills components.

In meeting the competences of this Unit the candidate will have opportunities to develop core skills in:

- ◆ **Communication** - through the preparation of reports, case studies and written answers to questions
- ◆ **Problem Solving** - through the demonstration of critical thinking, planning and organising of actual or simulated interventions, and in the preparation and compilation of reports.
- ◆ **Working with others** – working with individuals, which involves confidentiality, building up trust, being non judgemental in order to support and assist individuals.

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.

This unit can be taught as part of a group award or as a stand alone unit. If taught as a stand alone unit candidates must demonstrate they have the relevant underpinning knowledge (relating to wider social issues of care, control, vulnerability and exclusion), to enable them to understand and apply learning to a range of social care settings.

Assessment: This unit can be assessed either by a single instrument of assessment which would require candidates to produce report, integrated case study, or a series of separate case studies, which may be based on workplace or placement experience, depending on the current situation of the candidates and their prior experience.

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

Explain the factors of problematic substance use

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ The influence of personal values on responses to problematic substance use
- ◆ The effect of stereotyping and labelling on individuals affected by problematic substance use
- ◆ Individual and societal factors contributing to problematic substance use
- ◆ Societal responses to problematic substance use

Evidence requirements

This outcome should be assessed by means of a report or case study describing an actual or planned intervention in relation to an individual affected by problematic substance use. The intervention should include an assessment of the worker's role and planned responses to potential conflicts relating working with problematic substance use and associated illicit behaviour and activity.

Candidates should also be able to:

- ◆ Explain how and why different forms of substance use are defined as acceptable or problematic
- ◆ Explain how and why societal factors can influence effective work with individuals
- ◆ Explain how and why individual values and beliefs can influence effective work with individuals

Assessment guidelines

This report may take the form of a care plan. This assessment may also be used to assess Outcomes 2 and 3.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Working with Problematic Substance Use

Outcome 2

Describe and define problematic substance use

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ The types of substance used by individuals and their physical and behavioural effects
- ◆ The legal context of substance use
- ◆ The relevant legislation pertaining to problematic substance use
- ◆ The distinction between legal and illegal, prescribed and non prescribed substances
- ◆ The societal context for the criminalising or acceptance of specific substance use
- ◆ The penalties likely to be imposed for illegal substance use
- ◆ Criminal Justice Policy and Social Policy pertaining to problematic substance use
- ◆ The worker's role and responsibilities in relation to legislative requirements
- ◆ The ways in which multi agency working can contribute to positive outcomes for those affected by problematic substance use
- ◆ The legal status of each substance
- ◆ Definition problematic substance use
- ◆ Patterns of problematic substance use

Evidence requirements

Evidence should be presented as part of a report or case study, describing an actual or planned intervention in relation to an individual affected by problematic substance use. It may be supported by specific questions or class based assessments.

Candidates should be able to:

- ◆ Explain the different classifications for illegal substances *
- ◆ Distinguish between legal and illegal substances *
- ◆ Identify the relevant legislation for problematic substance use
- ◆ List the types of penalty relating to illegal substance use *
- ◆ Describe their duties and responsibilities in relation to legislation
- ◆ Describe patterns of problematic substance use
- ◆ Describe the behavioural and physical effects of problematic substance use

Assessment guidelines

See outcome 1

Bullet Points marked * are examples of evidence which will probably need to be supported by specific questions or class based assessments, as it may not be possible to ensure they will occur in the chosen planned intervention.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Working with Problematic Substance Use

Outcome 3

Describe ways in which workers can assist individuals and families to manage and control problematic substance use

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ The nature of service provision available for individuals affected by problematic substance use
- ◆ Theoretical frameworks and models for reducing problematic substance use
- ◆ Methods of encouraging and achieving behavioural change
- ◆ Interventions and support models that can support individuals and families affected by problematic substance use
- ◆ Behavioural factors that influence change
- ◆ How to apply individual skills necessary for effective support and intervention
- ◆ How family members are adversely affected by problematic substance use
- ◆ The concept of resilience
- ◆ ‘Good enough’ parenting skills; the relationship between one’s own experience of being parented and one’s ability to parent.
- ◆ Ethical issues relating to working with individuals who are engaged in criminal activity, or whose behaviour is not socially acceptable.
- ◆ The social care and criminal justice agencies involved in working with problematic substance use, their roles and remits.

Evidence requirements

Evidence should be presented as part of a report or case study, describing an actual or planned intervention intended to help the individual manage and control their problematic substance use and intended to help support family members. The report or case study may be supported by specific questions or class based assessments. This evidence should preferably be related to practice experience wherever possible.

Candidates should be able to:

- ◆ Describe theoretical frameworks used to assist individuals to manage and control problematic substance use *
- ◆ Demonstrate understanding of the relative merits of each approach *
- ◆ Demonstrate skills in assessment, planning, intervention and evaluation.
- ◆ Assess the impact of problematic substance use on the individual and their family and community

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Working with Problematic Substance Use

Assessment guidelines

See outcome 1.

This outcome can be assessed by means of a report or case study (used for outcomes 1 & 2).

Bullet Points marked * are examples of evidence which will probably need to be supported by specific questions or class based assessments, as it may not be possible to ensure they will occur in the chosen planned intervention.

Administrative Information

Unit code:	DH3R 35
Unit title:	Working with Problematic Substance Use
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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Working with Problematic Substance Use

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

This unit is designed to equip candidates with knowledge and skills of the issues surrounding problematic substance use. It is concerned with the interaction between wider societal factors and individual behavioural and psychological factors that contribute towards problematic substance use. The unit is concerned with problematic substance use in broad sense, and teaching should encompass the use of legal and illegal substances, prescribed and non prescribed substances across all sectors of society.

The Unit is likely to form part of the HNC Social Care which is designed to equip candidates with the professional skills and knowledge related to this occupational area. The Unit is likely to be delivered towards the end of the award, by which time candidates should have developed a broader knowledge base that underpins practice in the occupational area concerned. This knowledge will be derived from mandatory SVQ Units and HN Units, Social Care Theory for Practice, Social Policy and its Application to Social Services Provision, Psychology for Social Care Practice, Protection of Individuals from Possible Harm and Abuse, Sociology for Social Care Practice.

Outcomes 1 and 2 should be taught first, as this provides candidates with the opportunity to examine general themes and concepts relating to problematic substance use. Outcome 3 is concerned with developing skills and knowledge relevant to practice interventions designed to help those experiencing problematic substance use.

Outcome 1

This outcome enables candidates to become familiar with the individual and societal factors that contribute to problematic substance use. Candidates should understand the effect and significance of factors such as child abuse, domestic violence, deprivation, dysfunctional family life, neighbourhood youth culture, trauma and mental health upon the development of patterns of problematic substance use. Candidates should also examine the impact of problematic substance use upon individuals, their families and communities, and wider society.

As part of the teaching process, candidates should become familiar with some of the psychological and sociological perspectives in helping to develop understanding of problematic substance use. Of particular relevance are; behavioural theories such as; cognitive behavioural theory; theories such as the neo-freudians, systems theory and psychodynamic.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Working with Problematic Substance Use

It is important that candidates examine differing societal perspectives about substance use, and compare attitudes prevalent in different sections of society towards the use of legal and illegal substances.

As part of the teaching for this Unit, candidates should be encouraged to reflect on their own attitudes and values about substance use, and the ways in which they may influence professional practice. In addition, candidates should also be able to demonstrate how social work values may impact on work in this field.

Outcome 2

This outcome looks at the legislative context for problematic substance use, patterns of problematic substance use and professional duties in relation to problematic substance use.

Candidates should be familiar with the key aims and intentions of legislation relevant to problematic substance use (The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, Health and Medicines Act 1988), and with associated criminal justice and social work legislation Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, Children (Scotland) Act 1995, Criminal Justice Act 2003.

Teaching should also cover patterns of problematic substance use, with reference to lifestyles and behaviour, and the behavioural and physical effects of problematic substance use for a range of substances.

An important element of this outcome will be the development of candidate's ability to understand the complexity of working with those who may be in breach of the law, and the ways in which they can balance statutory responsibilities with effective interventions. Working with individuals who are regular users of illegal substances can create practice dilemmas for workers, which should be acknowledged and recognised.

Outcome 3

This outcome focuses upon practice interventions designed to support and help individuals receiving care. Candidates should be able to identify and use specific skills and knowledge developed in other Units. Underpinning actual or planned interventions will be an understanding of skills in assessment, planning and evaluation, together with effective communication skills. In addition, candidates should have a sound understanding of theories and practice in risk assessment, and its relevance to protecting individuals from abuse or harm. Specific communication skills and knowledge relevant to this outcome include motivational interviewing, negotiation skills and conflict theory and resolution.

Teaching on practice models should consider the following approaches; abstinence, harm reduction, and opportunity should be given to compare medical and social models of intervention, and also to compare the merits of group based and individual approaches.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Working with Problematic Substance Use

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

Delivery methods would be enhanced by the use of materials on the nature and specific societal cultures of substance using groups, with vulnerability, parenting, drug/alcohol awareness raising and education. Where possible and suitable, consideration should be given to including input from people who have been affected by problematic substance use, either as a user or family member.

Assessment should normally be by means of a report describing an actual or planned intervention in relation to an individual affected by problematic substance use. Wherever possible, this should be based on candidate's practice experience.

This assessment could be supported by the use of pre-set questions or a class based assessment.

Open learning

This unit is suitable for open learning

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: Working with Problematic Substance Use

This Unit is intended for candidates who have, or intend to have, a role working with people who are experiencing problematic substance use. It will provide you with the underpinning knowledge necessary to help you make informed choices about appropriate support and intervention to help people experiencing such difficulty.

It will be of use to people who are, or intend to work in services designed to meet the needs of this group across a range of delivery options (day services, residential and outreach)

It is also of relevance to workers in services which may not have a specific focus on problematic substance use, but who may require a level of knowledge about this subject to enhance and improve the service offered.

The assessment will take the form of a report or case study supported by responses to specific questions.