Higher National Unit Specification

General information

Unit title: Understanding Personal and Professional Development (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: J5R7 34

Superclass: PT

Publication date: August 2021

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

Unit purpose

This unit is designed to introduce students to reflective practice and its role in promoting personal and professional development. The learner will also gain the necessary knowledge and skills to enable them to identify and describe how personal and professional development needs will be met. In addition, learners will explore concepts of wellbeing and investigate causes of personal stress, effective coping strategies and developing resilience.

Outcomes

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

1. Discuss the importance of reflection on personal and professional development.
2. Develop individual learning needs and goals via a portfolio of evidence.
3. Investigate wellbeing for personal and professional effectiveness.

Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7)
Higher National Unit Specification: General information (cont)

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Recommended entry to the unit

Learners should have good communication skills, both written and oral. These can be evidenced either by the achievement of nationally recognised qualifications for example Higher English or a qualification equivalent to SCQF level 6 or by the completion of a pre-course interview part of which could take the form of a written assignment. The skills to undertake this unit could also be demonstrated through an employer’s reference or the process of application and interview. In addition to this learners should preferably have undertaken some work experience, paid or voluntary, in a health care setting.

Core Skills

Achievement of this unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill  Problem Solving at SCQF level 6

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

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 included in the framework of the HNC Healthcare Practice It is further recommended that this unit is taught at the beginning of the course prior to the students commencing placement.

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

Unit title: Understanding Personal and Professional Development (SCQF level 7)

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

Discuss the importance of reflection in personal and professional development.

Knowledge and/or skills

- Definition of reflection
- Models of reflection
- Reflection and its role in quality care provision and continuing professional practice

Outcome 2

Develop individual learning needs and goals via a portfolio of evidence.

Knowledge and/or skills

- Learning styles
- Identification of learning needs and goals
- Resources and support required to achieve identified needs and goals
- Academic writing and referencing standards
- Data base searches and research processes

Outcome 3

Investigate wellbeing for personal and professional effectiveness.

Knowledge and/or skills

- Mental health and wellbeing
- Causes of stress in care and academic settings
- Appropriate coping strategies to promote wellbeing and resilience
Higher National Unit Specification: Statement of standards (cont)

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Evidence requirements for this unit

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

Outcome 1

- Define reflection
- Discuss the role of reflection in ensuring quality care provision and continuing professional development
- Describe and apply one model of reflection to current practice

Outcome 2

- Complete a learning style profile
- Describe identified learning needs and goals
- Describe the resources and support needed to meet identified needs and goals
- Employ appropriate academic writing and referencing standards
- Undertake two data base searches and apply recognised research processes

Outcome 3

Please note: This outcome is focussed on the individual learner’s mental health and wellbeing. It is suggested therefore that this outcome is a personal investigation by the learner into their own experiences and approaches to mental health and wellbeing.

- Investigate personal causes of stress in care and academic settings
- Evaluate appropriate strategies to promote individual wellbeing
- Explain personal approaches and coping strategies which support the development of resilience and promote wellbeing
Higher National Unit Support Notes

Unit title: Understanding Personal and Professional Development (SCQF level 7)

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

Outcome 1

Within this outcome the learner will explore the concept of reflection and its purpose in personal and professional development. The learner should understand that reflection is part of being an effective learner and that they need to explore the use of reflection in learning and practice. This should include looking at Schon’s theories on Reflection On and Reflection in Action, Gibbs Reflective Cycle and John’s model of Structured Reflection or other relevant models. The learner should understand that it is a critical, purposeful process whereby the individual learns from their own experiences and reactions, thereby identifying gaps in their knowledge and understanding. The learner should consider what skills, knowledge, competence and performance levels he/she already has, but could develop further. The learner should also understand that writing experiences and responses down can often be cathartic and help them to clarify their experience and thinking. Reflection is therefore a useful learning tool that requires time and practice as learners need to learn not to censor what they write. The learner should explore reflection in the care context and understand why it is important for carers in particular to carry out reflective practice. The following should be considered: to carry out care to the best of their ability, to relate theory to practice, as a professional requirement and for care governance and for inter-professional working. The learner should understand the professional requirement for reflective practice in the context of continuing professional development eg the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

Outcome 2

Within this outcome the learner will explore learning styles in order to better understand how they learn. This will involve looking at learning styles and theories put forward by, for example; Honey and Mumford, Gardner and Kolb as well as looking at learner characteristics such as self-reliance, awareness of strengths and weaknesses and motivation. This can be enhanced by SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) the Vark questionnaire and personality profiling. This exercise will help the learner to formulate appropriate, individual strategies to meet their learning needs and goals. The use of reflection will help the learner to identify both their personal and professional learning needs. The learners will undertake data base searches using relevant academic search engines, such as, CINAHL, MEDLINE and ATHENS.
Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Learners are expected to be able to produce work that is academically written appropriate to the academic level of the unit/course being undertaken. It may therefore be necessary to consider covering academic writing processes including appropriate grammar and language usage, how to answer questions and the difference between for example: describe, explain and evaluate, together with essay and report writing. Referencing must also be covered, and learners should be familiar with referencing styles such as Harvard and able to correctly use this within academically written submissions. This standard should be applied to the whole course of study being undertaken.

Outcome 3

This outcome is focussed on the individual learner’s wellbeing and will explore stress and causes of stress, coping strategies and resilience in order to raise awareness and improve wellbeing.

The unit will start by exploring stress and looking at definitions and whether a level of stress is considered a normal part of daily life or if all stress is indicative of poor mental health. Models of stress can be explored to highlight the impact that long term stress has on health and wellbeing. Common causes of stress such as relationships, finance, living environments and trauma should be explored and discussed as well as their physical and emotional effects on the individual. The student should then focus on exploring their own stress in terms of academic, personal and placement stress and identify specifically what is causing difficulties. The tutor should discuss anxieties associated with both academic and placement issues i.e. fitting into the class, getting to know classmates, academic writing standards, assessment, presentations, drug calculations, as well as placement concerns such as interacting with patients, fitting in with ward staff, understanding roles and responsibilities, anxiety associated with caring for vulnerable or seriously/terminally ill patients, speaking to family members, carrying out clinical tasks effectively and using clinical equipment safely. The tutor should introduce coping strategies, looking a good and bad approaches and the learner should then explore strategies that they currently use and others that may help them in coping with their identified anxieties.
Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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The outcome should then look at resilience, exploring definitions and the idea that it is not something that an individual is born with but instead something that can be developed or learned as a response to stressful situations. Resilience is the ability to cope with and adapt to stressful situations. Situations which are stressful and how individuals cope with them are part of life experience.

Resilience develops from learning from each experience. Being able to act or behave in a way that is in our own best interest means that we can cheer ourselves up when we are sad or manage our anxiety when we feel stressed, this self-regulation is what makes us resilient. It does not mean however that we should never be exposed to difficulty or stress. To be resilient we need to experience difficulty and change and learn how to work through it and navigate it. Resilient people acknowledge that we must feel the full range of emotions in order to be healthy and happy, and accept that it is appropriate to feel sad, angry, frustrated or stressed at certain times in our life. The link between coping strategies and resilience should be. As we adopt more effective coping strategies and prove to ourselves that we can successfully cope with stressful situations then resilience will develop as we become more confident in our own abilities.

Guidance on approaches to delivery of this unit

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. Understanding Personal and Professional Development is a mandatory unit in the HNC Healthcare Practice. It is essential that learners are aware that they need to achieve all evidence requirements for the award. It can however be taken as a stand-alone unit.

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.

The assessment for this unit must be a real evaluation of the learner’s own practices, behaviour and performance, and a genuine attempt by the learner to assess his/her own individual personal and professional development needs. Outcome 1 could be assessed by an essay or reflective account. This should demonstrate the learner’s understanding of reflection, the relevant models and its importance in care as a means of assessing current individual practice and performance and ensuring continual learning to improve the quality of care provision. The assessment for Outcomes 2 and 3 must reflect all of the evidence requirements for this unit and cannot be carried out as a case study, simulation, or theoretical exercise but instead must be created out of the learner’s own experiences, learning, reflection and evaluation. If a portfolio is used it must contain evidence of the learner’s own continuing personal and professional development.
Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Understanding Personal and Professional Development (SCQF level 7)

The assessment for this unit could be made up of an essay or reflective account for Outcome 1 and 3 and the development of a portfolio, reflective accounts and other relevant evidence of learning for Outcomes 2.

Assessment guidelines

Outcome 1

The assessment for this outcome could consist of an essay or reflective account of 1,500 words that demonstrates that the learner has understood and met the evidence requirements for this outcome. The submission should be academically written and appropriately referenced.

Outcome 2

The assessment for Outcome 2 is a portfolio that the student will compile.

Compilation of a portfolio of evidence demonstrating continuing reflection and learning that contains the following:

- A review and evaluation of personal/professional development process
- Learning agreements
- Reflective accounts
- Placement documentation
- Clinical assessments
- Assessment feedback
- Mentor feedback
- Certificates

Outcome 3

The assessment for Outcome 3 could be a reflective account which explores the individual learner’s health and wellbeing and which reflect achievement of all outcome evidence requirements.

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.
Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of:

*Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* SCQF level 6 can be evidenced through the learner’s use of ICT throughout the Unit if the folio and any other evidence is created and submitted online.

*Communication* SCQF level 6 can be evidenced through the written submissions required for the assessments and the records of achievement.

*Problem Solving* SCQF level 6 can be evidenced by the learner’s identification of personal and professional learning needs as evidenced through the SWOT analysis and reflective accounts and his/her plan for meeting those needs and overcoming any difficulties.

The Core Skill of *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 6 is embedded in this unit. When a learner achieves the unit, their Core Skills profile will also be updated to include this Core Skill.
History of changes to unit

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General information for learners

Unit title: Understanding Personal and Professional Development (SCQF level 7)

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 enable you to carry out a self-evaluation of your individual personal and professional development needs through the use of reflection.

While undertaking this unit you will work through three outcomes.

To begin with you will learn about reflection and a variety of relevant models of reflection and its importance, not only in the provision of quality care but also with regard to continuing professional standards and registration.

You are expected to recognise that in order to be a successful learner at a higher level you need to take responsibility for your own learning, so you will investigate your own learning style by undertaking a learner style profile and personality profile. This will help you find the most effective way for you to study and identify areas that require improvement. Once you have identified your personal and professional learning needs you will devise and carry out activities to achieve the goals you have identified. This will include looking at reflection as a learning tool and a way of identifying areas that need to be developed. You will gather evidence of what you have done for inclusion in your portfolio.

You will create a professional portfolio that contains all of the evidence of learning and achievement that you have generated. Throughout the unit you will reflect on the overall process at regular intervals, take stock and make revisions and changes to take account of circumstances. The unit also gives you the opportunity to evaluate what improvements have been made to your personal and professional practice and to consider what you have learned and what implications there are for future personal and professional practice and development.

The final outcome focuses on your own health and wellbeing and will explore elements of the course, both placement and academic work, that have caused you anxiety. You will then look at what coping strategies you use and whether or not they are effective and finally you will research resilience and how to develop resilience.

The Core Skill of Problem Solving SCQF at level 6 is embedded in this unit. When a learner achieves the unit, their Core Skills profile will also be updated to include this Core Skill.