



## Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Specification

### General Information

This Graded Unit has been validated as part of the HNC Childhood Practice. Centres are required to develop a project-based assessment in accordance with this validated specification.

**Graded Unit title:** Childhood Practice: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

**Graded Unit code:** H9PR 34

**Type of Project:** Investigation

**Publication date:** August 2018

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 03

### Graded Unit purpose

This Graded Unit is designed to provide evidence that the learner has achieved the following principal aims of the Higher National Certificate in Childhood practice:

- ◆ to enable learners to demonstrate an understanding of the values and principles which underpin work in early learning and the broader childhood practice settings
- ◆ to enable learners to integrate knowledge, theory and practice effectively in a variety of early learning and the broader childhood practice settings
- ◆ to enable learners to have a focus on high quality learning and childcare for children and families
- ◆ to enable learners to explore a rights based practice approach
- ◆ to enable learners to reflect on and critically evaluate their practice
- ◆ to enable learners to develop a working knowledge of current legislation, policy and practice
- ◆ to facilitate progression to higher level education

### Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7)

## Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Specification: General Information (cont)

### Recommended entry to the Graded Unit

It is recommended that the learner should have completed or be in the process of completing the following Units relating to the above principal aims prior to undertaking this Graded Unit:

*Care in Contemporary Society*  
*Leadership Starts with Me*  
*Health Wellbeing and Safeguarding*  
*Lifespan Development: Theoretical Approaches*  
*Support for Play Learning and Development*

### Core Skills

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill                      Problem Solving at SCQF level 6

Core Skill component                      None

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

### Assessment Support Pack

The Assessment Support Pack for this Unit provides assessment and marking guidelines that exemplify the national standard for achievement. It is a valid, reliable and practicable instrument of assessment. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the Assessment Support Pack to ensure a comparable standard. Assessment Support Packs are available on SQA's secure website.

### Equality and inclusion

This Graded Unit has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Further advice can be found on SQA's website:  
**[www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements)**

# Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Specification: Designing the project and assessing learners

**Graded Unit title:** Childhood Practice: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

## Assessment

This Graded Unit will be assessed by the use of a project-based investigation developed by centres. The project should provide the learner with the opportunity to produce evidence that demonstrates she/he has met the aims of this Graded Unit.

The project undertaken by the learner must be a complex task which involves:

- ◆ variables which are complex or unfamiliar
- ◆ relationships which need to be clarified
- ◆ a context which may be unfamiliar to the learner

The project must require the learner to:

- ◆ analyse the task and decide on a course of action for undertaking the project
- ◆ plan and organise work and carry it through to completion
- ◆ reflect on what has been done and draw conclusions for the future
- ◆ produce evidence of meeting the aims which this Graded Unit has been designed to cover.

## Conditions of assessment

The learner should be given a date for completion of the project. However, the instructions for the project should be distributed to allow the learner sufficient time to assimilate the details and carry out the project. During the time between the distribution of the project instructions and the completion date, assessors may answer questions, provide clarification, guidance and reasonable assistance.

Reasonable assistance is the term used by SQA to describe the difference between providing learners with some direction to generate the required evidence for assessment and providing too much support which would compromise the integrity of the assessment. Reasonable assistance is part of all learning and teaching processes. In relation to the assessment of Higher National Project-based Graded Units, assessors may provide advice, clarification, and guidance during the time between the distribution of the project instructions and the completion date, ie at each stage of the project.

Remediation allows an assessor to clarify learner responses, either by requiring a written amendment or by oral questioning, where there is a minor shortfall or omission in evidence requirements. In either case, such instances must be formally noted by the assessor, either in writing or recording, and be made available to the internal and external verifier. In relation to Higher National Project-based Graded Units, learners must be given the opportunity for remediation at each stage of the project.

## Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Specification: Designing the project and assessing learners (cont)

**Graded Unit title:** Childhood Practice: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

The evidence for a Higher National Project-based Graded Unit is generated over time and involves three distinct stages, each of which has to be achieved before the next is undertaken. This means that any re-assessment of stages must be undertaken before proceeding to the next stage. The overall grade is derived from the total number of marks *across all* sections, and should reflect the ability of the learner to work autonomously and the amount of support required. In relation to Higher National Project-based Graded Units, learners who have failed any stage of the project and have been unable to provide the necessary evidence through remediation must be given the opportunity for re-assessment of that stage.

The tutor's role is as a facilitator and so to achieve high marks learners will need to demonstrate a high degree of autonomy throughout the project.

At this level, learners should work independently. It is up to centres to take reasonable steps to ensure that the project is the work of the learner. For example, centres may wish to informally question learners at various stages on their knowledge and understanding of the project on which they have embarked. Centres should ensure that where research etc, is carried out in other establishments or under the supervision of others that the learner does not receive undue assistance.

## Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Specification: Designing the project and assessing learners (cont)

**Graded Unit title:** Childhood Practice: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

### Evidence Requirements for this Graded Unit

The project undertaken by learners will consist of three stages: planning; developing; and evaluating. The following table specifies the minimum evidence required to pass each stage.

Project stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements	% Mark Allocation
Stage 1 — Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ the identification of a Topic and the development of a rationale which is relevant to Childhood Practice settings</li> <li>◆ the aim and objectives, including proposed methods of research and sources to be used.</li> <li>◆ the topic of the investigation should be recorded and agreed with the tutor.</li> <li>◆ identification of relevant theories/approaches to childrens' learning and development and links with knowledge acquired through the HNC</li> <li>◆ an outline of ways in which the topic links to children's individual needs, rights and interests</li> <li>◆ identification of how the topic relates to legislation, local/national initiatives and/or guidelines</li> <li>◆ an appropriately reference literature review to show wider reading around the topic chosen</li> <li>◆ a timescale for each stage of the project with a target completion date</li> </ul> <p><i>The learner <b>must</b> achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Planning stage.</i></p>	30%
Stage 2 — Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ development and/or justified adjustment of aim and objectives as detailed at the planning stage of the topic</li> <li>◆ implementation of the research methods identified to develop the Aim and its Objectives in the project as detailed in the planning stage</li> <li>◆ presentation and critical analysis of the results of the research findings</li> <li>◆ a summary and conclusion of the project findings including links to HNC Units and how they relate to the project</li> <li>◆ recommendations for a suggested strategy to further develop the project in relation to the chosen setting within the sector</li> <li>◆ appropriate referencing of sources used</li> </ul> <p><i>The learner <b>must</b> achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Developing stage.</i></p>	40%

## Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Specification: Designing the project and assessing learners (cont)

**Graded Unit title:** Childhood Practice: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

Project stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements	% Mark Allocation
Stage 3 — Evaluating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ an abstract</li> <li>◆ an evaluation of both the challenges involved and the aspects which were particularly successful including any changes made</li> <li>◆ reflection on the knowledge and skills which have been gained and/or developed whilst carrying out the research and investigation of the topic, linking these clearly to the relevant HNC Units</li> <li>◆ an evaluation of the effectiveness of the research methods used</li> <li>◆ reflection on the effectiveness of the learner's communication and interpersonal skills throughout the project</li> </ul>	30%
	<i>The learner <b>must</b> achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Evaluating stage.</i>	

### Assessing and grading learners

The overall project will be marked out of **100**. Only whole marks should be used.

The percentage of marks allocated to each stage of the project is outlined in the **Evidence Requirements**.

It is a requirement that learners must meet the minimum *Evidence Requirements* for the *Planning* stage *before progressing to the Developing stage before progressing to the Evaluating* stage. Learners may produce evidence over and above that specified in the minimum *Evidence Requirements* and deserve more than half the available marks for that stage. Assessors should use the Grade Related Criteria outlined below to judge learner performance.

Learners are required to work independently to meet the *Evidence Requirements* of the Graded Unit. At the same time, learners need appropriate support. SQA uses the term reasonable assistance to describe the balance between supporting learners in their project and not providing too much assistance.

At the end of *each* stage there should be opportunities for remediation and reassessment of learners for that particular stage. This includes the final *Evaluation* stage. Any reassessment should be carried out in line with the centre's own assessment policy.

## Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Specification: Designing the project and assessing learners (cont)

**Graded Unit title:** Childhood Practice: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

Grade Related Criteria	
Grade A	Grade C
<p>Is a seamless, coherent piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ has sufficient evidence for the three essential phases of the project, is produced to a high standard, and is quite clearly inter-related</li> <li>◆ demonstrates an accurate and insightful interpretation of the project brief</li> <li>◆ is highly focused and relevant to the tasks associated with the project brief</li> <li>◆ is clear and well-structured throughout and language used is of a high standard in terms of level, accuracy and technical content</li> <li>◆ effectively consolidates and integrates required knowledge and skills</li> <li>◆ demonstrates the learner's ability to work autonomously</li> </ul>	<p>Is a co-ordinated piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ has sufficient evidence of the three essential phases of the project, is produced to an adequate standard</li> <li>◆ demonstrates an acceptable interpretation of the project brief</li> <li>◆ is focused and relevant to the tasks associated with the project brief</li> <li>◆ is satisfactorily structured and language used is adequate in terms of level, accuracy and technical content</li> <li>◆ consolidates and integrates knowledge and skills but this may lack some continuity and consistency</li> <li>◆ demonstrates independent learning with minimum support and revision during project</li> </ul>

The marks allocated to each stage will then be aggregated to arrive at an overall mark for the project. Assessors will then assign an overall grade to the learner for this Graded Unit based on the following grade boundaries.

- A = 70%–100%
- B = 60%–69%
- C = 50%–59%

These grade boundaries are fixed and should **not** be amended.

Any learner who has failed their graded unit or wishes to upgrade their award must be given a re-assessment opportunity, or in exceptional circumstances, two re-assessment opportunities. In the case of project-based graded units, this must be done using a substantially different project.

The final grading given must reflect the quality of the learner's evidence at the time of the completion of the graded unit. Learners must be awarded the highest grade achieved — whether through first submission or through any re-assessment, remediation, and/or reasonable assistance provided.



## Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Support Notes

**Graded Unit title:** Childhood Practice: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

### Guidance on approaches to delivery and assessment of this Graded Unit

- ◆ Guidance should be provided to learners on how to identify and use reading and research to demonstrate and reference knowledge and understanding
- ◆ A meeting with the learner should be held to provide guidance on the Graded Unit planning and development stages
- ◆ The Graded Unit plan should be prepared after the main theories and practice knowledge in each of the taught Units have been delivered
- ◆ Part time learners who are in employment in a childhood practice setting should undertake the Graded Unit plan once the main theories and practice knowledge have been delivered
- ◆ The planning stage should be completed and marked prior to the start of the development stage
- ◆ It is recommended that the development stage of the plan be prepared over a period of 6–8 weeks to enable sufficient support to be provided to the individual receiving care
- ◆ It is recommended that a second meeting with the learner is held prior to the evaluation stage in order to establish whether the achievement of the development stage has been met
- ◆ Each stage of the Graded Unit should be achieved before learner moves to the next stage

Below is a **suggested** marking scheme for each stage of this project which has been provided for guidance only and is not mandatory. Centres may prefer to devise their own scheme.

**Please also consult Guidance on Grading Table when deciding on overall grade for the learner.**



## Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Support Notes

**Graded Unit title:** Childhood Practice: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

**Suggested allocation of marks:**

### Planning

This stage is worth **30** marks. As part of the planning process the learner should produce a report of 1,000–1,250 words. To confirm the planning stage an individual tutorial could take place after which the learner should record the discussion.

**The Action Plan should include:**

- ◆ A clear rationale behind selecting the topic
- ◆ A clear unambiguous aim
- ◆ Clearly defined objectives which detail the steps which will be taken to achieve the aim
- ◆ Evidence of agreement with tutor
- ◆ A detailed timescale for the planning, development and evaluation which could be presented in the form of a chart

**Up to 10 marks**

- ◆ Identification of the methods of research (primary and secondary) which will be used to investigate the project
- ◆ The topic's relation to legislation and policy guidance, local/national initiatives and/or guidelines

**Up to 10 marks**

- ◆ Evidence of how theories of children's development and learning have been used in determining the topic
- ◆ Evidence of how the topic is related to a child or group of children's identified needs or interests together with children's rights and entitlements
- ◆ Clear referencing of sources used

**Up to 10 marks**

### Developing

This stage is worth **40** marks. Assessment is based on a report on the process of undertaking the project. The report should be approx. 2,000 words.

**Aim and Objectives:**

- ◆ Restate aims and objectives
- ◆ Outline each objective and describe how this was met
- ◆ Describe research methods used and any changes necessary to gather information

**Up to 12 marks**

- ◆ Record data gathered and present relevant findings

**Up to 8 marks**

## Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Support Notes

**Graded Unit title:** Childhood Practice: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

- ◆ Analysis of findings and reflection on links to theory and current good practice explored in HN Units and literature review

**Up to 15 marks**

- ◆ Conclusion and recommendations for a suggested strategy to further develop the project in relation to the chosen topic/setting within the sector
- ◆ Clear referencing of sources used

**Up to 5 marks**

### Evaluation

A short abstract of no more than 200 words summarising the whole project. It should contain an outline of the investigation, together with information on context, findings and any recommendations.

**Up to 5 marks**

**NB: An abstract should be placed at the beginning of the project, before the Action Plan.**

- ◆ A discussion of how closely the learner has followed the original plan together with a clear explanation of reasons for any change made

**Up to 3 marks**

- ◆ An evaluation identifying the way in which challenges were met (eg meeting time scales, being able to carry out planned tasks/activities/research, team working skills, personal difficulties etc) together with a discussion highlighting aspects which were particularly successful.

**Up to 5 marks**

- ◆ Learner reflection on how the learning undertaken in the HNC was used in a holistic way to carry out the project. As part of this, learners should identify newly acquired and/or improved knowledge and skills which have been gained over the course of the project. (This could include research skills, IT skills, time management skills, reading for information skills, general personal organisation, etc).

**Up to 7 marks**

- ◆ Learner reflection upon the effectiveness of research methods used in their investigation. This may include both primary and secondary research (literature review).

**Up to 5 marks**

- ◆ Learner reflection on the effectiveness of the learner's communication and interpersonal skills throughout the project. (This may involve both verbal and written communication and could include negotiations with supervisor/placement staff, interviewees, children and college staff. In addition written communication in the form of letters, e-mails, etc. could be used as appropriate.)

**Up to 5 marks**

## Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Support Notes

**Graded Unit title:** Childhood Practice: Graded Unit 1 (SCQF level 7)

### Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of *Communication, Working with Others and Problem Solving* in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

Learners who use the Internet to conduct research will also have opportunities to develop skills in *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* and *Numeracy* depending on the variety of data gathered and how the data is presented.

This Unit has the Core Skill of Problem Solving embedded in it, so when candidates achieve this Unit their Core Skills profile will be updated to show that they have achieved Problem Solving at SCQF Level 6.

## History of changes to Graded Unit

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Core Skill Problem Solving at SCQF level 6 embedded.	24/11/15
03	Update of Conditions of Assessment.	06/08/18

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**FURTHER INFORMATION:** Call SQA's Customer Contact Centre on 44 (0) 141 500 5030 or 0345 279 1000. Alternatively, complete our [Centre Feedback Form](#).

## General information for learners

### Graded Unit title: Childhood Practice Graded Unit 1

This Unit has been designed to allow you integrate your learning across a range of Units in the HNC Childhood Practice. You should be able to draw upon your learning and assessment for the mandatory Units and your placement or workplace experience. You should be aware that any references to the individual(s) must be anonymised and the permission of that individual(s) obtained.

You will have the opportunity to discuss and agree on the topic of the investigation to be undertaken with your tutor and placement mentor prior to carrying out the investigation. You will explore theories and perspectives relating to childhood practice and draw on your experiences in practice/placement.

You will be given a date for completion of the investigation. This is an independent piece of work therefore assessors will guide, clarify and answer questions during the assessment period. Your final grade will reflect the quality of your work at the completion date and the level of support required to complete the investigation.

The investigation involves three distinct stages:

- ◆ Planning
- ◆ Development
- ◆ Evaluation

each stage has to be achieved before the next is undertaken. Therefore any reassessment of stages must be undertaken before you can proceed to the next stage. If you fail the project overall or wish to upgrade, then this must be done using a *substantially different* project, ie all stages are undertaken using a new investigation.

On completion of this Unit, you will be able to demonstrate that you have achieved the following principal aims of the HNC Childhood Practice:

- ◆ to enable learners to demonstrate an understanding of the values and principles which underpin work in childhood practice settings
- ◆ to enable learners to integrate knowledge, theory and practice effectively in a variety of childhood practice settings
- ◆ to enable learners to have a service user and childcare worker focus in their practice
- ◆ to assist learners to practice in an anti-discriminatory way
- ◆ to enable learners to critically evaluate their practice and to be reflective practitioners
- ◆ to enable learners to develop a working knowledge of current legislation, policy and practice methods
- ◆ to facilitate progression to higher education

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of *Communication*, *Working with Others* and *Problem Solving* in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

If you use the Internet to conduct research you will also have opportunities to develop skills in *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* and *Numeracy* depending on the variety of data gathered and how the data is presented.