



## Higher National unit specification

### General information

**Unit title:** Practising Inclusiveness through Needs-led Assessment (SCQF level 9)

**Unit code:** HH9L 36

**Superclass:** GB

**Publication date:** January 2017

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 01

### Unit purpose

This unit gives candidates the opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding of inclusiveness and put into practice their skills in the conduct of needs-led assessments, the identification of appropriate resources, the exercising of professional judgement in making reasonable adjustments and the implementation of effective support strategies for both staff and students.

When undertaken with the unit *Analysing Equality, Diversity and Inclusiveness in Context*, it forms the Professional Development Award 'Advancing Equality and Diversity through Inclusiveness at SCQF level 9'.

This unit is designed to meet the continuing professional development (CPD) needs of: staff employed as needs assessors in colleges and universities; staff who advise and support learners or manage the provision of learning resources; staff working in HR, recruitment, occupational health and staff/student services; training providers involved in supporting, mentoring, coaching and developing work colleagues/other staff. The unit may also be relevant to guidance and support teachers responsible for pupil inclusion or the negotiation of alternative assessment arrangements in schools.

In all contexts, candidates should be able to provide evidence of professional discussion with a line manager about the assessment of others' needs and the potential for improvements in practice.

Completion of this unit will not equip staff with diagnostic skills.

## Higher National unit specification: General information (cont)

**Unit title:** Practising Inclusiveness through Needs-led Assessment (SCQF level 9)

### Outcomes

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

- 1 Demonstrate a critical understanding of approaches to, and the conduct and purposes of, needs-led assessment.
- 2 Undertake effective needs-led assessments within the context of own role.
- 3 Plan and implement effective strategies to minimise or remove barriers and facilitate inclusion (for staff and students.)
- 4 Evaluate a range of assistive devices, tools and support strategies, in consultation with users.

### Credit points and level

2 Higher National unit credits at SCQF level 9: (16 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 9)

### Recommended entry to the unit

Entry of candidates to this unit is at the discretion of the centre.

### Core Skills

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

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this unit.

### Context for delivery

This is an optional unit within the PDA Advancing Equality and Diversity through Inclusiveness at SCQF level 9. Delivery of this unit (or the alternative optional unit *Practising Inclusiveness to Advance Equality and Diversity*) can be integrated with the single unit *Analysing Equality, Diversity and Inclusiveness in Context* where candidates are undertaking the full Group Award.

If the unit is taken as part of the PDA, candidates may wish to refer to the holistic evidence requirements for the Group Award which provides information on how to meet the combined evidence requirements for both units most efficiently.

### Equality and inclusion

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

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

## Higher National unit specification: Statement of standards

**Unit title:** Practising Inclusiveness through Needs-led Assessment  
(SCQF level 9)

Acceptable performance in this unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

### Outcome 1

Demonstrate a critical understanding of approaches to, and the conduct and purposes of, needs-led assessment.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Forms and purposes of assessment including Equality Impact Assessment
- ◆ Needs-led assessment policy and practice in context
- ◆ The inter-play between, and the implications of, competence standards and reasonable adjustments
- ◆ Inclusive approaches to conducting needs-led assessment
- ◆ Interpreting assessment evidence from other sources

### Outcome 2

Undertake effective needs-led assessments within the context of own role.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ The needs assessor's role in facilitating inclusion in education, training and work environments
- ◆ Reasonable adjustment guidelines and practices
- ◆ Taking account of the multiple factors including protected characteristics which may give rise to need
- ◆ Acknowledging and respecting every individual's identity, experience and difference
- ◆ Selecting and applying needs-led assessment criteria fairly and equitably (for both staff and learners)
- ◆ Intervening in a way likely to foster good relations, advance equality and maintain learners' and/or staff enthusiasm, motivation and sense of belonging

## Higher National unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

**Unit title:** Practising Inclusiveness through Needs-led Assessment (SCQF level 9)

### Outcome 3

Plan and implement effective strategies to minimise or remove barriers and facilitate inclusion (for staff and students).

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Planning and developing inclusive strategies to remove barriers to participation and enable individuals to fulfil their potential
- ◆ Creating 'fit for purpose' needs assessment reports
- ◆ Agreeing strategies which encourage engagement and develop personal responsibility
- ◆ Increasing participation in education, training and work environments
- ◆ Recognising when support is appropriate without comprising the required competence standards
- ◆ Strategies for evaluating effectiveness of intervention(s) and impact on practice
- ◆ Methods for self-evaluation and critical reflection on own performance

### Outcome 4

Evaluate a range of assistive devices, tools and support strategies, in consultation with users.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Introducing and demonstrating assistive devices effectively, supporting others to become independent users
- ◆ Obtaining feedback from users as a basis for developing own awareness and practice
- ◆ Compiling a series of objective assistive technology evaluations and 'user friendly' guides to support their application in practice
- ◆ Embedding mechanisms for ongoing identification, trialling and signposting of support strategies, assistive and emerging technologies

#### Evidence requirements for this unit

For candidates in either staff-facing or student-facing roles, evidence for this unit will be generated in the following ways:

- 1 The completion of a range of needs-led assessments and associated reports, which specify and justify planned support interventions.
- 2 A self-reflective log/blog.
- 3 Written/oral evidence of critically evaluating different support strategies, interventions, assistive technology devices and techniques to illustrate their critical thinking skills around accessibility and usability.

## Higher National unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

**Unit title:** Practising Inclusiveness through Needs-led Assessment (SCQF level 9)

### 1 Completed needs-led assessments and associated reports

Candidates should provide performance evidence from the workplace over a period of a minimum of six months by undertaking needs assessments for individuals presenting with a range of needs in either a student facing or staff role, or a combination of both. Candidates will also complete the associated reports for those needs assessments.

Candidates should identify and assess needs arising from at least four different protected characteristics OR 4 distinct conditions/circumstances.

In the case of candidates undertaking needs assessments to support applicants for the Disabled Students' Allowance, although all their students will share the protected characteristic of disability, the candidate must provide evidence of expertise and experience across a range of at least four distinct conditions, for example: support needs arising from sensory loss (hearing/vision); physical/motor impairment; specific learning difficulties (eg dyslexia) and mental ill-health (eg. psychosis).

The nature of the associated reports to be completed will be determined by the purpose for which they are generated. For example, needs assessment reports that are written in support of an individual's application to SAAS (or another agency) for the Disabled Student's Allowance should comply with the requirements set out in the DSA guidance and be completed using the specified format. For staff needs assessments, there may be institutional documentation required to formally record and evaluate reasonable adjustments agreed and implemented.

In both staff-facing and student-facing roles, for each needs-led assessment, the candidate should:

- (a) identify the barriers presented by the current experience or environment for the individual.
- (b) generate ideas about how those barriers might be overcome — through consideration of evidence, discussion with the individual concerned and others where appropriate, reasonable adjustment and practical evaluation.
- (c) consider the options, present a rationale and make recommendations about the most suitable aids and strategies for this individual which have been discussed and agreed with the individual concerned.
- (d) produce a clear report that summarises (a), (b) and (c).

### 2 Self-Reflective Log/Blog

Throughout the period during which needs assessment activity is undertaken, candidates must also keep a self-reflective log or blog which:

- ◆ demonstrates the skill of critical self-reflection.
- ◆ explains how they have modified their practice in light of what they have learned.
- ◆ makes reference to any challenges, issues or experiences while conducting needs-led assessment and support and indicates how they responded, what action was taken and what they have learned.
- ◆ maintains client confidentiality by anonymising all references to individuals for whom assessment and support has been provided.

## Higher National unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

**Unit title:** Practising Inclusiveness through Needs-led Assessment (SCQF level 9)

All log entries should be dated and confirmed as the authentic and original work of the candidate by a line manager or the assessor.

### **3 Critical Evaluations of Support Strategies, Approaches, Interventions, Assistive Technology Devices and Techniques**

Candidates must provide written or oral evidence (eg in a professional discussion) of their critical thinking skills around accessibility and usability by undertaking a minimum of six objective evaluations which cover different support strategies, approaches, interventions, assistive technology devices and techniques used within their workplace.

The candidate should critically analyse the impact of each support strategy; and evaluate its success in ensuring that no student or staff member experiences discrimination as a consequence of any protected characteristic in line with the Equalities Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty, providing recommendations for change where appropriate.

Satisfactory achievement in the Unit will be demonstrated by the candidate:

for the needs assessments:

- ◆ accurately identifying the appropriate resources and strategies required for all identified needs
- ◆ reporting the findings accurately and presenting a justified rationale, with clear and appropriate recommendations on the most suitable aids and strategies to meet those needs
- ◆ overseeing the implementation of the agreed interventions in a timely fashion

for the associated reports:

- ◆ producing an acceptable standard of report in terms of correct use of terminology and accuracy, written with consideration of who will be receiving and/or acting on the report recommendations
- ◆ meeting the requirements of the organisation for whom the report is produced

for the self-reflective log/blog:

- ◆ evidencing critical skills in self-reflection, with relevant examples, which clearly shows the candidate's learning journey throughout the course of the Unit and how their practice has changed and developed as a result of the knowledge and skills they have gained
- ◆ providing examples of the impact they have been able to make within their centre to improve accessibility and usability

for the critical evaluations:

- ◆ providing a reasoned justification for the conclusions they draw, with appropriate and practicable recommendations for change or future use, where relevant



## Higher National unit Support Notes

**Unit title:** Practising Inclusiveness through Needs-led Assessment (SCQF level 9)

Unit Support Notes are offered as guidance and 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 content for this Unit should reflect the developments in:

- ◆ Approaches to the assessment of individual needs and the provision of enabling support to facilitate inclusion in education, training or employment.

Useful guidance is available from the Equality and Human Rights Commission for Scotland website link below

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-guidance>

For colleges and higher education institutions, there are useful sources of information on equality, diversity and inclusiveness via the website links below

<http://www.ecu.ac.uk/guidance-resources/>

<https://professionallearning.collegedevelopmentnetwork.ac.uk/course/index.php?categoryid=27>

<https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/embedding-equality-and-diversity-curriculum>

- ◆ Assistive technologies and strategies which empower individuals to fulfil their potential.
- ◆ The duties placed on organisations to ensure policies and practices are equitable and inclusive.
- ◆ The requirement that employers provide appropriate professional development opportunities for all staff involved in identifying needs, recommending strategies and implementing inclusive solutions.

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/commission-scotland/public-sector-equality-duty-scotland>

The candidate should have access to a workplace where evidence to meet the Outcomes can be generated.

## Higher National unit Support Notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Practising Inclusiveness through Needs-led Assessment (SCQF level 9)

This Unit is aimed at needs assessment practitioners and has been designed to be undertaken by individuals in relation to their work context - with staff, students or both.

The principal context can be education, training or the workplace, which may be widely interpreted to include colleges and universities, training providers, schools and community learning settings. The PDA as a whole is intended to build capacity in equality, diversity and inclusiveness in a wide range of settings and to encourage innovation in all aspects of education, training and the workplace.

The following list offers suggestions for topics which could be included in the taught programme. The list is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive and should be regarded as a guide only.

- ◆ The purposes of assessment — person-centred; institutional; legal.
- ◆ Approaches to assessment — inclusive, needs-led, staged, contextualised
- ◆ Current policies, practices and strategies for the assessment of need
- ◆ The value of supporting evidence and interpretation of third-party/external reports, eg audit, funding providers and the law.
- ◆ The relevance of protected characteristics and definitions of equality, inclusiveness and diversity
- ◆ The accessibility and usability of provision; resources; buildings; course materials and language
- ◆ The responsibilities of individuals and institutions relating to disclosure, confidentiality, respect, data protection and sensitivity
- ◆ Behaviours: forms of discrimination; inclusive and exclusive language and practice; dependency; avoidance of patronising behaviours; promotion of independence; empowerment; consultation; anticipatory practice; responsiveness; willingness to change
- ◆ Impact: participation; engagement; performance; retention; satisfaction; achievement; progression
- ◆ Appropriate recommendations of support: reducing/removing institutional barriers; technological and non-technological aids; contextualisation of support; training and review of effectiveness
- ◆ Methods of reviewing the effectiveness of support, and evaluate and developing practice
- ◆ Assessment hypotheses as a basis for identification of needs and planning of appropriate interventions
- ◆ Types of assessment: outcome-based; screening; diagnostic; needs-led; progress monitoring
- ◆ Sources of evidence: diagnostic reports; results — from tests or examinations; account(s) of previous experience(s); transitional information; personal account/history; samples of work
- ◆ Knowing what to look for from a piece of evidence, and how to obtain further information if required
- ◆ Being able to gauge the 'value' or relative importance of a piece of evidence
- ◆ Understanding how to relate the evidence supplied to subsequent assessment of needs



## Higher National unit Support Notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Practising Inclusiveness through Needs-led Assessment (SCQF level 9)

- ◆ Assessment of skills; level; expertise; confidence; organisation of ideas; planning; computer literacy and confidence; existing strategies; mechanics/dexterity; legibility; composition; note-taking; experience of alternatives to handwriting; use of aids; degree of restriction; posture; comfort in sitting; positioning; memory and concentration: short-term/long-term; reliability of recall; recording/coding; attention span; communication: receptive (attention/insight); expressive (oral/speech/fluency); pain management; use of alternative therapies; stamina; experience of assistive technologies.
- ◆ How to plan and write needs assessment reports.
- ◆ The effective use of strategies to advance equality and facilitate reasonable adjustments in a wide range of contexts.
- ◆ Resources to encourage participation in education, training and the workplace
- ◆ Strategies for evaluating effectiveness of intervention and effectiveness of practice
- ◆ Awareness of unconscious bias and mitigation of the same
- ◆ Boundaries of competence and responsibility and protocols for onward referral

### Guidance on approaches to delivery of this unit

This Unit focuses on professional development, using a variety of different approaches and appropriate resources, requiring the candidate to reflect on own practice and implement continuous improvement in light of experience. It may be taught in-house or regionally to groups of staff on a face-to-face basis, via a blended learning approach which combines webinars and virtual but synchronous classes or entirely online.

### Glossary of terms

#### **Assessment:**

The term 'assessment' is used in a wide range of contexts and means different things, depending on the purpose for which it is being carried out. Relevant examples are illustrated below:

**Assessment** within a learning and teaching, continuing professional development (CPD) or training context:

- ◆ formative assessment is used to enable reflection as part of a process in gaining knowledge, competence(s) and skills
- ◆ summative assessment is used to describe a final process of assessing knowledge, skills and competence(s) which will be used to evidence a standard

**Outcome-based assessment** is an 'umbrella' term which includes assessments of performance and achievement. When standardised against defined criteria, an outcome-based assessment provides evidence of the individual's level of functioning and capability. Examples of outcome-based assessment include 'the Driving Test', Grade IV Music Theory

## Higher National unit Support Notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Practising Inclusiveness through Needs-led Assessment (SCQF level 9)

### Needs-led assessment

Needs assessment: This is the systematic effort to gather information from various sources that will help identify the needs of the individual, the impact these needs are having on their performance and the resources available to meet that person's needs.

A Needs Assessment will **not** result in a diagnosis. What an effective Needs Assessment **will** do is acknowledge the implications of the person's condition, consider the most appropriate way(s) of overcoming barriers to progress and make recommendations accordingly. As a general rule, Needs Assessment should only be undertaken if it is likely to make a positive difference to the experience of the person being assessed.

### Assessment of individual needs

Needs Assessors require to understand the purpose of the assessment they would conduct — and clearly distinguish this practice from other types of assessment.

- ◆ **Screening:** to identify individuals at risk
- ◆ **Diagnostic:** to confirm the presence of a 'condition' and start to address implications
- ◆ **Outcome-based:** to provide baseline indicator of level of functioning
- ◆ **Needs-led:** identify appropriate actions

**Context:** The circumstances, environment and purposes for which an assessment (of need or impact) is undertaken.

**Equality impact assessment (EIA)** refers to the process of ensuring the planning and decision-making for current and future policies and practices are assessed proactively to prevent negative impact and promote positive impact for protected characteristic groups. EIA is a legal requirement for all decision-making relating to new and revised policies, practices and procedures.

An EIA involves:

- ◆ Considering relevant evidence relating to people who share a protected characteristic
- ◆ Assessing the impact of applying a decision or a new or revised policy or practice against the needs of the public sector equality duty (PSED)
- ◆ Acting on the results of the assessment
- ◆ Publishing the results of the assessment
- ◆ Monitoring and reviewing the decision, impact and application of the policy or procedure

**Equality impact:** An intentional or unintentional lasting consequence or significant change brought about by an action or series of actions. A positive impact will actively promote equality of opportunity for one or more groups, or improve equal opportunities/relations between groups. An adverse or negative impact causes disadvantage or exclusion.

**Need(s):** A discrepancy between 'what is' and 'what should be' or a gap(s) between the real (current) and the ideal (desired) situation.

## Higher National unit Support Notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Practising Inclusiveness through Needs-led Assessment (SCQF level 9)

### Positive action

This term refers to initiatives to overcome the effects of historic discrimination.

Positive action refers to steps that organisations can take to encourage people from different groups in order to overcome historic disadvantage, or low participation in education, training or welfare.

The Equality Act 2010 harmonised positive action across the different protected characteristics (see list in glossary below).

Voluntary positive action measures must aim to alleviate disadvantage experienced by people who share a protected characteristic, reduce underrepresentation in relation to particular activities, and meet particular needs. Such measures must be proportionate to achieving the aim, and should have a verifiable evidence base.

**Protected characteristics:** The term ‘protected characteristics’ is used to identify a wider range of individual attributes now recognised within the law:

- ◆ Age
- ◆ Disability
- ◆ Gender reassignment
- ◆ Marriage and civil partnership (employees)
- ◆ Pregnancy and maternity
- ◆ Race
- ◆ Religion and belief, including lack of belief
- ◆ Sex
- ◆ Sexual orientation

**Sensitive personal data:** Information relating to an identifiable individual that refers to that person’s race, ethnicity, beliefs, physical or mental health, political opinion, trade union activity, sexual life and any conviction or alleged offence.

### Guidance on approaches to assessment of this unit

Candidates are required to generate the following evidence of achievement from the workplace:

- 1 Sufficient needs-led assessments and associated reports to satisfy the assessor that the candidate has the required range and breadth of expertise in identifying needs, understanding the implications of the same and implementing the most effective interventions/solutions in consultation with the learner.
- 2 A self-reflective log/blog, and
- 3 A portfolio, containing a minimum of six objective evaluations covering different support strategies, approaches, interventions, assistive technologies, aids, devices and/or techniques used within their workplace.

## Higher National unit Support Notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Practising Inclusiveness through Needs-led Assessment (SCQF level 9)

All product evidence could be in either hard-copy or electronic format.

It is the intention that support materials will be made available to centres on the SQA Academy.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met.

Bibliographical references to relevant reading should be compiled using the Harvard system of referencing.

### Opportunities for 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 social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all learner evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at [www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment](http://www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment).

### Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

#### Problem Solving

All elements of the core skill of *Problem Solving*, that is, Planning and Organising, Critical Thinking and Reviewing and Evaluating, will be enhanced and developed as candidates undertake the unit. The factors facilitating effective inclusion and full participation in a context relevant to the candidate must be examined in detail. A full formal report on personal practice requires a comprehensive analysis with review of all stages of the process to plan and ensure progression.

#### Communication

*Communication* skills underpin all work for the unit as candidates conduct in depth research on culture, attitudes and bias using a range of complex sources. They consider and evaluate the impact of such values in a formal review report on own practice. Reports, whether written and/or oral must be technically and factually accurate, fully referenced and presented to a professional standard.

#### Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Accessing, using and storing electronic data will enhance and develop professional skills. In researching and presenting complex information on trends, current policies and procedure the use of technology will be routine practice. The presentation of written and oral work will require skilled use of *ICT* and responsible awareness of security issues, including the protection of sensitive data, and methods to ensure protection.

## **Higher National unit Support Notes (cont)**

**Unit title:** Practising Inclusiveness through Needs-led Assessment  
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### **Essential Skills**

This award is designed to develop skills for the workplace and for career progression. The skills identified by employers as essential will provide a focus for activities. Working independently, self-management, using initiative and being proactive will support adherence to professional standards and working practices. Candidates will be required to demonstrate flexibility and the ability to adapt to different situations and environments.

### **Citizenship**

In depth understanding of citizenship will include keen awareness of rights and responsibilities; being outward-looking towards society; being able to recognise one's personal role and responsibilities in the context of identifying and eliminating discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relations between different groups.

## History of changes to unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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## General information for candidates

### **Unit title:** Practising Inclusiveness through Needs-led Assessment (SCQF level 9)

This section will help you decide whether this is the unit for you by explaining what the unit is about, what you should know or be able to do before you start and what you will need to do during the unit.

#### **What this unit is about**

This unit is about developing your knowledge and understanding of inclusiveness and will support you to put into practice skills in the conduct of needs-led assessments for staff or students. You will develop greater awareness of and how to use appropriate resources, how to use professional judgement in making reasonable adjustments and how best to implement effective support strategies for individuals.

#### **What you will learn**

You will learn how to take account of multiple factors including legally protected characteristics, individual identity, experience and difference which may give rise to need(s). You will develop skills in selecting and applying needs-led assessment criteria fairly and how to establish what constitutes reasonable adjustment. You will develop approaches which advance equality, motivate individuals to engage in support strategies and take responsibility; you will learn how to help others fulfil their potential and improve participation in the workplace, education or training. You will learn how to create 'fit for purpose' needs assessment reports, and develop effective self-reflective practice.

**Evidence** to meet the requirements of the unit must be from the workplace, not a simulated environment, so you should have access to a suitable workplace before you begin this unit.

On completion of the unit you will be able to:

- ◆ demonstrate a critical understanding of approaches to, and the conduct and purposes of, needs-led assessment.
- ◆ undertake effective needs-led assessments within the context of your role.
- ◆ plan and implement effective strategies to minimise or remove barriers and facilitate inclusion (for staff and/or students.)
- ◆ evaluate a range of assistive devices, tools and support strategies, in consultation with individuals.