



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: June 2017

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

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: Group Experience: Humanistic Approach
Counselling: Group Experience: Psychodynamic Approach
Counselling: Group Experience: Cognitive and Behavioural 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		
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
H0C2 35	Counselling: Group Experience: Humanistic Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Explain the humanistic 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

Unit code	Unit title	Outcomes
One Contemporary Theory and One Group Approach unit to be selected for the case study (cont)		
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

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

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. The assessment task should be marked as soon as possible after the completion date. The final grading given should reflect the quality of the learner's evidence at the time of the completion date.

The evidence for the project is generated over time and involves three distinct stages, where each stage has to be achieved before the next is undertaken. Thus any reassessment of stages must be undertaken before proceeding to the next stage.

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

Graded unit title: Counselling: Graded Unit 2

If a learner fails the project overall then this must be done using a *substantially different* project, ie all stages are undertaken using a new client as case study. In this case, the learner cannot achieve higher than a 'C' grade if the submission is taking place in the same academic year.

Remediation can take place at any stage throughout the project and it is recommended that learners shouldn't progress from one stage to the next without having passed the previous stage — however, the level of support required would be reflected in the grade given. If reassessment is required, the learner would not be able to achieve a grade above a 'C'. If significant assessor support is required in any of the project stages, the learner would not be awarded an 'A' grade as the level of independent working would not accord with the guidance on grading learners in the graded unit specification.

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> <p>The level of support required would be reflected in the grade given. If significant tutor support is required in any of the project stages, the learner would not be awarded an 'A' grade as the level of independent working would not accord with the guidance on grading learners in the graded unit specification.</p>	25% of total marks

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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
<p>Stage 2 — Developing</p>	<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>	<p>15% of total marks</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 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)

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Project stage	Minimum evidence requirements (cont)	% Mark allocation
	<p>Up to 12 marks for critically analysing self.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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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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.

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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.

If a learner does not achieve a pass or wishes to upgrade, then this must be done using a substantially different project, ie all stages are undertaken using a new project (case study, investigation or practical assignment). In these circumstances, the highest grade achieved should be awarded.

More information on reasonable assistance, remediation and re-assessment may be found in the SQA publication *Guidance for the Implementation of Graded Units in Higher National Certificates and Diplomas* (SQA, 2008, Publication code: CA4405).



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
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