



Higher National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Essential Skills for Care Practice

Unit code: FN27 34

Superclass: PA

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Unit purpose

This Unit has been designed to enable the candidate to develop the knowledge and skills to carry out competencies and calculations that are frequently used within their role of care practitioner. The candidate will also develop a knowledge of common medical conditions and the assessment, care and treatment that may be required.

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

- 1 Investigate signs and symptoms for one common medical condition and the assessment, care and treatment that may be required.
- 2 Calculate, interpret and record numerical data relevant to care.
- 3 Demonstrate a range of competencies associated with safe and effective care practice.

Recommended prior knowledge and skills

Candidates should have good communication skills, both written and oral. These can be evidenced either by the achievement of nationally recognised qualifications for example Higher English or a qualification equivalent to SCQF level 6 or by the completion of a pre-course interview part of which could take the form of a written assignment. The skills to undertake this Unit could also be demonstrated through an employer's reference or the process of application and interview. In addition to this candidates should preferably have undertaken some work experience, paid or voluntary, in a health care setting.

Credit points and level

2 Higher National Unit credits at SCQF level 7: (16 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.*

General information (cont)

Core Skills

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill	None
Core Skill component	Using Number at SCQF level 5 Critical Thinking at SCQF level 5

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit Specification.

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 of the HNC/HND Care and Administrative Practice. It is further recommended that this Unit is taught at the beginning of the course prior to the candidates commencing placement.

Assessment

This Unit could be assessed in three ways.

Outcome 1 could be the collaboration of an information leaflet. This must be evidenced based, and a bibliography page submitted.

Outcome 2 will be questions relating to calculations and measurements. This could be an on-line closed-book assessment.

Outcome 3 should be a Record of Achievement to record the candidate's ability to carry out competencies and procedures effectively using a holistic approach. This will be carried out when the candidate is working or on placement in a care setting and monitored by a supervisor/mentor.

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 signs and symptoms for one common medical condition and explain the assessment, care and treatment that may be required.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Signs and symptoms of clinical conditions
- ◆ Assessments undertaken
- ◆ Care required
- ◆ Treatment options

Clinical conditions should be examined by each candidate from the following body systems:

- ◆ Gastro-intestinal problems
- ◆ Respiratory problems
- ◆ Cardiovascular problems
- ◆ Central nervous system problems
- ◆ Endocrine problems, musculoskeletal or malignant disease

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ investigate the signs and symptoms of one common medical condition
- ◆ identify and explain at least two assessments that may be undertaken to confirm diagnosis of a common medical condition
- ◆ identify and explain the care that may be required to manage these medical conditions
- ◆ explain the Treatment options that may be offered.

Assessment Guidelines

Candidates could demonstrate their knowledge and skills by providing an information leaflet which would meet the Evidence Requirements and could be used in a clinical setting as an educational tool. A bibliography page must be submitted and candidates should be guided to research common conditions statistically relevant to the context of health within contemporary Scotland.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Essential Skills for Care Practice

Outcome 2

Calculate, interpret and record numerical data relevant to care.

Knowledge and/or Skills

In relation to the following procedures: Physiological measurements, specimen collection, body mass index, fluid balance.

Recording of results

- ◆ Accurately
- ◆ Graphically
- ◆ Numerically

Interpretation of results:

- ◆ Interpretation of graphs
- ◆ Recognition of normal values
- ◆ Recognition of deviation from the norm

Factors that can affect the reliability of results:

- ◆ Environmental factors
- ◆ Individual factors
- ◆ Faulty equipment
- ◆ Faulty technique

Numerical skills required for accurate calculations including:

- ◆ Addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions, decimals, percentages and conversion, eg grams/milligrams/micrograms

Evidence Requirements

The ability to record results of procedures accurately, using appropriate charts.

Candidates will be required to:

- ◆ interpret a graph
- ◆ recognise a normal value
- ◆ recognise deviation from a norm in relation to two procedures
- ◆ recognise factors that can affect the reliability of results
- ◆ numerical skills required for accurate calculations including, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions, decimals, percentages and conversion.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Essential Skills for Care Practice

Assessment Guidelines

A closed-book assessment of 20 multiple choice questions which meet the Evidence Requirements. This assessment may be completed on-line.

Calculators may be used in all parts of this assessment.

Candidates will be required to achieve 80% (**to maintain professional standard**) to pass.

Assessments should vary from year to year and alternative assessments should be available for re-assessment or for use with different groups.

Outcome 3

Demonstrate a range of competencies and procedures associated with safe and effective care practice.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Organisational policy in relation to competencies
- ◆ Awareness of administration of medicine
- ◆ Physiological measurements and monitoring
- ◆ Approaches to ensuring adequate nutrition
- ◆ Obtaining and testing specimens
- ◆ Sterile dressing technique
- ◆ Pressure area prevention and treatment
- ◆ Wound assessment
- ◆ Continence management
- ◆ Catheter care
- ◆ Clinical/therapeutic activities
- ◆ Foot care

Evidence Requirements

It will be necessary for candidates to provide evidence that they are aware that health care procedures should be documented in the care plan and must be carried out in accordance with organisational policy. It will be necessary for the candidate to recognise areas of competence and the parameters of their role.

- ◆ Use of appropriate interpersonal skills when carrying out competencies.
- ◆ Promoting safe practice which complies with employer's policies and procedures.
- ◆ Observation by a qualified supervisor/mentor.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Essential Skills for Care Practice

Assessment Guidelines

An integrated assessment in the form of a Record of Achievement should be used for recording evidence of the candidate's ability. A supervisor/mentor will observe the candidate carrying out competencies, candidates will provide evidence of

- ◆ using appropriate interpersonal skills when carrying out practical techniques
- ◆ promoting safe practice which complies with employer's policies and procedures
- ◆ identifying the appropriate equipment and demonstrating the correct procedure for the practical technique/competencies
- ◆ signed as satisfactory when observed by a qualified supervisor/mentor.

Candidates should aim to demonstrate ability in relation to these procedures on a minimum of three occasions. Candidates should be observed on each occasion. Evidence can be compiled in the form of checklists, completed recording sheets and reflective accounts. Where candidates are unable to provide evidence for all the procedures, simulation may be used for up to five procedures.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Essential Skills for Care Practice

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 is a mandatory clinical route Unit in the Group Award HNC in Care and Administrative Practice. This Unit is primarily intended to help candidates working in a care setting to contribute to individuals care by providing appropriate care.

It is essential that candidates are aware that they need to achieve all Evidence Requirements for the award.

Outcomes could be taught and assessed in an integrated manner to ensure that the candidates demonstrate a holistic approach to care. This Unit may also be delivered as a stand-alone Unit.

If this is taught as part of the HNC/HND Care and Administrative Practice then the completed Record of Achievement should be included in the portfolio created through the Unit: *Personal Development Planning*.

Outcome 1

Investigate the signs and symptoms of one common medical condition and explain the assessment, care and treatment that may be required in relation to clinical conditions such as.

Asthma, chest infections and cystic fibrosis

Angina, myocardial infarction and hypertension

Peptic ulcer and inflammatory bowel disorders

Parkinson's disease, cerebrovascular accident,

Depression and dementia

Diabetes

Rheumatoid arthritis

Liver disease

Malignant disease and palliative care

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Essential Skills for Care Practice

Candidates should be able to and explain the presenting signs and symptoms that a patient who has any of the stated common medical conditions may present with before diagnosis is confirmed. The effects on the individual if the medical condition is left untreated can also be explored.

Candidates should have a basic understanding of the assessment procedure that may be carried out to confirm diagnosis. This should include history taking, baseline observations, and baseline diagnostic tests, and any further investigations that may be required. Topics to be covered could include factors to consider, eg Food, age, drugs, time of day and body mass in relation to assessment. Lectures could also include care of the patient needing clinical assessment, types of assessment. For example specimens, ECG and diagnostic imaging.

Candidates should have a basic understanding of the care and treatment that a patient may receive by the multidisciplinary team to manage their condition. Specific health care support intervention could be examined and emphasised and significant others in contributing to the care needs should be explained. Candidates will use a holistic approach in examining care ensuring that the physical, psychological social and environmental care is assessed. Actual and potential problems should be identified and the intervention that needs to be delivered.

Outcome 2

This should be taught through classroom demonstration and practice. Sample documentation should be available for candidates to examine and use to record results. Case study material with associated charts should be made available and candidates could work in groups to evaluate the individual patient/client's condition and report on their findings. Candidates should be taught in the context of health care. The ability to recognise and understand normal values is of extreme importance and as is the ability to know the limitations of their role and when and to whom to report findings. The following care procedures should be examined. Physiological measurements, specimen collection, body mass index and fluid balance.

Candidates should be familiar with Units of measurement used in health care and should understand the importance of being able to carry out simple conversions. For example, candidates might be asked to convert grams to milligrams to micrograms or convert fractions to decimals.

Calculations should be related to events that occur in a health care environment, eg the calculation of body mass index or the amount of intravenous fluid administered in millilitres per minute if one litre is to be administered over a four-hour period. The importance of accurate fluid balance charts and management should be explored. Candidates should also be aware of the factors that can affect results.

Outcome 3

This should be taught through classroom demonstration and it would be beneficial for candidates to have the opportunity to become familiar with a range of equipment and procedures through classroom demonstration and practice prior to practical placement experience. Candidates should have the opportunity to simulate situations in a practical classroom.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Essential Skills for Care Practice

Candidates should understand the importance of applying the values and principles from other parts of the HNC programme. Issues relating to informed consent, confidentiality, privacy, health and safety should be discussed. Practical placement preparation should include role-play and simulation to enable candidates an opportunity to develop the ability to explain and carry out procedures safely and sensitively. Discussions should take place about the need to have organisational policies and candidates should be encouraged to locate and read policies that exist within their placement workplace. Candidates should be given the opportunity to explore issues relating to developing competences to enable a contribution to health care. The ability to recognise a need for professional and clinical supervision and to recognise limitations of one's competence should be discussed as central to good practice.

Tutor input should provide information on all of the elements listed below each competency. Experts within the field could be involved as visiting speakers to ensure current evidence based practice is delivered to provide underpinning knowledge in the following procedures.

- ◆ **Awareness of administration of medication** — A knowledge of European/national legislation in relation to administration of medication including Professional standards and local policy. Understand the different routes for the administration of medicine, storage of medication and record keeping, Care practitioners must also be aware of their sphere of competence in relation to medication administration.
- ◆ **Physiological measurements and monitoring** — candidates will be competent in basic physiological measurements and the appropriate recording methods used. This will include; Blood pressure, temperature, pulse, respiration, peak flow, oxygen saturation, BMI, height and weight. Normal values should be known and reporting of findings.
- ◆ **Approaches to ensuring adequate nutrition** — this will involve an understanding of basic nutritional needs and how to support an individual to meet this. The student will be able to support an individual to eat and drink, will be able to provide advice and information on nutrition, have an understanding of the equipment used; PEG feeding and NG feeding techniques. The candidate should be able to accurately complete food, fluid balance and must charts. The common types of nutritional supplements and their benefits should be examined. Cultural diversity and how this may impact on diet. Policy and procedure in relation to nutrition.
- ◆ **Obtaining and testing specimens** —specimens include; urine, faeces, sputum and blood, tests will include routine urinalysis, capillary blood glucose/haemoglobin, occult blood in faeces. Local and national policy and protocols should be explored. Candidates should identify the correct equipment and material required.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Essential Skills for Care Practice

- ◆ **Sterile dressing technique** — explanation of procedure and preparation of the individual, hygiene measures, disposal of dressing, observation of site, application of new dressing, reporting and recording, equipment and material required should be discussed in relation to this task, safely perform basic wound care using clean and aseptic technique. Cross infection, documentation of wound charts. Candidates should be familiar with different types and purposes of dressings.
- ◆ **Pressure area prevention and treatment** — an understanding of the assessment tools, eg: Waterlow and Braden could be examined. Techniques and equipment to be used to prevent pressure should be explored, eg; pressure relieving mattresses. Observation, monitoring and reporting in relation to skin condition should be discussed. Candidates should be aware of local policy and protocols and national guidelines.
- ◆ **Wound assessment** — candidates should be competent in; wound assessment and recognition of infection and factors contributing to poor healing, the process of, factors affecting and potential complications of wound healing, removal of wound closure materials and appropriate disposal, reporting and recording of findings including appropriate advice to service user. Candidates should have an understanding of national and local policy.
- ◆ **Contenance management** — this will include an identification of the common causes of incontinence, assessment of continence and the treatment pathways and aids available, eg bladder training, absorbent pads, convenes, underwear with built-in continence pads and catheters. Treatment of infection and the accurate recording of fluid balance. Candidates will be expected to undertake stoma care.
- ◆ **Catheter care** — the following will be covered using national guidelines and local policy; appropriate hygiene measures to prevent infection, recognition of localised infection. Procedures for the safe removal of a urinary catheter and disposal of used equipment, including personal protective equipment. Supporting individuals who have urinary catheters. The insertion and removal of an in and out catheter. The equipment and materials required for urinary catheterisation.
- ◆ **Clinical/therapeutic activities** — these activities will include the candidate will be familiar with a range of clinical and therapeutic activities and be able to follow direction and instruction from the appropriate registered practitioner.
- ◆ Monitor and manage the environment during and after clinical/therapeutic activities. Support the individual during and after clinical /therapeutic activities and assist the practitioner to implement clinical/therapeutic activities.
- ◆ Under direction fit healthcare equipment, medical devices, assisted technology, or products to meet individuals clinical needs.
- ◆ Under direction supporting individuals participating in therapy programmes to restore or maintain optimum independence in the management of dysphagia.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Essential Skills for Care Practice

- ◆ Under direction implementing physiotherapy programmes and treatments for individuals who have severely restricted movement/mobility to restore movement and function this will include; stairs, passive exercises, mobility and movement programmes, exercise session.
- ◆ Under direction provide support to individuals to develop their communication skills, assist and support individuals to use alternative and augmentative communication systems.
- ◆ **Foot care** — candidates will be competent in providing care for individuals who have been assessed by a podiatrist as requiring help with general foot care. Candidates should understand the importance of maintaining foot health, recognising changes in foot conditions, identifying the equipment and materials used to maintain the feet of individuals. Candidates should work within their sphere of competence, ensuring accurate recording and reporting.

The acquisition of skills should be seen as a process and a Record of Achievement can demonstrate that candidates have:

- ◆ underpinning knowledge/an evidence base relating to procedures
- ◆ promoting safe practice which complies with employer's policies and procedures
- ◆ observed the procedure being carried out correctly (this may be on one or more occasions depending on candidate competence)
- ◆ demonstrated the procedure under supervision (this may be on one or more occasions depending on candidate competence)
- ◆ judged to have carried out the procedure competently on a minimum of three occasions when supervised by a qualified member or members of staff, preferably the named supervisor/mentor.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

The first part of this Unit will prepare the student to gain the necessary knowledge and understanding of how to care for patients with specific disorders and the treatment that may be required to manage their condition.

This Unit should provide candidates with the opportunity to put theory into practice in a non-threatening simulated environment prior to practical placement.

It is recommended that theory in this Unit be linked to theory contained in other Units in the programme. Links can be made to values and principles, health and safety policy, and physiology.

Candidates should be given opportunities to gain confidence in their ability to perform calculations through the provision of formative assessment opportunities.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Essential Skills for Care Practice

College/placement liaison is also essential, as candidates will need access to a supervisor/mentor who will observe and sign candidate evidence recorded in a Record of Achievement it is recommended that the student completes a minimal 176 hours in practice placement.

Open learning

Theory for this Unit may be developed for delivery by open learning.

The Unit can only be achieved by candidates working in a care setting under the supervision of a qualified supervisor/mentor who will assess their competence in relation to the practical techniques contained in the Unit.

Opportunities for the use of e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or e-checklists. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all candidate evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. Further advice is available in *SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education (AA1641, March 2003)*, *SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools (BD2625, June 2005)*.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

This Unit has the Problem Solving component of Critical Thinking and the Numeracy component of Using Number embedded in it. This means that when candidates achieve the Unit, their Core Skills profile will also be updated to show they have achieved Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6 and Using Number at SCQF level 6.

There are opportunities to develop:

Communication: may be evidenced via the candidate's work with individuals and groups and competencies achieved through the Record of Achievement.

Working with Others: may be evidenced in the candidate's workplace via their ability to interact, communicate and negotiate with those with whom they come into contact.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT): may be evidenced in researching current evidence based practice and the 20 question assessment may be delivered on line.

Numeracy: may be evidenced through candidate ability to carry out physiological measurements.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Essential Skills for Care Practice

Results of measurements are recorded graphically and numerically. Candidates will recognise normal values and deviations from the norm. Candidates will also demonstrate the ability to carry out basic calculations relating to drug dosage.

Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Core Skills Components Using Number and Critical Thinking at SCQF level 5 embedded.	02/12/11

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General information for candidates

Unit title: Essential Skills for Care Practice

This Unit is designed to enable you to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to understand the signs and symptoms, then the assessment and care that may be required to treat and manage common medical conditions. You will also develop the knowledge to undertake calculations and the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills to enable you to carry out practical procedures and contribute to care practice.

Practical work experience is essential for this Unit. You will need to be working or on placement in a care setting and have a qualified practitioner as a supervisor/mentor as you progress through this Unit.

Outcome 1 will introduce you to the signs and symptoms of common medical conditions and the assessment care and treatment that may be required to treat and manage these conditions.

Outcome 2 will increase your confidence in carrying out calculations. You will be introduced to Units of measurements used when carrying out practical techniques. You will become familiar with different care situations that require measurements and calculations to be made and you will learn how to carry these out accurately.

Outcome 3 requires you to carry out a range of competencies. You will be shown how to do these and then you will practise under supervision until you become competent

The Unit is assessed in three ways: Outcome 1 – to complete the Unit successfully, you will have to achieve a satisfactory level of performance on a piece of assessed work. Towards the end of the Unit you will undertake an assessment under open-book conditions. You will be required to produce a leaflet which includes the signs and symptoms, assessment care and treatment that may be required to treat a common medical condition.

Outcome 2 — questions will be asked relating to calculations, graphs and measurements. This will be done as a closed-book test which may be completed on-line.

Outcome 3 — A Record of Achievement to record your ability to carry out practical techniques/competencies, using a holistic approach. This will be completed when you are working or on placement in a care setting and monitored by your supervisor/mentor.