



Higher National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Learning Disability: Promoting Safe and Effective Practice

Unit code: H3LE 34

Superclass: PN

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Version: 01

Unit purpose

The purpose of this Unit is to enable candidates to work sensitively and effectively in partnership with people with learning disabilities. The focus of this Unit is to support candidates to engage and deliver safe and effective person-centred practice. In addition they will gain an understanding of the background to contemporary approaches to learning disability care and the key concepts that underpin quality care.

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

- 1 Explain historical and contemporary approaches to learning disability and the impact of current policy and legislation.
- 2 Explain the impact of learning disability on learning and development.
- 3 Describe how to promote high quality care for individuals with learning disabilities.
- 4 Promote advocacy and empowerment in partnership with individuals who have a learning disability.

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. In addition to this, candidates should preferably have undertaken some work experience, paid or voluntary, in a health care setting.

General information (cont)

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.*

Core Skills

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of:

- ◆ *Communication* at SCQF level 5
- ◆ *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 5
- ◆ *Working with Others* at SCQF level 5
- ◆ *Information and Communication Technology* at SCQF level 5

in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components.

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.

Assessment

This Unit should be assessed through two Instruments of Assessment. Outcomes 1 and 4 could be an essay of 2,000–2,500 words that meets the Evidence Requirements and be academically written and referenced. Outcomes 2 and 3 could be an integrated assessment of a seen case study relevant to work-based practice or a hypothetical situation.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

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The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, Knowledge and/or Skills, and Evidence Requirements are mandatory.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the Knowledge and/or Skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Outcome 1

Explain historical and contemporary approaches to learning disability and the impact of current policy and legislation.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Current understanding and perspectives of 'learning disabilities'.
- ◆ An historical and cultural perspective on learning disability.
- ◆ Models of service delivery.
- ◆ Issues pertaining to inclusion of individuals with learning disabilities, including the impact of local and national legislation and policy.

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ explain the social construction of disability
- ◆ discuss current models of service delivery within contemporary Scotland
- ◆ discuss the inclusion of individuals with learning disability in relation to current local and national legislation and policy

Assessment guidelines

This Outcome could be assessed with Outcome 4 by an academically written and referenced essay of 2,000–2,500 words that meets the Evidence Requirements.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Learning Disability: Promoting Safe and Effective Practice

Outcome 2

Explain the impact of learning disability on learning and development.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ The diversity of learning disabilities.
- ◆ How learning disabilities can affect learning and development across the lifespan.
- ◆ Language and communication difficulties.
- ◆ Key interventions and support aids.

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ explain the effects of learning disability on the life of an individual
- ◆ discuss communication difficulties experienced by individuals with learning disabilities
- ◆ identify key interventions and support aids that promote effective communication

Assessment guidelines

The assessment for this Outcome will be integrated with the assessment for Outcome 3.

Outcome 3

Describe how to promote high quality care for individuals with learning disabilities.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Key concepts underpinning high quality care and professional learning disability practice.
- ◆ Assessment process and care planning.
- ◆ Factors that may impact on the individuals experience of care.
- ◆ The role of the family and significant others.

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ discuss the key concepts underpinning high quality care within learning disability practice
- ◆ describe the assessment process and appropriate care planning strategies
- ◆ identify factors that may impact on the individual's experience of care
- ◆ explain the role of family and significant others in relation to the individual with learning disability

Assessment guidelines

The assessment for this Outcome will be integrated with the assessment for Outcome 2 and could be seen as a case study relevant to work-based practice or a hypothetical situation.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Learning Disability: Promoting Safe and Effective Practice

Outcome 4

Promote advocacy and empowerment in partnership with individuals who have a learning disability.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Factors that lead to disadvantage and disempowerment of individuals with learning disabilities.
- ◆ Advocacy and empowerment and their effects on individuals' lives.
- ◆ User/carer involvement.
- ◆ Vulnerability, abuse and current legislation.

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ explain the factors that lead to disadvantage and disempowerment in the lives of individuals with learning disability
- ◆ describe advocacy and empowerment and evaluate their effects on an individual's life
- ◆ describe the candidate's own role in promoting empowerment and in protecting the individual from abuse and exploitation
- ◆ discuss current vulnerable adult legislation and its role in safeguarding individuals

Assessment guidelines

Outcomes 1 and 4 could be an integrated assessment of an essay.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Learning Disability: Promoting Safe and Effective 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

The Unit is primarily designed to enable candidates to acquire a current knowledge based on learning disability practice and understand how this has emerged from reaction to the oppression that people with learning disabilities have experienced historically.

Outcome 1 — introduces the historical perspective and moves candidates forward through major influences to current thinking in relation to both the assessment, support and enabler role of the learning disability nurse. The historical perspective need not be overly detailed but should highlight significant theories and movements including:

- ◆ the eugenics movement and its effect on thinking, policy and practice
- ◆ institutionalisation and its lasting effects on individuals and on society
- ◆ normalisation theory and its positive and negative impact

Candidates should also be made aware of how the social model of disability, with its emphasis on how society is constructed to protect the rights of its more powerful members, is more valid for their work practice than the outdated medical model with its emphasis on the shortcomings of the individual and focus on the impairment rather than the individual person. They should be clear that the social model of disability does not deny the impairment but considers it as just one contributory aspect of an individual's make-up and life circumstances.

The importance of the Scottish Executive's review of services and the resulting policy document *The same as you?* should be examined and candidates should make sure they become familiar with its overall content and particularly its objectives as the basis of all current and future work with people with learning disabilities and their families in Scotland.

This Outcome also enables candidates to become familiar with the general processes that influence social policy for individuals with learning disability. Candidates should consider the influences of the past to current provision for individuals with learning disability, including the contributions of the statutory, voluntary and private sectors and this should include the contribution of unpaid carers. Candidates should also look at professional and support roles including learning disability nurse, occupational therapist, physiotherapists, etc. Candidates should also examine publications such as *Strengthening the Commitment (2012)* which aims to ensure that people with learning disabilities of all ages have access to expert Learning Disabilities Nurses and that their families and carers get the best support and care.

Candidates should also examine legislation which promotes the rights and responsibilities of individuals. This will be achieved by examining legislation such as the Human Rights Act 1998 as well as specific sections of other current key pieces of legislation should be examined as deemed appropriate, eg:

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Learning Disability: Promoting Safe and Effective Practice

- ◆ Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000
- ◆ Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003
- ◆ Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act (2007)
- ◆ Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010
- ◆ Equality Act (2010)
- ◆ Patients Rights (Scotland) Act 2011

Candidates should also examine publications such as:

- ◆ A Life Like Any Other? Human Rights of Adults with Learning Disabilities (2007)
- ◆ National Guidance on Self-Directed Support (2007)

This Outcome also examines inclusion. Candidates should learn about the social context of inclusion, eg the importance and roles of social networks, involvement in social groups, and the political context, eg government policy and emphasis on social inclusion and citizenship. They should be encouraged to think about the ways in which people with learning disabilities have been denied the rights afforded to other people and the need to redress the balance.

Outcome 2 — Within Outcome 2 candidates will investigate definitions of term learning disability. They will also examine topics such as terminology/labelling/stereotyping. The candidate will then examine a range of causes, types and associated conditions of learning disability including the following:

- ◆ Down's Syndrome
- ◆ Fragile X Syndrome
- ◆ Cerebral Palsy
- ◆ Autism
- ◆ Epilepsy

Candidates will then proceed to examine child development and the effects of learning disability across the lifespan and the effect on the nature and level of support required by individuals with a wide diversity of needs. Candidates should also investigate both the positive and negative effects of a range of factors which may affect development.

- ◆ Health
 - genetic influences
 - physical changes (eg hormone imbalance, growth spurt)
 - mental health
 - hygiene
 - rest
 - exercise
- ◆ Environmental life circumstances
 - social
 - cultural and gender issues
 - housing
 - play areas
 - pollution
 - school and college provision

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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- ◆ Biological
 - heredity disability
 - secondary disability
 - family disability or illness

- ◆ Life circumstances
 - special needs
 - position in family
 - times of transition (eg moving to a new home)
 - starting/changing school/college
 - hospitalisation
 - children who use more than one language
 - stress
 - abuse
 - stereotypical views in the community

Candidates must examine in-depth how an individual's own disability or illness can affect their learning and development.

Facilitating effective communication and the importance of good interpersonal skills should also be examined within this Outcome. Candidates should explore in some depth the meaning of partnership in relation to people with learning disabilities, family members and others, eg taking the lead from the person with learning disability, facilitating effective communication, good listening and observation skills. Candidates should be aware that people with a learning disability often complain that doctors (and other healthcare professionals) tend to talk to their carer or helper, rather than talking to them directly. Finding time and communication aids (when required) for people with learning disabilities is extremely important. Ways to facilitate communication and aids and support devices will be examined, eg:

- ◆ Signing (Makaton and BSL)
- ◆ IT aids
- ◆ Hearing aids
- ◆ Augmentive and communication aids

Centres may also invite a Speech and Language Therapist to be a guest speaker.

Outcome 3 — Candidates should identify the principles of good practice in relation to the delivery of individual patient/client care:

- ◆ promotion of individual rights and choice
- ◆ equality and diversity
- ◆ maintenance of confidentiality
- ◆ effective communication skills
- ◆ recognition of the individual's rights and beliefs

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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Candidates should be taught about the main principles of 'person-centredness', eg involving the individual as a partner (or involving an advocate where the individual is unable to advocate for him or herself because of complex needs) at all stages of the care process, starting with hopes and aspirations, focusing upon positive images and aspects rather than negative, taking the lead from the person, enabling the person to make choices and decisions rather than imposing your own ideas, working with rather than for, the centrality of communication and relationships in person-centred work. Candidates must also explore the role of family and significant others within this Outcome.

Candidates have to evidence their ability to make a holistic assessment. They should include the aspects in Outcome 2 explaining the importance of these issues within the care planning process and the benefits to the individual. Candidates should understand the reasons for care plans and the stages of the care planning process. It is understood that candidates may be in a variety of care related work placements. Each of these placements will have a variety of care planning processes. The candidate should have an understanding of the areas to be covered in a care plan.

Candidates should be given the opportunity to be involved in the development and implementation of a care plan within their clinical placement. It is recognised that this will be within the limitations of confidentiality. This may mean that candidates are restricted in their role but they should be included as much as possible. They must also ensure the service user is at the centre of this process. The candidate, with the guidance and support of a mentor or supervisor, should ensure the individual service user is clearly involved in the process. The candidate should ensure the individual's beliefs and preferences are listened to and adhered to within the process and also explore informed consent.

Candidates will need to be aware of the additional needs of people with profound and multiple learning disability including complex health needs along with holistic assessment and the care planning process. Risk assessment and risk assessment tools will also be researched.

Reports that should be discussed within this Outcome are:

- ◆ NHS Education for Scotland (2002) Promoting Health, Supporting Inclusion
- ◆ NHS Education for Scotland (2004) Health Needs Assessment Report

Candidates must explore why people with learning disabilities frequently have greater health needs than the rest of the population, yet they seem to receive significantly less assistance and support in the health services. Candidates should explore the role of the learning disability nurse in identifying and ensuring health needs are met.

Candidates should then examine and evaluate the various mechanisms used to support accountability and quality assurance processes. In addition, candidates should be encouraged to identify other, often more local mechanisms. In evaluating these mechanisms, candidates should be encouraged to consider (from their own placement where possible), relevant documentation, eg inspection reports, clinical governance development plans, audits, etc. Candidates should also evaluate the effects of using these mechanisms in relation to staff, agencies and users of the service.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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Candidates will also explore documents such as:

- ◆ Scottish Government NHS Scotland Quality Strategy 2010
- ◆ NHS Quality Improvement Scotland (2006) best Practice Statements: Promoting Access to healthcare for people with learning disabilities
- ◆ Scottish Executive (2002) Promoting Health, Supporting Inclusion: The national review of the contribution of all nurses and midwives to the care and support of people with learning disabilities
- ◆ NHS Quality Improvement Scotland (2009) Tackling Indifference: healthcare services for people with learning disabilities

Candidates must also explore current research on other factors that impact on service users experience of care, eg staff training, families and carers of people with learning disabilities not being involved, poor communication and partnership working.

Outcome 4 — This Outcome necessitates an understanding of the qualities and skills required for an empowering and facilitative approach to support work. Information on person-centred approaches can be drawn from the work of John O'Brien, Marsha Forrest, Jack Pearpoint, Michael Smull, Helen Sanderson and their associates. It is also important that candidates are made aware of their own responsibility in working with people who are known to be particularly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. They should understand the possible roots of this vulnerability, eg social isolation, disempowerment, communication difficulties, being dependent on others for support, lack of experience and opportunity.

This Outcome should also commence by placing the issue within the context of valuing individuals, rights and responsibilities and the dilemmas which may be involved in protecting individuals while respecting their rights and their responsibility for their own protection. This should be explicitly linked to the responsibilities of professionals as set out within their code of conduct. Reference should also be made here to relevant legislation, eg:

- ◆ The Human Rights Act 1998
- ◆ The Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003
- ◆ Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000

and other charters and statements of rights. The preferences, best interests and empowerment of those we work with must be at the heart of what we do. They should also analyse the skills and qualities partnership requires, eg good listening and observation skills, relationship building, appropriate methods of communicating, teamwork skills, sharing information and responsibilities. Ethics and ethical decision making could also be examined within this Outcome.

Safe guarding and current legislation must also be examined commencing with definitions of types of abuse.

Candidates should have an awareness of social and psychological factors which may give rise to abuse and the need to support those at risk to prevent abuse occurring.

Teaching should not only deal with the broad categories of abuse such as physical, neglect, sexual and emotional, but also with the forms these may take, eg racial abuse, misuse of medication, financial, bullying and self-harm.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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Caution should be exercised when discussing signs of abuse as they may also have alternative explanations and do not always mean that abuse has actually occurred. However the signs should alert staff to consider whether the person has been abused. A range of indicators of abuse should be covered including physical evidence, emotional and behavioural signs and disclosure. Some of these will be common across different ages and service user groups but others will be more specific. Particular importance should be attached to potential symptoms where the explanation is inconsistent with the injury; there are fears of particular places or people and changes in behaviour or emotional state. Listening and communication skills need to be emphasised, as victims of abuse will sometimes disclose in indirect ways, eg non-verbal indicators, withdrawal, and sexualised behaviour.

Candidates should have an awareness of the different service user groups in the workplace and what aspects of their vulnerability make them open to abuse. Various issues such as communication barriers, discrimination, marginalisation and inequalities of power make individuals and groups more vulnerable to abuse. Candidates should be aware of the support available from different agencies, professionals and what is their professional and legal responsibility. At all times their responsibilities and the limits of those responsibilities should be clarified.

Candidates should also explore the policies, procedures and practices which prevent abuse and promote safe caring. Current legislation should also be examined including:

- ◆ Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007
- ◆ Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007

The following textbooks and publications are considered as useful resources:

- ◆ Learning Disabilities: Toward Inclusion (Atherton and Crickmore (Eds) 2011, Churchill Livingstone, Elsevier, Edinburgh)
- ◆ NHS Health Scotland (2004) Health Needs Assessment Report: People with learning disabilities In Scotland (NHS Health Scotland Glasgow)
- ◆ NHS Quality Improvement Scotland (2009) Tackling Indifference: healthcare services for people with learning disabilities (NHS QIS Edinburgh)
- ◆ Scottish Executive (2000). The Same As You? A review of services for people with learning disabilities (Scottish Executive Edinburgh)

Guidance on the delivery of this Unit

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 although it can be taught as a standalone Unit for Continuing Professional Development. It is recommended that this Unit is taught prior to the candidate's commencing placement.

Group discussions can be facilitated to enable candidates to examine a range of perspectives and policies. Candidates are encouraged to research more fully than tutor input.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Learning Disability: Promoting Safe and Effective Practice

Guidance on the assessment of this Unit

Outcome 1 — This Outcome could be assessed with Outcome 4 by an academically written and referenced essay of 2,000–2,500 words that meets the Evidence Requirements.

Outcomes 2 and 3 — The assessment for these Outcomes will be integrated, and could be a seen case study relevant to work-based practice or a hypothetical situation.

Online and Distance Learning

This Unit is suitable for open or distance learning provided there are clear guidelines and quality systems in place to ensure sufficiency and authentication of the candidate's evidence. The placement mentor would require clear supervisor guidelines, and support for supervisors and candidates could be through a virtual learning environment such as Blackboard or Moodle.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There is no automatic certification of the Core Skills, however assessment of this Unit will assume the development of Core Skills necessary in the performance of tasks at this level. For example, assessments are likely to include the use of appropriate information technology and the demonstration of skills required to undertake presentations written and oral which will include the use of complex information.

Candidates will have the opportunity to develop the following Core Skills:

Communication — written and verbal communication will be developed and evidenced through a range of activities including class and small group plenary discussions. It could also be developed through recording, reporting and presenting throughout the assessment process.

Problem Solving — can be developed as candidates collaborate on group investigations and research information.

Working with Others — can be developed as certain activities will require candidates to collaborate with each other, as well as mentors in the candidate's placement to research concepts. It could be developed through team meeting and interaction with staff and individuals involved in service delivery.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) — could be evidenced through maintaining records, preparing reports and the submission of assessment evidence in an electronic format.

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

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General information for candidates

Unit title: Learning Disability: Promoting Safe and Effective Practice

This Unit is intended to provide you with a clear understanding of how to deliver safe and effective person-centred practice. In addition, you will gain an understanding of the background to contemporary approaches to learning disability care and the key concepts that underpin quality care.

Within this Unit you will explore current perspectives of learning disability and the impact of policy and legislation. You will then investigate how learning disability can affect learning and development. Working in partnership with individuals who have a learning disability will be explored also, and you will identify and investigate what contributes to high standards of care. Finally, in the last Outcome you will examine how to safeguard individuals who have learning disabilities.

On completion of the Unit you should be able to:

- 1 Explain historical and contemporary approaches to learning disability and the impact of current policy and legislation.
- 2 Explain the impact of learning disability on learning and development.
- 3 Describe how to promote high quality care for individuals with learning disabilities.
- 4 Promote advocacy and empowerment in partnership with individuals who have a learning disability.

The Unit may be assessed by an essay for Outcomes 1 and 4 and a case study relevant to work-based practice or a hypothetical situation for Outcomes 2 and 3.