



Higher National Unit Specification

General information

Unit title: Counselling: Setting up a Practice (SCQF level 8)

Unit code: HL9M 35

Superclass: PS

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Version: 01

Unit purpose

This unit is designed to give learners an opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding of the factors involved when setting up a counselling practice in the statutory, voluntary or independent sector, and the operational requirements of running a professional service. Learners are required to consider the planning and preparation of a service, the legal and ethical issues arising when setting up a practice and the quality assurance and accountability mechanisms. The unit content is underpinned by the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling.

Outcomes

On successful completion of the unit the learner will be able to:

- 1 Investigate issues relating to the setting up of a counselling practice.
- 2 Analyse the legal and ethical issues arising when setting up a counselling practice.
- 3 Investigate quality assurance and accountability mechanisms when setting up a counselling practice.

Credit points and level

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

Recommended entry to the unit

The learner should have a knowledge and understanding of counselling practice. It is recommended that learners at a minimum should hold SCQF level 7 units relating to counselling, eg HNC Counselling.

Higher National Unit Specification: General information (cont)

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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

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 optional within the framework of the Counselling HND.

Equality and inclusion

This unit specification 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 our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

Higher National unit specification: Statement of standards

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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.

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. Learners should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Outcome 1

Investigate issues relating to the setting up of a counselling practice.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Type and nature of research necessary when setting up a practice
- ◆ Methods of marketing necessary when setting up a practice
- ◆ Sources of funding and the role played by funding and finance
- ◆ Factors which may affect the setting up of a practice

Outcome 2

Analyse the legal and ethical issues arising when setting up a counselling practice.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Measures necessary to protect the confidentiality of clients using the service
- ◆ Health and safety considerations and procedures necessary to ensure the health and safety of counsellor and clients
- ◆ Legal and ethical issues arising when setting up a counselling practice, including client contracts, counsellor supervision and indemnity insurance
- ◆ Key features of legislation that relate to the policies chosen

Outcome 3

Investigate quality assurance and accountability mechanisms when setting up a counselling practice.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Personal and organisational accountability mechanisms including a complaints procedure
- ◆ Importance of financial accountability and organisational constitutions/policies
- ◆ Explain the importance of maintaining own continued professional development (CPD)

Higher National unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Counselling: Setting up a Practice

Evidence requirements for this unit

Learners will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills across all outcomes by showing that they can:

- ◆ explain two types of research and why this is necessary when setting up a practice.
- ◆ describe two methods of marketing necessary when setting up a practice.
- ◆ describe the personal communication and interpersonal skills necessary when setting up a counselling practice.
- ◆ identify four factors which may affect the setting up of a counselling practice.
- ◆ explain the measures necessary to protect the confidentiality of clients using the service.
- ◆ describe the health and safety considerations and procedures necessary to ensure the health and safety of workers and clients.
- ◆ explain the legal and ethical issues arising when setting up a counselling practice, including client contracts, counsellor supervision and insurance.
- ◆ describe the key features of a minimum of three pieces of legislation which relate to Counselling from the policies chosen.
- ◆ explain personal and organisational accountability mechanisms including complaints procedure.
- ◆ explain the need for financial accountability and transparency.
- ◆ explain the importance of organisational constitutions/policies.
- ◆ explain the importance of maintaining CPD to own practice.

Holistic assessment of this unit is recommended.



Higher National Unit Support Notes

Unit title: Counselling: Setting up a Practice (SCQF level 8)

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 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this unit

This specialist unit is designed to give learners an opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding of the factors involved when setting up a counselling practice in the statutory, voluntary or independent sectors and the operational requirements of the running a professional service. Learners are required to consider the planning of a practice, legal and ethical issues, quality assurance and accountability mechanisms.

This unit will require learners to consider all aspects of setting up a counselling practice. They will be expected to use research and communication skills to investigate the factors involved in the planning and preparation of such an activity.

Outcome 1 requires the learner to explain the research necessary prior to setting up a counselling service. The following topics should provide context for this outcome.

- ◆ Funding and finance: From where does the funding come? Local council, health service, grant providers, bank loans?
- ◆ How will the financial side of the service be managed? When investigating the finance and support available a range of funding sources should be identified including EAPs. The importance of meeting funders' criteria should be stressed together with the requirement to follow correct procedures for successful applicants.
- ◆ Service marketing: how is the service marketed? Development of a web site, flyers distributed throughout community, contact with GP surgeries, local church contacts, etc?
- ◆ Location and premises: where should the premises be located to best meet the needs of the service users? What is it important to consider when choosing premises? Accessibility in terms of transport — is it on a bus route? Do the premises meet the requirements of equality legislation? Are the counselling rooms confidential? (Physical resources.) Learners may also consider the implications of running a counselling service from home.
- ◆ What skills and qualities are required? What qualifications are necessary?
- ◆ Barriers to setting up a service: what could prevent the effective setting up of a counselling practice?

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Outcome 2 requires the learner to explain the legal and ethical issues arising when setting up a counselling practice. This includes data storage, note taking, ethics and confidentiality, self-care and personal safety. The need for policy statements and procedures to be used as working documents which inform practice should be considered. Through examining the policies and their relationship with legislation, the learner will develop knowledge and understanding. They should be able to explain the role of legislation in promoting positive care within the practice.

Legislation which may be considered:

- ◆ Mental Health Care and Treatment Act (2000)
- ◆ The Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001
- ◆ Human Rights Act (1998)
- ◆ Data Protection Act (1998)
- ◆ The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- ◆ The Equality Act 2010

Legislation provides clients with rights and responsibilities and counsellors require an awareness of these.

In considering the legislation and related policies within the counselling practice, learners should be familiar with the key features of relevant legislation. Learners should develop knowledge and understanding of ethics and principles of counselling practice. It is important that the supervision of counsellors, boundaries, client contracts and indemnity insurance be considered.

Outcome 3 requires the learner to investigate quality assurance mechanisms necessary within a counselling service. Learners should understand the terms 'quality assurance' and 'accountability' and should examine and evaluate the impact these mechanisms have on clients, volunteers, paid employees and the counselling practice.

Learners are required to explain the importance of continuous professional development for volunteers and staff and the need for ongoing training.

Learners will learn of the importance of policy documents and an organisational constitution within a counselling practice.

- ◆ Protects clients and volunteers
- ◆ Standardises practice
- ◆ Meets legal requirements
- ◆ Accountability mechanism
- ◆ Offers guidance within service
- ◆ Induction tool

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Guidance on approaches to delivery of this unit

The delivery of this unit may be enhanced by the use of visiting speakers such as counselling practitioners or representatives from agencies who will bring first hand, up to date knowledge of the considerations and requirements necessary when setting up and operating a service for clients. Centres may consider delivering this unit in conjunction with the unit *Preparing to Start a Business* as this provides an introduction to producing a business plan and the practical considerations to be taken into account when starting a business.

Guidance on approaches to assessment of this unit

Evidence can be generated using different types of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education.

Outcomes 1, 2 and 3

This unit could be assessed holistically using one instrument of assessment. This could be a series of extended response questions set in open book conditions at appropriate times during delivery of the unit.

Learners must achieve all the minimum evidence specified for all outcomes in order to pass the unit.

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.

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

There will be opportunities to gather evidence towards Core Skills in this unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components. There will be opportunities to develop the skills of *Communication, Problem Solving, Working with Others, Numeracy* and *Information and Communication Technology*.

History of changes to unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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General information for learners

Unit title: Counselling: Setting up a Practice (SCQF level 8)

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, what you will need to do during the unit and opportunities for further learning and employment.

This unit is designed to provide you with an opportunity to develop your knowledge and understanding of the factors involved in setting up a counselling practice, and the operational requirements of running a professional service. You are required to consider planning and preparation of a practice, the legal and ethical issues arising when setting up a service and the quality assurance and accountability mechanisms.

On completion of the unit you should be able to:

- ◆ investigate issues relating to the setting up of a counselling practice.
- ◆ explain the legal and ethical issues arising when setting up a counselling practice
- ◆ investigate quality assurance and accountability mechanisms when setting up a counselling practice

Evidence could be presented as responses to extended response questions to cover all evidence requirements.

You must achieve all the minimum evidence specified for all outcomes in order to pass the unit.

You will have the opportunity to develop the Core Skills of *Communication, Problem Solving, Numeracy, Working with Others* and *Information and Communication Technology*. In addition, whilst preparing your project you will demonstrate the aims of Curriculum for Excellence and become a successful learner, a confident individual, a responsible citizen and an effective contributor within society.