



Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Working in an Early Education and Childcare Setting

Unit code: DF4Y 34

Unit purpose: This Unit is intended to provide a practical understanding of working in an early education and childcare setting. It is designed to enable candidates to understand the features of working in an early education and childcare setting and of how to observe, plan, record and report in that context. It is intended for candidates who want to work with children in an early education and childcare setting and to build their skills and make them competent to work with children, including those for whom additional support is required, and as part of a team of other professionals.

This Unit can only be achieved within a real working environment and it is expected that candidates will spend a minimum of 60 days in appropriate workplace setting.

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

- ◆ Analyse how learning, or in the case of Playwork-play, takes place in an early education and/or childcare setting (select a minimum of 2 developmental/childhood stages)
- ◆ Demonstrate knowledge of how to plan, organise and implement development and learning opportunities in an early education and/or childcare setting (use the same developmental/childhood stages selected for Outcome 1)
- ◆ Identify and demonstrate how appropriate skills are used to create a nurturing and stimulating learning and/or Playwork environment
- ◆ Evaluate your own contribution in creating a nurturing and professional service for children

Credit value: 3 HN Credit at SCQF level 7: (24 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 recommended that candidates should have, or be able to demonstrate, an understanding of the development and behaviour of children. This may be evidenced by significant experience working with children. Evidence could also be through achievement of current NQ Units or equivalent, which assess knowledge and understanding of children in the age range birth to 12 years, or SVQ level 2 Early Years Care and Education.

General information for centres (cont)

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 Problem Solving, Working with Others, Information Technology, Numeracy and Communication to levels required by occupations in early education and childcare or progression pathways supported by the HNC Early Education and Childcare.

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 is included in the framework for the HNC Early Education and Childcare

Assessment:

For Outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 4.

The assessment for this Unit may take the form of an overall workplace folio which will consist of 6 records of reflective practice. These should reflect their role and that of other adults in promoting a stimulating and nurturing environment for children. They may be selected from the following:

- ◆ Planning session (may include responsive planning)
- ◆ Consultation with mentor/supervisor
- ◆ Meeting with other appropriate professionals
- ◆ Indoor/outdoor environment
- ◆ Organisation of resources
- ◆ Any other appropriate opportunity

Accounts of reflective practice should contain evidence of planning, observing and evaluating. Evidence of self-analysis may be presented within the accounts of reflective practice, or as a final personal statement.

Please note that all Evidence Requirements for each Outcome must be met.

The delivery and assessment of this mandatory Unit should be integrated with either of the following Units: Curriculum and Assessment in an Early Education and Childcare Setting, or Facilitating Playwork Opportunities. It would be possible to integrate both these Units.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Working in an Early Education and Childcare Setting

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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

Analyse how learning, or in the case of Playwork — play, takes place in an early education and/or childcare setting (select a minimum of 2 developmental/childhood stages).

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Demonstrate an understanding of how curriculum or Playwork theories relate to children
- ◆ Demonstrate an understanding of the role of all professionals in constructing the learning or play environment
- ◆ Demonstrate an understanding of how theories of child development enable an understanding of how to provide appropriate play for children.

Evidence Requirements

This Unit must be undertaken in an appropriate real working environment. Candidates should build up a folio of observations of the ways in which children learn and of the contribution *all* adults make to the process of curriculum planning and/or constructing a play environment. Candidates should provide evidence of awareness of learning and development promotion approaches appropriate for the age and stage of the child and of using different and appropriate techniques of observation.

In recording this information, candidates need to be able to relate the learning and development theories highlighted in this Outcome to their practical application.

They must demonstrate an awareness of the underlying values and principles of working with children and in promoting a positive learning experience for children.

Assessment guidelines

The assessment for this Outcome forms part of an overall folio for the Unit. The candidate will demonstrate how learning takes place in the given context and will carry out and record a minimum of six written observations which reflect the practice observed and the learning opportunities presented to children in at least 2 developmental/childhood stages.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Working in an Early Education and Childcare Setting

Outcome 2

Demonstrate knowledge of how to plan, organise and implement development and learning opportunities in an early education and/or childcare setting (use the same developmental/childhood stages selected for Outcome 1).

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Show how a curriculum framework can be used to inform the planning process in an early education and childcare setting (in the case of Playwork an appropriate model of play).
- ◆ Demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of how and when to observe children appropriately in a given context.
- ◆ Demonstrate an understanding of how consulting children informs planning.
- ◆ Demonstrate an understanding of how observing children informs the planning process for developmentally appropriate learning and/or play.
- ◆ Demonstrate how keeping records can enable the planning process for developmentally appropriate learning and/or play.

Evidence Requirements

This Unit must be undertaken in an appropriate real working environment. In relation to this Outcome, candidates should demonstrate a strong understanding of the part planning plays in the process of supporting children's development and learning. They should also be aware of importance of consulting with children in developing appropriate learning opportunities. Candidates should contribute to planning and its consequent implementation and keep relevant written records which show and evaluate this contribution.

When working with children it is important to be analytical in thought and to engage in self evaluation. Candidates are expected to show they possess both of these skills in the written examples generated for their folio.

Assessment guidelines

The assessment for this Outcome which forms part of the overall folio of evidence for the Unit will be through successful completion of 6 written accounts of planning, observation and evaluation of the learning experiences offered.

Outcome 3

Identify and demonstrate how appropriate skills are used to create a nurturing and stimulating learning and/or Playwork environment.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Working in an Early Education and Childcare Setting

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Explain how the various roles adults take support the child's learning opportunities.
- ◆ Using analytical skills show the benefits of appropriate adult interactions with children in creating a stimulating, nurturing environment for children.
- ◆ Demonstrate how adults can affect the pace of learning and/or play to create a nurturing and stimulating environment for children.

Evidence Requirements

This Unit must be undertaken in an appropriate real working environment. In generating evidence for this Outcome it is important candidates demonstrate understanding of the specific roles adults play and the way learning can be organised in providing a suitable and stable learning environment for children.

Candidates are directed to the specific roles, attitudes and role modelling that the adult might assume in supporting the child's learning. Candidates should also be aware of the importance of team working and of effective time management.

Assessment guidelines

The assessment for this Outcome which forms part of the overall folio for the Unit will be through successful completion of six accounts of practice. These should reflect their role and the roles of other adults in promoting a positive learning environment and should be selected from the following:

- ◆ Planning session (minimum of two, maximum of four)
- ◆ Team meeting (minimum of one)
- ◆ Meeting with mentor/supervisor (minimum of one)
- ◆ Meeting with parents/carers (if appropriate)
- ◆ Use of specific resources
- ◆ The outdoor environment
- ◆ The production of resources
- ◆ Purchasing small items to facilitate activities.

Outcome 4

Evaluate your own contribution in creating a nurturing and professional service for children

Knowledge and Skills

- ◆ Analyse ways in which you could establish your success in planning and providing for a child's developmental/learning needs.
- ◆ Demonstrate how you would share this information with appropriate other professionals
- ◆ Critically evaluate your performance.
- ◆ Demonstrate how you would review your practice with other appropriate professionals.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Working in an Early Education and Childcare Setting

Evidence Requirements

It is anticipated this Outcome will be evidenced throughout the folio with attention given to particular policies of the workplace, team dynamics and collaboration with other team members, parents and carers. It is important that the candidate is seen as a valuable part of the overall team. The candidate should also show an understanding and awareness of their professional responsibilities to the workplace and how their actions affect others including other staff members, children and parents/carers.

Written evidence will include self analysis or personal statement by the candidate in which he/she reflects on how their actions and behaviours have impacted on the following:

- ◆ Other team members
- ◆ Development and learning (formal or informal) of the children
- ◆ The overall play environment
- ◆ Developing the play environment
- ◆ Observation and planning
- ◆ Working with others
- ◆ Interacting and communicating with children
- ◆ Ability to use appropriate skills in specific contexts.

Assessment Guidelines

The assessment for this Outcome which forms part of the overall folio will be through successful completion of a self analysis schedule of a personal statement.

When complete the overall portfolio will show clearly the candidate's progress in becoming a practitioner.

Administrative Information

Unit code:	DF4Y 34
Unit title:	Working in an Early Education and Childcare Setting
Superclass category:	PQ
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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: Working in an Early Education and Childcare Setting

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 120 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This Unit could be used by Playwork professionals or by early education and childcare professionals. In the case of Playwork, specific theories mentioned will be Playwork theories and activities organised will reflect the age, stage and environmental considerations of where the play is taking place.

The Unit is designed to allow candidates to build up a knowledge and understanding of the workplace and to extend their practical experience of working with children and other team members, alongside their theoretical understanding of how children learn most effectively. It is expected there will be an integrative approach taken to the generation of evidence for this Unit. Aspects of children's development and learning, and the cycle of observation, planning, recording and reporting alongside the important contribution of team working, working with parents and carers and understanding the role of the adult are all integral to building up competence in the workplace and cannot be seen as skills and competences in isolation from each other.

This Unit should be seen as a progressive Unit. It is anticipated the candidates will build up skills and competences as they have additional placement practice. This should be reflected in a workplace folio which will provide evidence for all four Outcomes. Candidates should be able to identify the holistic nature both of the setting and of the ways in which children learn. **The term learn has been used to mean both play and learning and should be reflective of practice in an appropriate early education and childcare setting.** Evidence generated for this Unit will be based on the experiences gained in a *practical* setting. The candidates will select 2 from the following age ranges on which to build up their folio.

- ◆ Birth to 18 months
- ◆ 18–24 months
- ◆ 2–3 years
- ◆ 3–5 years
- ◆ 5–7 years
- ◆ 7–10 years
- ◆ 10–12 years

The evidence should reflect the particular setting and a description of each context should be included.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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Outcome 1

It is suggested candidates should spend time in the workplace building up the folio by making close observation of the ways in which children learn and of the contribution all adults make to the process of curriculum planning/and or Playwork planning. If a curriculum is used, the candidate needs to be aware of what is appropriate to the child's particular learning needs and current curricular documentation. Candidates need to be aware of the different types and styles of observation in order to successfully complete this Unit.

In recording this information, candidates need to be able to relate its practical application to the learning, development and Playwork theories highlighted in Outcome 1. Candidates must also be aware of the underlying values and principles of working with children and in promoting a positive learning experience for children.

Outcome 2

In relation to Outcome 2, candidates are actively encouraged to ask questions of staff in order to build up a strong understanding of the part planning plays in the process of supporting children's development and learning. They should be encouraged to contribute to planning and its consequent implementation by keeping relevant written records which show and evaluate their contribution.

When working with children it is important to be analytical in thought and to engage in self evaluation. Candidates are expected to show they possess both of these skills in the written work generated for their folio.

Outcome 3

In generating evidence for this Outcome, it is important to understand the particular and specific roles adults play and the way learning can be organised to provide a suitable and stable learning environment for children. Candidates are directed to the specific roles, attitudes and role modelling the adult might assume in supporting the child's learning.

Candidates should also be aware of the importance of team working and of effective time management.

This Outcome could also highlight the importance of understanding how children become numerate and literate and the ways in which adults can promote and develop this. It could reflect the child's age and stage of development and readiness for the processes of literacy and numeracy.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Working in an Early Education and Childcare Setting

It is important to indicate in the written folio the particular features of the learning environment which made this process possible for the child. Candidates would be expected to show how they have contributed to this development and how they have used observation and assessment skills effectively.

Outcome 4

It is anticipated this Outcome will be evidenced throughout the folio with attention given to the particular policies of the workplace, team dynamics and collaboration with other team members, parents and carers. It is important that the candidate is seen as a valuable part of the overall team. The candidate should also show an understanding and awareness of their professional responsibilities to the workplace and how their actions affect others including other staff members, children and parents/carers.

The candidate will also show an ability to critically analyse and evaluate their own practice, to respond to constructive criticism and to act on advice.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

Candidates will require guidance from centres to ensure that they adopt a suitable approach to the Unit. Centres will also have to allow time to monitor the progress of candidates. There is a requirement for a number of formal time-tabled hours for candidates to cover the theoretical knowledge required.

Centres may find it advisable to appoint a mentor for the candidate. This should be someone at the candidate's place of work or placement who can monitor progress and who can confirm the authenticity of the personal reports submitted by candidates. If centres do take this approach, it may be helpful to arrange some induction training for mentors prior to the commencement of the Unit. In these circumstances, mentors could be given training to help them monitor portfolios and ensure that portfolios contain all the requisite evidence for assessment.

This Unit is best delivered as an ongoing Unit throughout an HNC programme to enable the candidate to build up competence. It is recommended that delivery and assessment of this Unit is combined with one or more others, such as Curriculum and Assessment in an Early Education and Childcare Setting, Facilitating Playwork Opportunities, Working with Children 0-3; 3-5; 5-8; 8-12, Team Working in Childcare and Promoting Language, Literacy and Numeracy in Early Education and Childcare

Open learning

This Unit is not suitable for open learning delivery as this Unit can only be achieved within a real working environment/appropriate work placement.

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

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Working in an Early Education and Childcare Setting

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 in an Early Education and Childcare Setting

This Unit is designed to enable you to gain an understanding of the features and requirements of working with children in an early education and/or childcare setting. The Unit is intended to enable you to develop the knowledge and skills to observe, plan, record and report in the context of your workplace setting. It is also intended to make you competent to work with children and as part of a team of other professionals.

You should be in a work placement or employed in the early education and/or childcare sector. If you are undertaking an HNC in Early Education and Childcare you will have the opportunity to relate theory to practice.

This Unit can only be achieved within a real working environment and it is expected that you will spend a minimum of 60 days in an appropriate workplace setting. Most of the evidence required will be generated by you as part of your normal course of employment or placement. You will need the co-operation of your employer or placement supervisor and you should be prepared to seek their assistance.

You will need to complete a folio for the assessment of this Unit, which will show clearly your progress from analytical observer of good practice to the role of competent practitioner. You should generate evidence for this from your placements or from your place of work and so it is important to remember that confidentiality is important. You should never write in a way which can easily identify a particular child or children.