

Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Learner Support: Support Strategies for Promoting Independence in Learning

Unit code: DP9A 34

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed to enable candidates to develop skills in assisting students with additional needs in learning by using support strategies which promote independence in learning. Candidates will normally be engaged in supporting students with additional needs on 'mainstream' and 'special programme' courses in which individuals may require directed, personal assistance with motivation and organisation.

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

- 1 Use prompts to focus a student with additional support needs on task.
- 2 Assist a student with additional support needs on time management.
- 3 Promote effective organisational skills and study skills to students with additional support needs.

Credit points and level: 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: Candidates should have gained the pre-requisite study skills. This may have been achieved through experiential learning or completion of a prior course of study such as HNC/SVQ level 3.

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.

Context for delivery: This Unit is one of a series of Units intended for candidates who are following a training programme for learning assistants/facilitators — a role which involves carrying out a number of functions within an educational context to support learners with additional learning needs. This Unit is one of six which form the Professional Development Award (PDA) Advanced Certificate: Learner Support. The Unit can be delivered as part of the Group Award, however, it is also a discrete Unit and may be delivered as part of a Continuing Professional Development programme.

General information for centres (cont)

Assessment: This Unit should be assessed holistically by:

- ◆ The production of a portfolio of evidence by the candidate
- ◆ An observational assessment of the candidate working with a student on one or more of the above tasks. This could be by workplace assessment or by video.

The portfolio should include a section on self-evaluation.

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

Use prompts to focus a student with additional support needs on task

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Definition of prompting — maintaining student focus on tasks
- ◆ Understanding of why students may need prompting
- ◆ Methods of prompting students
- ◆ Knowledge of boundaries when prompting
- ◆ Effective use of prompts when working with students
- ◆ Self-evaluation
- ◆ Reporting to others

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ prompt a student with additional needs on task
- ◆ explain the reasons for prompting
- ◆ describe the methods adopted
- ◆ reflect on practice and provide a self-evaluation

Assessment guidelines

This Outcome is assessed holistically and will include a portfolio and work practice observation (video accepted). The portfolio will include evidence of knowledge and skills, plans for support sessions, self-evaluation of tasks and a summary report of session for all 3 learning Outcomes in this Unit. At least one Outcome should form part of an observed assessment supported by plans, an evaluation of the task and summary report. The written work should be included as a record in the portfolio.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Learner Support: Support Strategies for Promoting Independence in Learning

Outcome 2

Assist a student with additional support needs on time management

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Definition of time management
- ◆ Understanding why students might need assistance with time management
- ◆ Methods of assisting students with time management
- ◆ Applying time management skills in working with student
- ◆ Self-evaluation
- ◆ Reporting to others

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ assist a student on time management using effective strategies
- ◆ describe the strategies used
- ◆ explain the methods chosen
- ◆ reflect on practice and provide a self-evaluation

Assessment guidelines

This Outcome is assessed holistically and will include a portfolio and work practice observation (video accepted). The portfolio will include evidence of knowledge and skills, plans for support sessions, self-evaluation of tasks and a summary report of session for all 3 learning Outcomes in this Unit. At least one Outcome should form part of an observed assessment supported by plans, an evaluation of the task and summary report. The written work should be included as a record in the portfolio.

Outcome 3

Promote effective organisational skills and study skills to students with additional support needs

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Explain what is meant by study skills
- ◆ Understanding of who might benefit from assistance with study skills
- ◆ Knowledge of a range of study skills strategies
- ◆ Application of study skills
- ◆ Effective explanation of study skills to students
- ◆ Self evaluation
- ◆ Reporting to others

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Learner Support: Support Strategies for Promoting Independence in Learning

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ explain study skills techniques
- ◆ effectively support the student with additional support needs by introducing him/her to appropriate study skills strategies
- ◆ evaluate the use of study skills in the learning sessions with a student/students

Assessment guidelines

This Outcome is assessed holistically and will include a portfolio and work practice observation (video accepted). The portfolio will include evidence of knowledge and skills, plans for support sessions, self-evaluation of tasks and a summary report of session for all 3 learning Outcomes in this Unit. At least one Outcome should form part of an observed assessment supported by plans, an evaluation of the task and summary report. The written work should be included as a record in the portfolio.

Administrative Information

Unit code:	DP9A 34
Unit title:	Learner Support: Support Strategies for Promoting Independence in Learning
Superclass category:	GB
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History of Changes:

Version	Description of change	Date

Source: SQA

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Learner Support: Support Strategies for Promoting Independence in Learning

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

The development of this PDA has been initiated as a response to changes within the FE sector influenced by the amended DDA (Disability Discrimination Act 1995), and the Beattie Inclusiveness Agenda. As a result the sector has taken a pro-active approach to ensure that it both meets the needs and encourages participation of individuals with diverse needs. To do this many of the FE colleges have employed learning facilitators/learning assistants to provide, as appropriate, support to learners with additional support needs. In the main appropriate college lecturing staff have been provided with the opportunity of further training, through the BRITE Initiative (Beattie Resources for Inclusiveness in Technology and Education) to ensure that the needs of learners can be met. It has been through this activity that the need for a training course for learning facilitators has emerged. This PDA therefore, formalises training for such individuals to ensure that we are delivering a quality provision for all learners.

This Unit is intended for candidates who are in employment in the role of learning assistant or facilitator and who are taking this qualification as part of the Group Award, (PDA Advanced Certificate: Learner Support) with the support of their employer. The Unit may be taken on a stand-alone basis. Most of the evidence will be generated by candidates as part of their normal course of employment. Candidates may need the assistance of their employer in identifying appropriate opportunities to develop and demonstrate their knowledge and skills.

In **Outcome 1**, candidates should be focussed on the need for and practical uses of prompting when supporting a student with additional needs. Understanding when and why a student may require prompting as well as how to use prompts effectively should be explored. Boundary issues should be discussed. Candidates should be given the opportunity to explore their own reactions and self-evaluation of practice should be encouraged.

Outcome 2 is focussed on time-management and on the skills required to assist a learner to develop time-management skills. Different strategies/methodologies should be explored and candidates encouraged to select methods appropriate to meeting the learner's needs. This is a practical Outcome which includes 'hands-on' work with learners. Candidates will need to be able to communicate effectively with the learner and be able to explain the chosen method(s) to learners. As in Outcome 1, emphasis should be given to reflecting on own practice.

Outcome 3 concentrates on study skills and how to develop these in students with additional learning needs. A range of strategies to promote study skills should be discussed in relation to selecting appropriate strategies for individual learners. Candidates should learn how to support a learner effectively in developing his/her own study skills. Candidates should also learn how to evaluate the selected strategy following a learning session in relation to meeting the needs of learners.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (notes)

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Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

As an SQA course, the PDA or single Units can be delivered by any approved centre. However, a strategically a partnership approach is envisaged. Access Centres are best placed to deliver and assess particular aspects of training. Colleges will however require to support and mentor their learning facilitators/assistants on an on-going basis ensuring that they get access to learners, facilities and materials to support the generation of evidence for the award. The award has been designed to ensure that a higher percentage of the evidence for knowledge and skills relates to real- life practice. It is student centred and the delivery model should ensure that candidates develop the skill of independent learning.

The tasks undertaken are anticipated to be part of the candidates' regular programme of work and should not be inconvenient to those involved. It is importance that others participating in the observed assessment with the candidate are clear on the objectives of the session and are willing participants. It may be necessary to create or construct an opportunity for assessment if this does not naturally present itself in the course of the candidates work. Background information may be required on the support needs of the participating student in order to make the planning and task meaningful. The observed task may be conducted by an assessor in person or by video recording.

The Unit is assessed holistically through the portfolio and one observed assessment. Centres may find it useful to appoint a mentor who can monitor progress and can confirm the authenticity of the written work in the portfolio. Mentors may also assist in identifying appropriate opportunities for candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. Mentors will require clear guidelines on what is required of candidates from the point of view of assessment.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills in this Unit. However, there are clear opportunities for candidates to develop aspects of the Core Skills in Communication, Written and Oral, (all Outcomes), Working with Others (all Outcomes) and Problem Solving (particularly Outcome 3).

Open learning

This Unit is suited to delivery by distance learning. The observed assessment may be submitted on video tape.

Candidates with disabilities and/or additional support needs

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. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (www.sqa.org.uk).

General information for candidates

Unit title: Learner Support: Support Strategies for Promoting Independence in Learning

This is a practical Unit to help you develop the knowledge and skills to support learners with additional learning needs. The Unit will develop your skills to assist students develop time management and study skills. You will learn how to use prompting effectively and to recognise when learners may require assistance with study skills and time management. You will also learn how to promote effective organisational skills to students with additional learning needs.

You will put together a portfolio of evidence to show that you understand the techniques and strategies that can help students with their learning. You will also learn how to plan support sessions and how to evaluate how effective the strategies have been in supporting the learner.