



Higher National Unit specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Facilitate Learning in a Social Services Practice Context

Unit code: F2VH 36

Unit purpose: To enable candidates to understand factors which impact on and influence learners and the learning environment, work effectively with others to support learning, and support learners to develop reflective practice and integrate knowledge into their practice.

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

- 1 Demonstrate a critical understanding of factors that influence learning within social services practice settings.
- 2 Develop effective working relationships to facilitate the learning process in a social services practice context.
- 3 Collaborate in the development of a learning environment which promotes a culture of effective practice in a social services context.
- 4 Support learners to develop effective practice in a social services context.

Credit points and level: 2 HN credits at SCQF level 9: (16 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 9*)

**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 well developed communication and inter-personal skills and be able to demonstrate the ability to think analytically and systematically. They should be able to use these skills to give an account of their experiences, reflect on them, make valid conclusions and express strengths and development needs, both personal and organisational. These may be evidenced by the achievement of a qualification at SCQF level 8 (or equivalent) or above. Candidates will be expected to have relevant experience in a social services, education or health setting.

Acceptance of candidates' competence and experience will be at the discretion of the centre.

Core Skills: Although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components in this Unit, there will be opportunities to develop the Core Skills of Working with Others, Problem Solving and Communication at SCQF level 6. Additionally, there may be opportunities to develop the Core Skill of Information Technology.

General information for centres (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: The focus of this Unit is on the development of competence to use a selection of principal skills, techniques and practices to facilitate learning in the social services practice context. It is suitable for holistic assessment and the recommended assessment mechanism is a collection of practice evidence gathered from a range of sources.

The collection of evidence approach allows candidates flexibility in relation to evidence gathering and scope to present their evidence in a way that best fits with their learning needs and styles. The evidence gathered to demonstrate that a candidate has achieved the Outcomes should be naturally occurring during their day to day activity, therefore encouraging candidates to reflect on the nature of what they do on a daily basis.

Candidates' practice evidence of their ability to facilitate learning in the social services practice context can be drawn from a variety of sources including feedback from peers, managers, learners, service users, carers and other professionals. This will be collated alongside evidence of the candidate's knowledge and understanding of the topics covered by the Unit. Also within their collections of evidence candidates should provide a critically reflective narrative identifying their learning for the Unit, critically reflecting on what they might have done differently and what they need to work on in the future.

It is a requirement that there is evidence of direct observation of the candidate's current practice with a learner or learners eg these may be in the form of witness statements from, for example, managers, colleagues, service users, the learners themselves or practitioners in other related disciplines. There is also an expectation that there must be direct observation by an occupationally competent assessor.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Facilitate Learning in a Social Services Practice Context

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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

Demonstrate a critical understanding of factors that influence learning within social services practice settings

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Adult learning theories
- ◆ Enablers and barriers which impact on and influence learning
- ◆ Strategies to overcome barriers to learning
- ◆ Learning styles

Outcome 2

Develop effective working relationships to facilitate the learning process

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Characteristics of effective working relationships
- ◆ Roles, responsibilities and accountability within the learning process
- ◆ Professional values, ethics and practice in different disciplines
- ◆ Diversity in relation to individual learners
- ◆ Communication skills and techniques to support learning

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Facilitate Learning in a Social Services Practice Context

Outcome 3

Collaborate in the development of a learning environment which promotes a culture of effective practice

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Characteristics of learning organisations and factors which enable and support learning within organisations
- ◆ Organisational supports for effective practice within candidate's own practice setting
- ◆ Methods of communicating information about legislation, policy and guidance
- ◆ Methods of sharing research findings
- ◆ Methods of identifying learning needs and appropriate actions to address them
- ◆ SSSC codes of practice and their application

Outcome 4

Support learners to develop effective practice

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Knowledge and application of relevant evidence based research findings, legislation and policy
- ◆ Models of reflective practice appropriate to learner's stage in learning
- ◆ Processes to facilitate learners development of essential practice knowledge
- ◆ Techniques to facilitate learners to develop skills in reflective practice

Evidence Requirements for the Unit

Candidates will need to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills for all four Outcomes by providing evidence within the context of social services practice of:

- ◆ critical evaluation of their knowledge of adult learning to facilitate a supportive learning environment which enables the learner to integrate into the learning context
- ◆ identification of potential and actual barriers to learning (personal or structural) for individuals and evaluation of the steps taken to overcome them
- ◆ critical evaluation of the effectiveness of their working relationships with both the learner and with others involved with the learner, including service users and carers, and effective communications re roles, responsibilities, diversity and accountability
- ◆ critical evaluation of their contribution to a learning culture by acting as a resource to facilitate development of others
- ◆ critical evaluation of their use of different processes and models to support learners to reflect upon and develop practice, and to develop knowledge essential to the learning context, and share knowledge with others within their practice setting

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Facilitate Learning in a Social Services Practice Context

- ◆ identification of their own, and learner's learning needs and critical evaluation of the steps taken to develop their own practice as identified in the SSSC Codes of Practice

Direct Observation of the candidate interacting with the learner is mandatory.

Assessment Guidelines for the Unit

This Unit stands alone and can be assessed in its own right. However when delivered as part of a Group Award it may be appropriate for candidate evidence including observation to span more than one Unit.

Appropriate methods for a candidate to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how to facilitate learning in the social services practice context include witness statements, formal and informal feedback, learning material devised, self-evaluation, direct observation and analysis of own practice.

Combining evidence from more than one Unit should be encouraged wherever possible. It will give candidates the chance to develop a more comprehensive record of their learning, but will also highlight the close connections and relationships between the different strands involved in professional development. It may also enable candidates to make use of the same piece of evidence in different contexts.

Administrative Information

Unit code: F2VH 36

Unit title: Facilitate Learning in a Social Services Practice Context

Superclass category: PM

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Facilitate Learning in a Social Services Practice Context

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 80 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This Unit has been designed as a stand alone Unit. It can be delivered as a stand-alone Unit if a centre has determined that the knowledge and skills developed within this Unit are all that are required to enhance the capability of candidates. Alternatively, the Unit can be delivered as part of an SQA Group Award such as a Professional Development Award (PDA). For example, it is one of three Units that comprise the:

- ◆ PDA in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 9

Where this Unit is delivered as part of the PDA in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 9, the centre should be aware that there may be additional entry requirements for candidates in line with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) policy.

This Unit is intended for candidates from a range of situations relating to social services, education or health settings. Examples include people whose role involves supporting learners, such as staff members (eg link supervisors, first line managers, residential care officers, housing support workers), those who use human services (service users), people who are carers for others who use human services and volunteers in human service settings. This list is not exhaustive but provides a flavour of the diversity of people who might wish to access this Unit from a social service or other relevant setting.

The knowledge and skills covered by the Outcomes of this Unit will enable candidates to learn about effective learning environments, and the characteristics of learning organisations. They will develop knowledge about how people learn and how to facilitate learning within their own environment. They will be expected to develop their ability to seek out and utilise knowledge and research relevant to their own practice setting. Candidates will develop knowledge of reflective practice and of how to enable learners to develop their ability to learn from practice and develop future practice, and also to incorporate knowledge into their practice. They will also learn about different methods and processes of facilitating learning.

The overall purpose of the Unit is to provide candidates with an understanding of how to facilitate learning within their own environment. They will be able to identify, and communicate effectively with others who can be involved in the learning process including service users and carers and those from other professional backgrounds. They will be able to develop strategies to ensure clear communication regarding roles and responsibilities of those involved in the learning process. They will support learners to draw from research to develop their own practice. They will be able to use different methods of facilitating learning and have developed strategies to identify and address any barriers to learning. They will be expected to contribute to developing a culture of learning within their own organisation, including identifying their own learning needs and taking steps to develop their own practice.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Facilitate Learning in a Social Services Practice Context

Outcome 1

Candidates will be encouraged to apply an understanding of adult learning theories (ie the different ways in which adults learn and different learning styles) as this will influence the choice of learning methods. Candidates require knowledge of factors which enable or enhance learning (eg environment, motivation). They will be required to apply knowledge of how to build upon the learner's previous experience to facilitate the use of existing knowledge and transfer learning from other, or previous, learning contexts to the current learning setting. Candidates should be encouraged to apply their understanding of the potential barriers and challenges for learners, either on a personal basis (eg dyslexia, caring commitments, personal learning blocks), or on a structural basis (eg accessibility of both the learning setting and learning opportunities for learners with restricted mobility). Candidates will develop and use strategies to address barriers (eg through policy, individual learning plans, specialist resources or equipment etc). Candidates will be required to apply skills in helping the learner to integrate into, and work within, the learning environment.

Outcome 2

Candidates will be required to use appropriate communication skills to build effective relationships with a range of people involved in the learning process, including learners. Candidates should be encouraged to use knowledge of inter-professional working and identify different people who have knowledge or skills which could be shared with the learner, in order to meet the learner's identified learning needs. They will need to use skills in negotiating and clarifying the different roles, responsibilities and accountability of those involved in the learning process. To work effectively with different professionals and disciplines, candidates will have to apply their understanding of, and have an ability to work with, the different professional values, ethics, procedures and approaches which influence the practice of those others involved. Candidates will be required to apply their understanding of diversity, and use skills in working with differences between candidate and learners eg, gender, age, value base, racial/cultural backgrounds, etc. Candidates will need to apply knowledge of, and use skills in, involving service users and cares within the learning experience.

Outcome 3

Candidates should apply knowledge of learning cultures to enable them to develop a learning environment which can support and promote the development of learners. They should identify, develop and utilise supports within their organisation which promote effective practice (eg specialists or key people, materials/resources). They will be required to support learners to apply their understanding of how relevant legislation, policy and guidance contributes to effective practice. Candidates will apply skills in sharing knowledge of evidence-based practice and research with others, including learners. They will be required to understand the current context of continuous professional development, and analyse their own and other learner's learning needs and be able to evidence the steps they have taken towards developing their own, and other learner's, practice. They will be familiar with developments within, and requirements of, lead organisations such as the SSSC, Scottish Government and SIESWE, and with publications such as Changing Lives (Scottish Executive 2006), National strategy for the development of the Social Service Workforce 2005, Continuing Professional Development for the Social Service Workforce in Scotland 2005.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Facilitate Learning in a Social Services Practice Context

Outcome 4

Candidates will be required to support learners to apply their knowledge of up-to-date evidence-based practice, gained from reference to research. Candidates will be encouraged to explore the concept of reflective practice including definitions of reflective practice and models for use with learners. They will be required to gain knowledge of and utilise different techniques to facilitate learners to reflect on and learn from practice (eg critical incident analysis, learning logs, research). They will need to acquire knowledge of, and develop skills in, using different processes for supporting learners (eg supervision, mentoring, or coaching) to integrate knowledge essential for effective practice into their own practice, and choose methods to facilitate this (eg observation of others, co-work).

On successful completion of the Unit, candidates will be able to

- ◆ apply their knowledge of adult learning to facilitate a supportive learning environment which enables the learner to integrate into the learning context
- ◆ identify potential and actual barriers to learning (personal or structural) for individuals and take steps to overcome them
- ◆ critically evaluate the effectiveness of their working relationships with both the learner and with others involved with the learner, and communicate effectively re roles, responsibilities and accountability
- ◆ involve service users and carers in the learning process
- ◆ contribute to a learning culture by acting as a resource to facilitate development of others
- ◆ use different processes and models to support learners to reflect upon and develop practice, and to develop knowledge essential to the learning context
- ◆ support learners to use different methods of evidence based practice, gained from reference to research
- ◆ identify their own, and learner's learning needs and take steps to develop their own practice

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

Delivery

This Unit involves candidates in a significant amount of experiential learning. Candidates are required to critically analyse their experiences and to be able to make conclusions for their future behaviour and development.

The delivery mechanisms adopted by centres should be flexible to allow comprehensive access and participation, including distance and e-learning. A holistic approach, centred round the learning needs of the individual, may best meet the requirement for flexible delivery. The delivery of the Unit must take account of its practical nature and of the occupational and professional backgrounds of candidates.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Facilitate Learning in a Social Services Practice Context

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

Assessment

Centres should advise candidates about assessment requirements. The Unit takes a holistic approach to assessment and all four Outcomes are closely and systematically connected. Candidates can be encouraged to seek opportunities to generate evidence that would span more than one of the Outcomes. For example, there is likely to be a link between the evidence candidates have provided in Outcomes 1 and 3. In Outcome 1 candidates will have provided evidence of their understanding of factors which promote learning and knowledge about how people learn and applied this in creating a learning environment (Outcome 3)

Candidates should demonstrate that they have achieved the Unit Outcomes by gathering evidence from a range of sources eg assignments, video, audio, oral presentation, witness statements etc. As far as possible for most candidates the evidence should be 'naturally occurring' during the course of their day to day activity. Some candidates will not be able to rely solely on naturally occurring evidence, in which case supplementary assessment activity such as role play or simulation will need to be developed by centres. The approach aims to encourage candidates to critically analyse what they do on a daily basis.

Centres should provide advice and guidance to candidates on gathering evidence. The evidence should be presented as a coherent and logical whole rather than a collection of disparate items. Essentially, it is a record of the learning journey undertaken by candidates.

Whilst it is recognised that the collection of evidence method will be suitable for most candidates undertaking this award the individual Unit specifications do not require this as a mandatory approach. It is important to recognise that dependant on individual candidate needs other methods may be equally applicable.

The evidence produced by candidates should demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to each Outcome. Overall, this should encompass a demonstration of:

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

There may be opportunities to combine evidence including observation for this Unit with evidence from other Units, especially where candidates are undertaking a relevant Group Award or a number of Units as part of a programme of Continuous Professional Development.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Facilitate Learning in a Social Services Practice Context

Combining evidence from more than one Unit should be encouraged wherever possible. It will give candidates the chance to develop a more comprehensive record of their learning, but will also highlight the close connections and relationships between the different strands involved in professional development. It may also enable candidates to make use of the same piece of evidence in different contexts.

Collection of Evidence

The collection of evidence should offer candidates flexibility in relation to evidence gathering against the Unit Outcomes. Each candidate's collection of evidence will be unique. Although unique, all collections of evidence will be expected to meet a set of minimum required content criteria as advised by the centre. Candidates are encouraged to offer fewer rather than more pieces of work to evidence several Outcomes. This is not intended to deter candidates from taking a rigorous approach to their assessment tasks, but rather to allow them scope to focus their evidence. Each Unit contains mandatory Evidence Requirements but the type of evidence candidates present for assessment is not prescribed unless listed as an additional requirement.

It is likely that content will include items covering both product and process. Evidence of support for learning can be drawn from any context across health, education and social services and involve work with individual learners and/or groups, such as through facilitation of student supervision, study groups or planning, delivering and/or evaluating training events. Evidence can come in a variety of forms including assignment, video, audio, oral presentation, witness statements etc.

It is a requirement that there is evidence of direct observation of the candidate's current practice with a learner or learners eg these may be in the form of witness statements from, for example, managers, colleagues, service users, the learners themselves or practitioners in other related disciplines. There is also an expectation that there must be direct observation by an occupationally competent assessor.

Centres will advise on specific requirements but candidates will need to provide evidence of knowledge, values and skills and may include some of the following, for example:

- 1 The candidate's critically reflective accounts of how they have met each of the Outcomes for each Unit.
- 2 Formal and informal feedback on practice from a learner or learners with whom the candidate has been working.
- 3 Formal and informal feedback on practice from, an appropriate, mentor, assessor, service user, carer, peer manager or other professional.
- 4 A self-assessment, including critical analysis by the candidate on feedback received
- 5 Product evidence to specifically demonstrate knowledge gained, eg assignments, reports, extracts of minutes, supervision notes, practice documents, copy of record of Post Registration Training and Learning etc.
- 6 A critically reflective narrative of the learning from each Unit as a whole. This is the candidate's summary of how the evidence they have provided meets the Outcomes. It can include a clear map indicating where the evidence provided links to the Outcomes. It is likely that this will also describe what they might have done differently and what they need to work on in the future.
- 7 The necessity of observation.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Facilitate Learning in a Social Services Practice Context

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There are opportunities to develop the following Core Skills in this Unit:

Communication (at SCQF level 6): could be evidenced through reporting, assessments and use of effective communications with learners, colleagues and other professionals. For example, analytical communication skills will be practiced and developed through presentations, negotiations and collaborations with learners, colleagues and other professionals.

Working with Others (at SCQF level 6): could be evidenced through feedback and critical analysis of collaborations with learners, colleagues and a wide range of professionals.

Problem Solving (at SCQF level 6): critical thinking, planning and organising, reviewing and evaluating could be evidenced through supervised practice, assessments and discussions with supervisor or mentor about the most appropriate courses of action for learning for an individual or group of learners.

Information Technology (at SCQF level 6): could be evidenced through the use of technology to research, critically analyse and present complex reports. Further IT skills may be developed if a candidate opts to submit assessment evidence in the form of an e-portfolio.

Open learning

This Unit requires candidates to take responsibility for their own learning. If it is to be delivered by means of open learning it will be necessary to ensure candidates have access to relevant material to enable them to assimilate the underpinning concepts and knowledge. Candidates will also need access to guidance and support throughout the learning and development process. However, this would require to be managed effectively with the organisation to ensure the authenticity of the candidate's work.

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: Facilitate Learning in a Social Services Practice Context

The Unit is designed to enable you to understand factors which impact on and influence learners and the learning environment, work effectively with others to support learning, and support learners to develop reflective practice and integrate knowledge into their practice.

In this Unit you have to achieve four Outcomes. Collectively these Outcomes cover a selection of principal skills, techniques and practices to support learning as part of a wider inter-professional context for a range of learners in practice learning environments. They will involve you in developing an effective learning environment based on knowledge of how people learn, using skills to facilitate learning in your own environment, enabling learners to apply research findings to their practice setting, applying knowledge of reflective practice to enable learners to develop their ability to learn from practice and using different methods and processes for facilitating learning.

The overall purpose of the Unit is to provide you with an understanding of how to facilitate learning within your own environment. You will learn about how to identify, and communicate effectively with, others who can be involved in the learning process including service users and those from other professional backgrounds. You will be able to develop strategies to ensure clear communication regarding roles and responsibilities of those involved in the learning process. You will support learners to draw from research to develop their own practice. You will be able to use different methods of facilitating learning and have developed strategies to identify and address any barriers to learning. You will be expected to contribute to developing a culture of learning within your own organisation, including identifying your own learning needs and taking steps to develop your own practice.

On successful completion of this Unit, you will be able to:

- ◆ apply your knowledge of adult learning to facilitate a supportive learning environment which enables the learner to integrate into the learning context,
- ◆ identify potential and actual barriers to learning (personal or structural) for individuals and take steps to overcome them
- ◆ develop effective working relationships with both the learner and with others involved with the learner, including those from other disciplines, communicating effectively re roles, responsibilities, diversity and accountability
- ◆ involve service users and carers in the learning process
- ◆ support learners to use different methods of evidence based practice, gained from reference to research
- ◆ identify your own, and other learner's, learning needs and have taken steps to develop your own practice
- ◆ use different processes and models to support learners to reflect upon and develop practice, and to develop knowledge essential to the learning context

The assessment for the Unit requires you to produce evidence that you can:

- ◆ analyse and apply your knowledge of adult learning and factors which enhance and impact on learning
- ◆ identify and take action to overcome barriers to learning

General information for candidates (cont)

Unit title: Facilitate Learning in a Social Services Practice Context

- ◆ select, use and critically analyse teaching/learning methods to enable learners to develop and apply knowledge of effective practice
- ◆ communicate effectively with others involved in the learning process, including with service users and carers
- ◆ support learners to apply their understanding of how relevant legislation, policy and guidance contributes to effective practice
- ◆ support learners to apply their knowledge of up to date evidence based practice
- ◆ identify your own learning needs, and learning needs of other learners, and take action to develop own, and other's skills and knowledge
- ◆ be directly observed where the observer comments on the effectiveness of your working relationship with the learner
- ◆ contribute to a learning culture by acting as a resource to facilitate development of others
- ◆ select and use methods to facilitate the learner to reflect on their learning experiences in order to develop practice, and provide rationale for choice

The assessment for the Unit requires you to produce evidence that you can describe effective and ineffective communication; describe positive and negative aspects of learning environment; evaluate and use your own previous experiences of learning to support learning and development of others; provide examples of your awareness of the impact of difference, diversity and power on the learning environment and on the learner; use methods to help others learn; reflect on your own ways of communicating with learners; identify agency legislation, policy and/or guidance important for learners; and provide accessible information about, and support to learners to learn about agency legislation, policy and/or guidance..

You may already have some of this evidence from previous experience. You can discuss credit transfer and RPL when you devise your plan of action with your assessor.

Your evidence is likely to consist of several different types of item covering both product and process. Centres will advise you about any specific requirements. Some examples of items of evidence you might provide are:

- ◆ critically reflective accounts of how you have met each of the Outcomes
- ◆ witness testimony from others involved in the learning process (learners, colleagues, service users, assessors, other professionals, university or college tutors etc)
- ◆ produce evidence to specifically demonstrate knowledge gained, eg assignments, reports, extracts of minutes, supervision notes, practice documents, copy of record of Post Registration Training and Learning etc
- ◆ a critically reflective narrative of learning from the Unit as a whole
- ◆ video, audio, oral presentations
- ◆ role play and simulations-
- ◆ copy of record of Post Registration Training and Learning
- ◆ direct observation of practice is mandatory

If you take this Unit along with one or more other Units, you may be able to present evidence for more than one Unit at the same time. In this way, you can provide a much fuller record of several interconnected aspects of your personal development. It is possible, therefore, to use evidence generated as part of this Unit to gain credit for more than one Unit.