



Higher National Project-based Graded Unit Specification

General information

This graded unit has been validated as part of the HND Counselling. Centres are required to develop the assessment instrument in accordance with this validated specification. Centres wishing to use another type of graded unit or assessment instrument are required to submit proposals detailing the justification for change for validation.

Graded unit title: Counselling: Graded Unit 2

Graded unit code: HN8V 35

Type of project: Case Study

Publication date: July 2018

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 04

Graded unit purpose

This graded unit is designed to provide evidence that the learner has achieved the following principal aims of the HND Counselling:

- ◆ professionalise the industry, particularly in Scotland, by providing a qualification which meets the BACP requirements for individual entry to the professional register
- ◆ emphasise the importance of contractual relationships and ethical and regulatory frameworks
- ◆ develop learner's counselling skills in practice with clients in a range of counselling settings
- ◆ develop the learners skills in research, self-evaluation and personal development

The content of this unit is underpinned by the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling.

Credit points and level

2 Higher National Unit credits at SCQF level 8: (16 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8)

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:

Counselling: Professional Standards
Counselling: Psychopathology for Counsellors
Counselling: Personal Development in a Therapeutic Setting
Counselling: Supervised Practice
Counselling: Research Skills
Counselling: Values and Principles for Practice
Counselling: Self-evaluation for Counsellors

Plus a minimum of two of the following units, one Theory unit and one Group Experience unit to be selected:

Counselling: Contemporary Humanistic Counselling Theory
Counselling: Contemporary Psychodynamic Counselling Theory
Counselling: Contemporary Cognitive and Behavioural Counselling Theory
Counselling: Contemporary Pluralistic Counselling Theory

Counselling: Group Experience: Humanistic Approach
Counselling: Group Experience: Psychodynamic Approach
Counselling: Group Experience: Cognitive and Behavioural Approach
Counselling: Group Experience: Pluralistic Approach

Core Skills

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the support notes of this graded unit specification.

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

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

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

Graded unit title: Counselling: Graded Unit 2

Assessment

This graded unit will be assessed by the use of a project-based *case study* 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

This graded unit will be assessed by the use of a project in the form of a case study which should be based upon a client from the learner's supervised practice. The developed practical case study should provide the learner with the opportunity to produce evidence that demonstrates the application of knowledge and understanding to a situation that involves a counselling environment. During delivery for this unit, there will be regular opportunity for practice observation, feedback, discussion and review.

The case study should show evidence that the learner is able to integrate knowledge and skills. The case study samples across the following outcomes from the mandatory units:

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

Graded unit title: Counselling: Graded Unit 2

| Unit code | Unit title | Outcomes |
|--|--|--|
| HL9K 35 | Counselling Supervised Practice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Demonstrate own readiness to practice ◆ Demonstrate professional development as a practising counsellor |
| HL9J 35 | Counselling: Professional Standards | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Demonstrate ethical decision making in relation to therapeutic practice and legislation ◆ Apply ethical framework to own practice, values and attitudes |
| HL9R 35 | Counselling: Values and Principles for Practice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Evaluate and reflect on the relationship between personal development, learning in relation to values and principles of practice and the ethical framework. |
| HL9N 35 | Counselling: Personal Development in a Therapeutic Setting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Critically analyse self in relation to others |
| HL9P 35 | Counselling: Psychopathology for Counsellors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Explain legal and ethical issues in abnormal psychology for counsellors |
| H0C4 35 | Counselling: Self Evaluation for Counsellors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Identify and address learning needs for ongoing personal development. |
| HL9L 36 | Counselling: Research Skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Critically analyse published, relevant research |
| One Contemporary Theory and One Group Approach unit to be selected for the case study | | |
| Contemporary Theories (one to be selected) | | |
| F1EG 35 | Counselling: Contemporary Humanistic Counselling Theory | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Evaluate personal learning in relation to the contemporary humanistic approach |
| F1EH 35 | Counselling: Contemporary Psychodynamic Counselling Theory | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Evaluate personal learning in relation to the contemporary psychodynamic approach |
| F1EF 35 | Counselling: Contemporary Behavioural and Cognitive Theory | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Evaluate personal learning in relation to the contemporary behavioural and cognitive approach |
| J00E 35 | Counselling: Contemporary Pluralistic Counselling Theory | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Evaluate personal learning in relation to the contemporary pluralistic approach |

| Group Approaches (one to be selected) | | |
|--|---|---|
| H0C2 35 | Counselling: Group Experience: Humanistic Approach | ◆ Explain the humanistic approach to group development and process |
| H0C3 35 | Counselling: Group Experience: Psychodynamic Approach | ◆ Explain the psychodynamic approach to group development and process |
| H0C1 35 | Counselling: Group Experience: Cognitive-Behavioural Approach | ◆ Explain the cognitive-behavioural approach to group development and process |
| J00F 35 | Counselling: Group Experience: Pluralistic Approach | Explain the pluralistic approach to group development and process |

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

Graded unit title: Counselling: Graded Unit 2

The above units are mandatory for the HND Group Award and will form the basis of the client case-study. The context for the developed practical case study should draw upon the topics selected by the learner covered in the units from the optional section listed below.

| Unit code | Unit title |
|------------------|---|
| F1EV 34 | Counselling: Understanding Addictive Behaviours |
| F1EW 35 | Counselling: Working with Addictive Behaviours |
| F1EX 35 | Counselling: Working with Substance Misuse |
| F1EM 34 | Counselling: Loss, Grief and Bereavement in a Counselling Context |
| F1EK 34 | Counselling: Group Counselling Skills |
| H0HL 35 | Counselling: Deaf People |
| H0HN 35 | Counselling: Course Residential Experience |
| HL9M 35 | Counselling: Setting Up a Practice |

Project Brief: Case Study

This assignment relates to an actual client that the learner is engaged with in a therapeutic counselling relationship in accordance with the mandatory unit *Supervised Practice*. The learner will consider different counselling theories and plan a model of counselling support appropriate to the client. Client cases used within this unit can only be used if the client has (a) been provided with all details regarding their participation in this assessment, (b) fully agreed to and signed to give their permission and is offered the option to withdraw their permission at any time. The BACP Ethical Framework underpins every aspect of this process.

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

Graded unit title: Counselling: Graded Unit 2

Stage 1: Planning

Explore the issue(s) that might affect one chosen client. Briefly explain how one of the three theories of counselling: humanistic, psychodynamic or cognitive and behavioural could be applied to the scenario with reference to:

- ◆ understanding and knowledge of theories and structure
- ◆ counselling ethics
- ◆ boundary issues

Stage 2: Developing

Conduct five counselling sessions with one client within supervised placement.

- ◆ experience as a counsellor
- ◆ application of theories and skills from chosen approach
- ◆ adherence to professional ethical framework

Stage 3: Evaluating

Deliver a case presentation in which you evaluate and review the activity with reference to:

- ◆ relevant theory and model
- ◆ reflection on own learning
- ◆ adherence to ethical framework
- ◆ role of supervision
- ◆ management of personal values and principles
- ◆ self-evaluation
- ◆ reflection on holistic nature of the learning experience

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

Graded unit title: Counselling: Graded Unit 2

Conditions of assessment

The learner should be given a date for completion of the case presentation. However, the instructions for the assessment task should be distributed to allow the learner sufficient time to assimilate the details and carry out the assessment task. During the time between the distribution of the assessment task 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.

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.

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

Graded unit title: Counselling: Graded Unit 2

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 | <p>Produce a plan which includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Analysis of the issue(s) in the case study and the key factors influencing the client. 2 Identification of the additional units from which knowledge and skills will be applied. 3 An explanation of the theories which could be applied. 4 Identification and exploration of the ethical and boundary issues involved. 5 Identification of and reasons for selection of theories. <p>The plan should be between 1,000 and 1,500 words, or equivalent.</p> <p>Additional guidance on grading</p> <p>This stage is worth 25 marks which should be allocated as set out below.</p> <p>The learner must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified below to pass the planning stage. The planning stage is assessed by a planning document and supportive statement from the learner's clinical supervisor. The tutor's role is as a facilitator and so to gain high marks the learner must demonstrate a high degree of autonomy in planning activities.</p> | 25% of total marks |

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

Graded unit title: Counselling: Graded Unit 2

| Project stage | Minimum evidence requirements (cont) | % Mark allocation |
|---------------|--|-------------------|
| | <p>Up to 8 marks for an analysis of the case study and the identification of the key issues. Marks should be awarded on the basis of a clear and comprehensive analysis of the key issues identified from within the case study.</p> <p>Up to 8 marks for the explanation of the theories being applied. Marks should be awarded on the basis of The theories applied are appropriate and clearly explained including a rationale for the two additional knowledge and skills units.</p> <p>Up to 8 marks for analysis of the ethical issues. Marks should be awarded based on the case study, potential ethical issues and related personal ethics are identified.</p> <p>Up to 1 mark can be allocated for structure and referencing throughout the plan.</p> <p><i>The learner must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Planning stage.</i></p> <p><i>This can be demonstrated by submitting evidence relating to all six aspects of the Planning stage and achieving a mark of at least 13/25.</i></p> | |

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

Graded unit title: Counselling: Graded Unit 2

| Project stage | Minimum evidence requirements | % Mark allocation |
|-------------------------|--|--------------------|
| Stage 2 — Developing | <p>A signed checklist completed by the clinical supervisor and placement mentor for five counselling sessions for which there should be appropriate verifiable records.</p> <p>The learner should undertake five counselling sessions in supervised placement. The sessions should last 50 minutes each.</p> <p>This stage is worth 15 marks. The learner must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified below to pass the developing stage. The tutor's role is as a facilitator and so to gain high marks the learner must demonstrate a high degree of autonomy in developing the model of counselling support.</p> <p>Evidence must include a signed, completed checklist from the clinical supervisor and placement mentor.</p> <hr/> <p><i>The learner must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Developing stage.</i></p> <p><i>This can be demonstrated by submitting evidence relating to the Developing stage and achieving a mark of at least 8/15.</i></p> | 15% of total marks |

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

Graded unit title: Counselling: Graded Unit 2

| Project stage | Minimum evidence requirements | % Mark allocation |
|-----------------------------|--|--------------------|
| Stage 3 — Evaluating | <p>Deliver a case presentation which includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 A brief outline of the case study and the points identified for consideration. 2 Review of the original action plan, with reference to any modifications made during the course of the project. 3 Critical self-evaluation of the model of counselling support. 4 Demonstrate ethical decision making in relation to therapeutic practice and legislation with chosen client 5 Critically analyse the contribution of published, relevant research in informing the therapeutic intervention 6 Apply the ethical framework to own practice, values and attitudes with chosen client 7 Evaluate and reflect on the relationship between personal development, learning in relation to values and principles of practice and the ethical framework 8 Critically analyse self in relation to others 9 Explain legal and ethical issues in abnormal psychology for counsellors 10 Identification of skills gained and integration of learning. 11 Identify and address learning needs for ongoing personal development <p>The delivery of the presentation should be between 20–30 minutes in length.</p> <p>This stage is worth 60 marks. The learner must achieve the minimum criteria specified below to pass the evaluating stage. The evaluating stage is assessed by a case presentation. The tutor’s role is as facilitator so learners should demonstrate a high degree of autonomy in evaluating the model of support. The marks for this stage should be allocated in the following way.</p> <p>Up to 5 marks for a summary of the case study and the points identified for consideration.</p> | 60% of total marks |

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

Graded unit title: Counselling: Graded Unit 2

| Project stage | Minimum evidence requirements (cont) | % Mark allocation |
|---------------|--|-------------------|
| | <p>Up to 5 marks for a review of the original action plan, with reference to any modifications made during the course of the project.</p> <p>Up to 4 marks for critically analysing the contribution of published, relevant research in informing the therapeutic intervention. Current, peer reviewed and published research should be selected and the impact on choice of methodology explained.</p> <p>Up to 16 marks to apply the ethical framework and law to own practice, values and attitudes with chosen client.</p> <p>The following should have been considered within the presentation:</p> <p>In relation to safe, ethical practice: current law, own decision making, values, attitudes and practice, issues relating to mental health of both counsellor and client.</p> | |

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

Graded unit title: Counselling: Graded Unit 2

| Project stage | Minimum evidence requirements (cont) | % Mark allocation |
|---------------|---|-------------------|
| | <p>Up to 12 marks for critically analysing self. The presentation should include the following:</p> <p>Effects of defence patterns, factors inhibiting congruent relating, effects of own fears and awareness of how personal prejudice can influence judgement and behaviour.</p> <p>Up to 18 marks for the identification and addressing of learning needs for ongoing personal development and for evaluating and reflecting on the relationship between personal development and learning. The presentation will include reference to the following:</p> <p>Personal responsibility for own learning and development, self awareness and reflection skills, clear evaluation of learning with identification of areas requiring improvement and the actions that can be taken to do this.</p> <hr/> <p><i>The learner must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Evaluating stage.</i></p> <p><i>This can be demonstrated by submitting evidence relating to all four aspects of the Evaluating stage and achieving a mark of at least 30/60.</i></p> | |

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Graded unit title: Counselling: Graded Unit 2

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"> ◆ produces evidence for the three essential stages of the practical assignment ◆ is of high quality and clearly inter-related ◆ is highly focused and demonstrates an insightful interpretation and a balanced, integrative approach ◆ is tightly structured, relevant to the content of the units and displays a high level of counselling expertise ◆ effectively applies integrated and consolidated knowledge, understanding and skills from the counselling units to client situations. | <p>Is a co-ordinated piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ produces adequate, fairly well integrated documentation for the three essential stages of the practical assignment ◆ demonstrates an acceptable interpretation from a balanced integrative approach ◆ is reasonably well structured and displays an adequate level of counselling expertise ◆ applies integrated and consolidated knowledge understanding and skills with some lack of continuity and consistency. |

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

Graded unit title: Counselling: Graded Unit 2

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: Counselling: Graded Unit 2

Guidance on approaches to delivery and assessment of this graded unit

As this unit is learner-initiated and driven, it requires only guidance and direction on the part of the lecturer. Primarily, the role of the lecturer is that of mentor. The expectation is that the learner works independently, demonstrating a thorough understanding of each stage of the unit, ie, planning, developing and evaluating. Problem solving skills and evaluative skills should be evident. Submission and presentation completion date has to be established and adhered to. A learner should work independently throughout a project-based graded unit assessment. The role of the assessor is to provide reasonable assistance, eg to provide clarification and guidance in a way which ensures that it is still the work of the learner which will be assessed.

The setting of deadlines in project-based graded units is imposed to ensure fairness so that all learners are given the same time to complete either the entire project or phases within the project. However, colleges should take into consideration any personal circumstances in line with their centre's own policy and SQA's guidance on special assessment arrangements. If however, no personal circumstances pertain, the learner's work should be submitted and marked by the due deadline

Learners should be encouraged to draw upon their learning and assignments for the mandatory units.

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or a Core Skill component as part of this graded unit. However, there may be opportunities to develop the Core Skills of *Problem Solving, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Working with Others* and *Communication* at SCQF level 6.

History of changes to graded unit

| Version | Description of change | Date |
|---------|--|----------|
| 04 | Update of Conditions of Assessment. | 17/07/18 |
| 03 | Pluralistic units added to the mandatory/optional list, pages 2,4,5. | 27/4/18 |
| 02 | General Information for Learners bullet point 4 reworded. | 25/07/17 |
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General information for learners

Graded unit title: Counselling: Graded Unit 2

This unit has been designed to allow you integrate your learning across a range of units in the HND Counselling. You will be able to draw upon your knowledge and skills gained from the course and reflect upon and evaluate your learning journey.

You will have the opportunity to discuss and agree on the suitability of the client to be used as a case study with the tutor prior to the project being undertaken.

On completion of this unit, you will be able to demonstrate that you have achieved the following principal aims of the HND Counselling:

- ◆ Developed knowledge of the importance of contractual relationships and ethical and regulatory frameworks.
- ◆ Demonstrated competent counselling skills in safe practice with clients in a range of counselling settings.
- ◆ Developed skills in research, self-evaluation and personal development.
- ◆ Developed awareness of health, safety and security requirements for safe working