



Higher National Unit Specification

General information

Unit title: Counselling Supervision: Introduction (SCQF level 10)

Unit code: J3HJ 37

Superclass: AF

Publication date: November 2019

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 02 (August 2024)

Unit purpose

The aim of this unit is to provide experienced counsellors with a detailed insight into the role and responsibilities of counselling supervisors, the purpose of clinical supervision and the theoretical models used. The unit also aims to facilitate development of the skills necessary for supervision practice, so learners understand how to establish and maintain the supervisory relationship to enable the supervisee to make effective use of supervision.

The content of this unit is underpinned by the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions and aligned with the BACP Curriculum Framework for Counselling Supervisor Training.

Outcomes

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

- 1 Explain the supervisor's role and responsibilities in the context of counselling practice.
- 2 Critically analyse the supervisory relationship.
- 3 Critically evaluate the skills necessary to ensure the supervisee can make effective use of supervision.

Higher National Unit Specification: General information (continued)

Unit title: Counselling Supervision: Introduction (SCQF level 10)

Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit credit at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 10: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 10).

Recommended entry to the unit

Entry is at the discretion of the centre.

It would be beneficial if learners had already completed the HN Units Counselling: Supervised Practice and / or Counselling Supervision at SCQF level 8 as these units provide a perspective of supervision from the supervisee's point of view.

The following entry criteria are mandatory.

Applicants must:

- have significant experience in counselling / psychotherapy practice (with a minimum of 450 client hours).
- have as a minimum, two years' post-qualifying experience
- be BACP Registered or equivalent member of a professional body who adheres to an ethical framework or code of ethics.
- have appropriate supervision arrangements in place, including access to at least two supervisees.
- be able to demonstrate knowledge of a range of media used for remote supervision, including audio, text, email and blended approaches.

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.

The unit is mandatory within the PDA in Counselling Supervision at SCQF level 11.

Higher National Unit Specification: General information (continued)

Unit title: Counselling Supervision: Introduction (SCQF level 10)

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:

[SQA Assessment Arrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements) (www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements).

Higher National Unit Specification: Statement of standards

Unit title: Counselling Supervision: Introduction (SCQF level 10)

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

Explain the supervisor's role and responsibilities in the context of counselling practice.

Knowledge and / or skills

- The role and clinical responsibilities of the counselling supervisor
- Theoretical models underpinning supervisory practice
- Educational theories and principles that inform self-directed learning in counselling supervision
- Importance of placing the supervisee's needs, expectations and preferences at the centre of planned learning

Outcome 2

Critically analyse the supervisory relationship.

Knowledge and / or skills

- Establishing and maintaining an effective supervisory relationship and contract exploring the supervisees needs, expectations and understanding of supervision.
- Factors that create an appropriate environment for successful supervision.
- Managing a working supervisory relationship demonstrating the ability to work with supervisees to bring supervisory sessions and relationships to an end.
- Exploration and practice of supervision skills.

Higher National Unit Specification: Statement of standards (continued)

Unit title: Counselling Supervision: Introduction (SCQF level 10)

Outcome 3

Critically evaluate the skills necessary to ensure the supervisee can make effective use of supervision.

Knowledge and / or skills

- Approaches to presenting work in supervision
- Importance of skills in reflection, self-appraisal and reciprocal feedback on self-directed learning
- Demonstration of supervision skills underpinned by theory
- Reflective practice

Evidence requirements for this unit

Evidence is required to demonstrate that learners have achieved all outcomes. Given the nature of this unit, the importance of maintaining confidentiality and responsibilities relating to disclosure on issues emerging should be stressed to learners. Learners and teachers / lecturers / supervisors should adhere to a nationally recognised professional ethical framework. Criteria for this assessment should be clear and specific with regard to learner competency.

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

- explain the role of the counselling supervisor and their clinical responsibility.
- critique one theoretical model of counselling supervision.
- describe the educational principles that inform counselling supervision.
- explain the theory behind self-directed learning.
- describe how to work within the supervisee's optimal level of challenge whilst recognising their capacity for transfer of learning.
- explain the importance of working collaboratively.
- explain how to enable supervisees to identify their own strengths and weaknesses and set relevant learning objectives which utilise their preferred learning styles.
- describe the three domains of the supervisory alliance.
- explain the factors that contribute to creating and maintaining an appropriate environment for building a supervisory relationship, including:
 - factors for forming a positive alliance
 - importance of a non-judgemental environment
 - open and honest discussion to support supervisee's personal development.

Higher National Unit Specification: Statement of standards (continued)

Unit title: Counselling Supervision: Introduction (SCQF level 10)

Evidence requirements for this unit (continued)

- clear structure and process of supervision, gaining feedback on supervision, awareness of personal responsibility within the relationship.
- identifying actions that are appropriate where the working alliance has broken down.
- identify relevant content for a supervision session, including different approaches to structuring and presenting practice that hasn't proceeded as well as expected.
- explain the importance of the following skills for facilitating the supervisee's self-directed learning:
 - self-appraisal
 - reflection
 - accepting summative and formative feedback.
- explain the importance of engaging with feedback from the supervisee.
- demonstrate own supervision skills and ability to link theory to practice.



Higher National Unit Support Notes

Unit title: Counselling Supervision: Introduction (SCQF level 10)

Unit support notes are offered as guidance and are not mandatory. As the content of the unit is mapped to the BACP Counselling Supervision Training Curriculum it is recommended that the BACP ethical framework and guidance for clinical supervision should be adhered to throughout.

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 unit is mandatory in the PDA in Counselling Supervision at SCQF level 11. It is designed to be delivered as the first component of the programme.

In this unit, learners will develop their knowledge of the role and responsibilities of a professional clinical supervisor. They will learn about the importance of developing skills to facilitate an effective supervisory relationship — and what to do should this relationship break down. They will have the opportunity to develop and demonstrate their ability to embed their knowledge of the theoretical models, educational theories and supervision skills into their professional practice. Throughout the unit the learner will develop skills as a reflective practitioner.

Outcome 1

This outcome introduces the role of the supervisor and purpose of supervision. Learners will gain an understanding of the role and the importance supervision plays in ensuring competence and safety in the context of clinical practice. Theoretical models underpinning supervisory practice should be highlighted throughout this unit, for example person-centred, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), psychodynamic, pluralistic, prescriptive, informative, confronting, cathartic, catalytic, supportive approaches in addition to theory-based, developmental, social role and competency-based models.

These might include the seven-eyed or double-matrix Model, the Integrative Developmental Model (IDM), procedural model, function models, system models and tasks of supervision.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (continued)

Unit title: Counselling Supervision: Introduction (SCQF level 10)

The emphasis on self-directed learning should be reinforced with exploration and application of educational theories and principles that inform the requirement for independent learning in counselling supervision. A range of learning styles could be covered including:

- Visual (spatial): Learners prefer using pictures, images, and spatial understanding.
- Aural (auditory-musical): Learners prefer using sound and music.
- Verbal (linguistic): Learners prefer using words, both in speech and writing.
- Physical (kinesthetic): Learners prefer using your body, hands and sense of touch.
- Logical (mathematical): Learners prefer using logic, reasoning and systems.
- Social (interpersonal): Learners prefer to learn in groups or with other people.
- Solitary (intrapersonal): Learners prefer to work alone and use self-study.

Outcome 2

Outcome 2 focuses on the importance of effectively managing the supervisory relationship. The choice and efficacy of structures, frameworks and tools explored might include:

- Managerial — where counselling supervisors are also line managers to supervisees.
- Administrative — in which supervisors are responsible for leadership.
- Training — where supervisees are part of training courses in counselling.
- Groupwork — where supervision is focused on supervisees' work with groups.
- Consultative — in which supervisees are qualified counsellors.
- Non managerial — in which supervisors have no managerial responsibilities for supervisees.
- Self-supervision — in which supervisees monitor their own work.
- Organisational — during which the focus is on the organisation rather than the individual client.
- Individual — which is an arrangement between one supervisor and one supervisee.
- Individual supervision in a group setting — where supervision is as an individual but within a group setting.
- Group — where one supervisor meets with a number of supervisees.
- Peer group — which is usually a small leaderless group of supervisees who monitor each others' counselling work.
- Staff — where the composition of the group is also the team or staff within a particular organisation. The supervisor is usually from outside the organisation.
- Dual — where two supervisors monitor the work of a supervisee.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (continued)

Unit title: Counselling Supervision: Introduction (SCQF level 10)

Outcome 2 (continued)

The centre should provide a recommended reading list which will benefit learners in their self-directed learning.

Time should be spent reflecting upon the factors that help create an appropriate environment for successful supervision. Time should also be spent exploring the supervisee's needs, expectations and understanding of supervision, and demonstrating the ability to agree and review contracts. This can be based on evidence, current practice and personal experience.

Class time should be allocated for practicing supervision skills with other members of the group, working with teacher / lecturer / supervisor and peer feedback. Practice sessions that would be helpful for the supervisee should be set up, for example setting up exercises that help the supervisee to rehearse implementing therapeutic procedures.

Class time should be allocated for practice sessions learning how to bring supervisory sessions as well as relationships to an end.

Outcome 3

This outcome centres on the approaches to presenting work in supervision, the impact of contracting, reflection, self-appraisal and feedback on self-directed learning and the demonstration of supervisory skills where the knowledge and understanding gained throughout the unit are embedded into professional practice.

Content might include; tools to aid reflection, how to structure case presentation, the value of maintaining a professional journal and how to record process notes.

Guidance on approaches to delivery of this unit

A variety of teaching approaches is encouraged, for example, lectures and group-work including discussion around case studies and simulated supervision sessions. Self-directed research should be encouraged.

A minimum of 80% attendance is required by the learner for this unit. Please note this figure is subject to the requirements of qualification funding bodies some of whom require 90% attendance at funded courses. Centres should have processes in place to monitor attendance.

As the content of the unit aims to develop the supervisor's ability to link theory to practice, it is mandatory that delivery will include structured simulated supervision skills and group-work sessions. This will provide beneficial experiences for learners as they will practise their supervision skills and work with teacher / lecturer / supervisor and peer feedback. They will also gain experience in supporting their supervisee, for example setting up exercises that will help their supervisee to rehearse implementing therapeutic procedures. A suggested order for delivery and minimum content follows.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (continued)

Unit title: Counselling Supervision: Introduction (SCQF level 10)

Session	Content of Session
Session 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the course, requirements and overview of sessions. • The role of the supervisor and clinical responsibility: • Understanding the knowledge base of the supervisory alliance — the three domains: the bond between supervisor and supervisee; the supervisory tasks and the goals and aims of supervision. • Identifying relevant content for a supervision session.
Session 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The models of counselling supervision. • Educational models, emphasising the theory behind the self-directed learner, for example Kolb's learning cycle and active learning. • Facilitation of supervisees to link theory with practice.
Session 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding how to work within the supervisee's optimal level for challenge. • The importance of collaboration. • The importance of reflection in supervision. • Enabling supervisees to identify their own strengths and weaknesses and set their own learning objectives.
Session 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the supervisee's learning style: creative methods of working in supervision could be included here, for example art materials, movement and drama. • Understanding a supervisee's capacity for the transfer of learning and finding a way to work with this.
Session 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the knowledge of therapist factors that increase the probability of forming a positive alliance, for example being flexible, allowing the focus of the sessions to remain with the supervisee, being respectful, open, alert and active. • Creating a non-judgmental environment. • Building a relationship where the supervisee can congruently discuss their experience of supervision and openly discuss their aims in a manner that supports their professional development and helps them to be inquisitive about their practice.

Session	Content of Session
Session 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising and addressing the strains in the supervisory alliance, for example checking that a supervisee is clear about the structure and process of supervision, increased awareness of the importance of asking for feedback from the supervisee, accepting responsibility for their contribution to any strains in the relationship. • Recognising and taking appropriate action when the working alliance has broken down completely.
Session 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying and presenting practice that has not proceeded well. • Enabling a supervisee to structure their presentations in supervision.
Session 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding supervisee's self-appraisal in relation to the work with a supervisor, for example drawing on knowledge that a supervisee's self-appraisal tends to be lower when supervisors only give supportive feedback. • Facilitating reflection in supervision, for example knowledge and implementation of educational models rooted in self-reflection, enabling the supervisee to reflect on the perspective of the client, learning logs, responding to supervisee's reflections in a respectful manner.
Session 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating the context for giving feedback, for example ensuring that the supervisory alliance is good enough to allow summative and formative feedback to be accepted.
Session 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving feedback in an appropriate manner, for example a balance between positive and constructive feedback, suggesting actions for the supervisee, phrasing feedback that avoids the imputation of personal failure. • Engaging with feedback from the supervisee.
Session 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidation of learning and assessment.
Session 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training Group work, reflection and evaluation.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (continued)

Unit title: Counselling Supervision: Introduction (SCQF level 10)

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.

Evidence for all knowledge based elements may be assessed holistically. Evidence may be gathered in open-book conditions at appropriate points throughout the unit. The use of a learner portfolio totalling no more than 2,500 words is recommended. (This will also be useful if the learner chooses to maintain a reflective journal to support their learning process).

Evidence for skills-based elements should be assessed via a combination of group contribution and demonstration of the learner's ability to link theory into practice.

Outcome 3 provides an important opportunity for the learner to demonstrate their ability to link the underpinning knowledge and understanding elements of the unit into their practice. The use of an internally moderated observation checklist supported by evidence of constructive questioning and feedback from the peer group and teachers / lecturers / supervisors are appropriate methods of assessment. Learners should be encouraged to reflect on each of the practice sessions as this will contribute to their overarching evaluation.

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 [SQA e-Assessment](http://www.sqa.org.uk/SQA_e-Assessment). ([www.sqa.org.uk/Guide to best practice.pdf](http://www.sqa.org.uk/Guide%20to%20best%20practice.pdf)).

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of Communication (Oral and Written Communication), Numeracy, Problem Solving, Working with Others and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) throughout the unit.

History of changes to unit

Version	Description of change	Date
02	<p>'Tutor' changed to 'teacher / lecturer / supervisor' throughout unit specification.</p> <p>Page 1: Minor amends to wording of introduction. Amendment to wording of outcome 3.</p> <p>Page 2: Changes to entry requirements.</p> <p>Page 4: New paragraph added before outcome 1. Addition of 'expectations' in bullet 4 of outcome 1. Addition of 'and contract exploring the supervisees needs, expectations and understanding of supervision' bullet 1 outcome 2. Removal of 'help' from bullet 2 outcome 2. Addition of 'demonstrating the ability to work with supervisees to bring supervisory sessions and relationships to an end', bullet 4, outcome 2. Change to heading of outcome 3. Change from 'impact' to 'importance' bullet 3, outcome 3.</p> <p>Page 6: Addition of 'and teachers / lecturers / supervisors' in paragraph one of 'Evidence requirements for this unit'.</p> <p>Page 7: Removal of 'and are not mandatory' and changed from aligned to 'mapped'.</p> <p>Page 8: Removal of all reference to books / reading suggestions as most are out of date. Addition of 'The centre should provide a recommended reading list which will benefit learners in their self-directed learning'.</p>	August 2024

History of changes to unit (continued)

Version	Description of change	Date
02 (continued)	<p>Page 9: Addition of 'Time should also be spent exploring the supervisees needs, expectations and understanding of supervision, and demonstrating the ability to agree and review contracts.' To paragraph 1. Two new paragraphs added to page 9.</p> <p>Page 10: Addition of 'contracting' to outcome 2. Removal of reading list being available in Content and Context section. Addition of 'centres should have processes in place to monitor attendance.'</p> <p>Page 12: Addition of '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'.</p> <p>Page 15: Removal of is from last paragraph.</p>	August 2024

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2019, 2024

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged.

Additional copies of this unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Please contact the Business Development and Customer Support team, telephone 0303 333 0330.

Unit template: February 2024

General information for learners

Unit title: Counselling Supervision: Introduction (SCQF level 10)

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 for registered counsellors who wish to expand their own practise as clinical supervisors. It clarifies the role of counselling supervision and the underpinning theoretical models used to help you develop and maintain the skills necessary to facilitate supervisory practice.

During the unit you will learn how to establish and maintain the supervisory relationship and acquire the understanding and the skills needed to enable the supervisee to make successful use of supervision.

The unit is mandatory within the PDA in Counselling Supervision at SCQF level 11 but can also be taken as a stand-alone unit, perhaps for the purpose of continued professional development.

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

You will complete three outcomes to achieve the unit.

- 1 Explain the supervisor's role and responsibilities in the context of counselling practice.
- 2 Critically analyse the supervisory relationship.
- 3 Critically evaluate skills necessary for a supervisee to benefit from clinical supervision.

Assessment for theory-based content will include an holistic portfolio whilst skills-based elements are assessed by both (a) group contribution and (b) demonstration incorporating teacher / lecturer / supervisor and peer feedback.