



Higher National Project-based graded unit Specification

General information

This graded unit has been validated as part of the **PDA in Scrutiny and Improvement Practice**. Centres are required to develop a project-based assessment in accordance with this validated specification.

The unit is designed to reflect knowledge and skills related to the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Inspection of Health and Social Care.

Graded unit title: Scrutiny and Improvement: Graded unit (SCQF level 10)

Graded unit code: HJ3E 37

Type of Project: Practical Assignment

Publication date: July 2018

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 03, September 2023

Graded unit purpose

This graded unit is designed to provide evidence that the learner has achieved the following principal aims of the **PDA in Scrutiny and Improvement Practice at SCQF level 10**:

- ◆ demonstrate the ability to apply the knowledge and insights gained from analysis of key legislation, models and concepts in inspection, regulation, scrutiny and improvement to their own professional practice
- ◆ critically evaluate their contribution in promoting protection, participation, empowerment, equality and diversity of people using services through the scrutiny and improvement process
- ◆ apply and critically evaluate the use of appropriate skills to enable the effective direction of scrutiny activity and implementation of improvement practice which contributes to better outcomes for people using services

General information (cont)

Graded unit title: Scrutiny and Improvement Practice: Graded unit (SCQF level 10)

The learner should be able to prepare and carry out a project in the form of a *practical assignment* over time, in which they identify, support and critically evaluate an area of improvement. The improvement should be identified in the process of carrying out scrutiny activity within their range of professional practice.

Credit points and level

2 Higher National unit credits at SCQF level 10: (16 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 10)

Recommended entry to the graded unit

Learners should have well developed communication and inter-personal skills. They should be able to demonstrate their ability to critically review and consolidate knowledge, skills, practices and thinking in their areas of practice. This may be demonstrated by: relevant professional qualifications at SCQF level 9 (or equivalent), or above with relevant experience in a social services or other related settings. Acceptance of relevant equivalent qualifications and experience will be at the discretion of the centre.

It is recommended that the learner should be in the process of completing the following units relating to the above principal aims prior to undertaking this graded unit:

- ◆ *Frameworks for Scrutiny Practice*
- ◆ *The Craft of Scrutiny*
- ◆ *Supporting Improvement*

Core Skills

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

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

Higher National Project-based graded unit Specification: Designing the project and assessing learners

Graded unit title: Scrutiny and Improvement Practice: Graded unit (SCQF level 10)

Assessment

This graded unit will be assessed by the use of a project involving carrying out a *practical assignment* in an area of professional practice. 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 consists of three stages: planning, developing and evaluation. The project undertaken by the learner must be a complex task which involves scrutiny activity with or related to a service or agency or significant others.

The process must include supporting and leading an aspect of improvement identified during scrutiny activity, and evaluating the outcome. Improvement is defined as 'contributing to better outcomes for people who use and access services'. The evidence that is produced will include:

- 1 demonstrating the ability to plan and carry out scrutiny activity
- 2 identifying an area for improvement which emerges from the scrutiny activity
- 3 demonstrating how the learner works with services or relevant others to communicate the need for improvement related to the scrutiny activity
- 4 carrying out and critically evaluating research into the area of improvement
- 5 developing and implementing a plan of action outlining the rationale and process of how the learner will support and lead aspects of the improvement
- 6 critically examine how they deal with tensions and conflicts in their role
- 7 critically evaluating the outcomes of the improvement and the learner's role in this
- 8 demonstrating integration of theory and practice.

The project should provide the candidate with the opportunity to produce evidence that demonstrates she/he has met the aims of the Group Award that this Graded unit covers.

Some examples of areas that could be covered in the project are:

- ◆ A planned and agreed improvement or innovation to maintain or improve scrutiny and improvement practice
- ◆ A planned and agreed improvement or innovation involving empowering people who use services, or staff working in services, to participate more fully in the scrutiny process
- ◆ A planned and agreed improvement in policy development
- ◆ A planned and agreed activity designed to support and stimulate debate in an area of practice

These examples are intended to help centres to devise an appropriate project. They are not exhaustive. It is intended that the projects are unique pieces of work and this Graded unit is designed to enable learners to demonstrate their ability to meet the learning outcomes across a wide range of practice.

Higher National Project-based graded unit Specification: Designing the project and assessing learners (cont)

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The assessment will consist of an action plan outlining the process of a scrutiny activity within a chosen area and a rationale for the area of improvement chosen; a critical examination of development and implementation of the improvement and how it leads to better outcomes for people using services; a critical evaluation of the learner's role within the process of supporting and leading improvement, linked to the action plan and a record of authentication of scrutiny practice. It is expected that learners anonymise work appropriately. It is also expected that learners ensure they have consent for their project, if appropriate, and approach the project in an ethical way.

Conditions of assessment

The assessment takes a holistic approach to providing evidence which allows the learner to meet the principal aims of the group award. It is also designed to be undertaken over time. As such, the instructions for completion should be given out early in the delivery of the group award. This is to allow the learner sufficient time to assimilate the details and carry out the project. The learner should also be given a date for completion of the project.

During the time between the distribution of the project instructions and the completion date, assessors may 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.

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 role of the tutor/assessor at this stage is as a facilitator only. To achieve a high grading, learners must demonstrate a high level of autonomy throughout the assessment process.

Higher National Project-based graded unit Specification: Designing the project and assessing learners (cont)

Graded unit title: Scrutiny and Improvement Practice: Graded unit (SCQF level 10)

At this level, learners should work independently. It is the responsibility of the centre to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the work presented is the learners' own work. For example, centres may wish to plan meetings with the learner and tutors/assessors at each stage of the project to discuss the learner's plan for that stage. Centres are encouraged to use a learner's signed declaration of authenticity submitted with their work.

Higher National Project-based graded unit specification: Designing the project and assessing learners (cont)

Graded unit title: Scrutiny and Improvement Practice: Graded unit (SCQF level 10)

Evidence requirements for this graded unit

The project undertaken by learners will be a *practical assignment* consisting of three stages: planning; developing; and evaluation. The following table specifies the minimum evidence required to pass each stage.

Project stage	Minimum evidence requirements	% Mark Allocation
Stage 1 — Planning	<p>The learner must submit an Action Plan that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The title of the project ♦ Identification and rationale for tasks necessary in preparing and carrying out scrutiny and improvement activity in the chosen service ♦ Identification of improvement or innovation based on the scrutiny activity, and timescale for major stages and processes involved in support and leadership of the improvement ♦ An annotated bibliography consisting of relevant literature and research, accompanied by a justification for the selection of one main piece of research on which the improvement is based ♦ Critical analysis of timescales, resource implications, possible attitudes to change and how these may be tackled from a leadership perspective ♦ Explanation of how the piece of work reflects legislation, policy and guidance in this area ♦ Critical evaluation of how the learner's personal and organisational values impact on their approach to the project 	<p>30%</p> <p>5 marks</p> <p>5 marks</p> <p>3 marks</p> <p>5 marks</p> <p>5 marks</p> <p>7 marks</p>
	<p><i>The learner must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Planning stage. This section may be up to 1,500 words.</i></p>	
Project stage	Minimum evidence requirements	% Mark Allocation
Stage 2 — Developing	<p>The learner must produce a critical examination of implementation of the improvement which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ A brief outline of the processes involved in the development of the improvement ♦ Explaining how the piece of work was selected and negotiated with the service or agency or significant others 	<p>40%</p> <p>2 marks</p> <p>3 marks</p>

Project stage	Minimum evidence requirements	% Mark Allocation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explaining and justifying the communication and leadership methods adopted to support the implementation of the plan for the improvement activity. 	6 marks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critically reflecting on how methodologies and models of scrutiny have been applied to influence the selected improvement. 	7 marks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critically reflecting on the types of tensions and conflicts which arose and how these were managed. 	7 marks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critically reflecting on how professional judgement was used when testing out and implementing the improvement. 	6 marks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explaining and critically reflecting on the ways in which people using services have been involved in the activity. 	4 marks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarising and explaining the outcomes achieved and how the piece of practice incorporates the Scottish Social Services Council Codes of Practice and any other relevant professional codes. 	5 marks
	<p><i>The learner must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Developing stage. This section may be up to 1,500 words.</i></p>	
Project stage	Minimum evidence requirements	% Mark Allocation
Stage 3 — Evaluating	<p>A critical evaluation of the learner's role within the process of supporting and leading improvement, linked to the plan of action. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critically examining the strengths and weaknesses of the plan. Critically reflecting on the communication methods used before, during and after testing and implementing improvement. Critically reflecting on power and its use during the process. Critically analysing how leadership was applied in this project, and what could be learned from this. Critically reflecting on areas for the learner's future practice and development that were highlighted by the project. Appropriate documentation generated before, during and after the implementation of the improvement (eg records of meetings, letters, agendas, reports etc) which show the trail of events, work undertaken and organisation of information. This also serves to authenticate the work. 	<p>30%</p> <p>5 marks</p> <p>5 marks</p> <p>5 marks</p> <p>5 marks</p> <p>6 marks</p> <p>4 marks</p>

	<i>The learner must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Evaluating stage. This section may be up to 1,500 words.</i>	
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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 re-assessment of learners for that particular stage. This includes the final *Evaluation* stage. Any re-assessment should be carried out in line with the centre's own assessment policy.

Grade Related Criteria	
Grade A	Grade C
<p>Is a seamless, coherent piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Provides specific and detailed information related to the plan including a clear rationale.◆ Is critically insightful in relation to their analysis of care attitudes and personal and organisational values.◆ Evidences relevant research and literature which is detailed, specific and well referenced.◆ Is highly focused and relevant to the tasks.◆ Is well-structured and referenced throughout, using language of a high standard in terms of level, accuracy and technical content.◆ Effectively consolidates and integrates required knowledge and skills.◆ Demonstrates the learner's ability to work autonomously.	<p>Is a co-ordinated piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Is clear, accurate and satisfactorily structured containing language of a professional standard recognised as appropriate to the sector.◆ Is appropriately focused and relevant to the task.◆ Consolidates and integrates limited relevant knowledge and skills.◆ Uses basic knowledge and skills only and has a limited number of sources of evidence.◆ Is satisfactorily structured and language used is adequate in terms of level, accuracy and technical content.◆ Consolidates and integrates knowledge and skills but this may lack some continuity and consistency.◆ Demonstrates independent learning with minimum support.

Higher National Project-based graded unit Specification: Designing the project and assessing learners (cont.)

Graded unit title: Scrutiny and Improvement Practice: Graded unit (SCQF level 10)

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: Scrutiny and Improvement Practice: Graded unit (SCQF level 10)

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

- ◆ An initial 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 delivery of the unit entitled 'Frameworks for Scrutiny'.
- ◆ The planning stage should be completed and marked prior to the start of the developing stage.
- ◆ It is recommended that the developing stage takes place over an appropriate period of time to enable sufficient support to be provided to the service or agency involved and/or the consultation needed with relevant others related to the improvement.
- ◆ It is recommended that a second meeting with the learner is held prior to the evaluation stage in order to establish that the project is progressing.
- ◆ Each stage of the Graded unit should be achieved before learner moves to the next stage.

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

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

Communication: Written communications will be developed through learners producing written work in a variety of formats; oral communication will be developed through direct work with individuals, discussion, debate and evidence of engagement with other professionals and key people.

Working with Others: Will be developed as learners will be required to work with individuals and collaboratively with colleagues from their own and other service areas in the preparation and research for their graded unit.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT): Learners will develop their ICT skills through research and the presentation of written assignments and recording of real work practice.

Problem Solving: Learners will develop skills through finding solutions to challenges they encounter in the project as it progresses and in the evaluation of the outcomes.

Numeracy: Learners will build upon their numeracy skills by analysing numeric and statistical information in relation to inspections. Learners will also interpret graphical and tabular data.

History of changes to graded unit

Version	Description of change	Date
03	Title clarification, removal of (Social Services) from title of unit and additional wording p.7 regarding Codes of Practice.	Aug 2023

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General information for learners

Graded unit title: Scrutiny and Improvement Practice: graded unit (SCQF level 10)

The unit forms part of the Group Award entitled PDA in Scrutiny and Improvement Practice. This unit allows you to show your ability to integrate the knowledge and skills you have gained in the units and apply them to the planning, developing and evaluation of a real piece of scrutiny and improvement activity. This piece of work is called a practical assignment and will be based on how you supported and led some aspect of improvement which contributed to better outcomes for people using services. The project will have three stages. The first is the planning stage, the second is the developing stage and the third is the evaluation stage.

You will need to plan your project carefully, selecting an appropriate scrutiny activity in your arena of practice. You will meet with your tutor/assessor to discuss the planning stage. This meeting is to allow you to explain your approach, identify your objectives and confirm the timing of the task you are going to complete with the service or agency or significant others with whom you will be working. Further meetings may take place before you move on to the developing and evaluation stages.

You will be expected to work autonomously and it is your responsibility to ensure that all submitted work is appropriately anonymised. The project will be authenticated through appropriate workplace documentation.

- 1 For the planning stage, 30 marks are available: This is where you explain what you plan to do, who will be involved, and how you will proceed. You will produce an action plan where you outline the tasks involved in planning and carrying out a scrutiny activity and select and justify your improvement on the basis of research, legislation and policy. You will also critically examine personal and organisational values which must be accounted for in applying improvement.
- 2 For the developing stage, 40 marks are available: This is where you explain how you implemented the plan for supporting and leading improvement in your chosen arena of scrutiny practice.
- 3 For the evaluation stage, 30 marks are available: This is where you can reflect on your learning and your work practice, critically evaluate and analyse the project outcomes and recognise objectively areas for improvement and further learning.

You complete one stage at a time. Each part will be marked by your tutor and you will be given a grade of A, B, C (pass grades) or D (fail grade). You must achieve a pass at each stage before you can move on to the next part.

Successful completion of the graded unit which contains observed practice is designed to reflect knowledge and skills outlined in the Inspection of Health and Social Care Standards.