



National Unit Specification

General information

Unit title: Scalp Massage: An Introduction (SCQF level 5)

Unit code: J6LG 45

Superclass: HL

Publication date: July 2022

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 05, December 2025

Unit purpose

This unit is designed to enable learners to have an understanding and knowledge of scalp massage, the effects of massage techniques and be able to prepare and perform a scalp massage treatment.

Learners will learn about bones and muscles related to scalp massage, effects of massage techniques on systems of the body, absolute and relative contraindications to treatment, contra-actions to treatment, preparation of self and working area and application of correct massage techniques.

They will also learn to prepare for and perform a consultation before applying massage techniques which meet the needs of the client, give aftercare and specific homecare advice and evaluate the treatment.

Throughout learners will demonstrate knowledge of and adherence to current relevant health and safety procedures, hygienic salon practices, appearance which reflects salon and industry standards and effective communication and consultation techniques.

This unit is suitable for those who have no previous qualifications, experience, or prior knowledge in this subject area and who wish to gain an introductory qualification.

Outcomes

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

- 1 Demonstrate knowledge of scalp massage.
- 2 Prepare for scalp massage treatment.
- 3 Perform and evaluate scalp massage treatment.

National Unit Specification: General information (continued)

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Credit points and level

1 National Unit credit at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 5:
(6 SCQF credit point at SCQF level 5).

Entry to the unit

Entry is at the discretion of the centre

However, for health and safety reasons it is the centres responsibility to ensure that candidates must be 16 years old at the time of registration.

[HABIA Fact Sheet – Pre 16 Age restrictions](#)

Core Skills

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

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

Context for delivery

If this unit is delivered as part of a group award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the group award to which it contributes. This unit is recommended to be taught within the SCQF level 5 Framework.

The Assessment Support Pack (ASP) for this unit provides assessment and marking guidelines that exemplify the national standard for achievement. It is a valid, reliable and practicable assessment. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the ASP to ensure a comparable standard. A list of existing ASPs is available to download from SQA's website (<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/46233.2769.html>).

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.

National Unit Specification: Statement of standards

Unit title: Scalp Massage: An Introduction (SCQF level 5)

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.

Outcome 1

Demonstrate knowledge of scalp massage.

Performance criteria

- (a) Identify and describe the absolute and relative contraindications.
- (b) Identify and describe contra-actions to treatment.
- (c) Describe the general effects of massage.
- (d) Describe the benefits of the specified massage techniques.
- (e) Describe the effects of massage on specified systems of the body.
- (f) Identify the relevant bones and muscles relating to scalp massage.

Outcome 2

Prepare for scalp massage treatment.

Performance criteria

- (a) Prepare self and environment appropriately for treatment.
- (b) Consult with the client to develop an appropriate treatment plan.
- (c) Prepare and position client for treatment application.
- (d) Select appropriate massage medium.
- (e) Record treatment plan on client consultation record.

Outcome 3

Perform and evaluate scalp massage treatment.

Performance criteria

- (a) Perform a scalp massage treatment following correct application of massage

techniques.

- (b) Follow industry standard procedure with regards to time, sequence, and application.
- (c) Provide aftercare and specific homecare advice.
- (d) Comply with relevant, current health and safety and workplace practices throughout.
- (e) Evaluate treatment application.

National Unit Specification: Statement of standards (continued)

Unit title: Scalp Massage: An Introduction (SCQF level 5)

Evidence requirements for this unit

Evidence is required to demonstrate that learners have achieved all outcomes and performance criteria.

Outcome 1

The evidence for this outcome will be carried out in closed-book supervised conditions.

Learners must demonstrate their knowledge of scalp massage:

- Identify and describe the absolute and relative contraindications.
- Identify and describe contra-actions to treatment.
- Describe the general effects of massage:
 - physical and psychological.
- Describe the benefits of the specified massage techniques used in treatment:
 - pressure point, effleurage, petrissage, frictions, tapotement.
- Describe the effects of massage techniques on specific systems of the body:
 - lymphatic system, circulatory system and muscular system.
- Identify the bones and muscles of the treatment area:
 - frontal, occipital, parietal, temporal, clavicle, cervical vertebrae.
 - deltoid, sternocleidomastoid, platysma, frontalis, occipitalis, temporalis.

PCs (a), (b) and (d) for this unit can be assessed individually.

The assessment must be conducted under closed-book, supervised conditions.

Similarly, all remaining knowledge components (PCs (c), (e) and (f)) should also be assessed under closed book supervised conditions.

Outcome 2 and 3

Performance evidence for outcomes 2 and 3 should be holistically assessed reflective of industry standard procedure and timings.

Learners will be required to demonstrate by observed practical assessment on a minimum of **two** occasions on **two** different clients that they are able to prepare for and carry out a scalp, massage treatment.

Learners will be required to demonstrate that they are able to:

- Prepare self and environment appropriately for treatment in accordance with salon and industry standards.
- Consult with the client to develop an appropriate treatment plan:
 - confirm parental/guardian consent to treatment for minors (where applicable).
- Prepare and position client for treatment application.
- Select appropriate massage medium for the application of treatment:
 - oil or cream.
- Record treatment plan on client consultation record.
- Perform a scalp massage treatment following correct application of massage techniques:
 - pressure point, effleurage, petrissage, frictions, tapotement.
- Follow industry standard procedure with regards to time, sequence, and application.
- Provide aftercare and specific homecare advice to the client.
- Comply with relevant, current health and safety and workplace practices throughout.
- Evaluate treatment application.

National Unit Specification: Statement of standards (continued)

Unit title: Scalp Massage: An Introduction (SCQF level 5)

Performance should be supported by observation records and accurately completed client consultation records.

Client consultation records should include:

- Date of treatment.
- Client general health and medication.
- Client treatment objectives.
- Absolute and relative contraindications checklist.
- Massage medium.
- Adaptations to treatment.
- Contra-actions (where applicable).
- Aftercare and specific homecare advice.
- Treatment evaluation.



National Unit Support Notes

Unit title: Scalp Massage: An Introduction (SCQF level 5)

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

Learners will gain knowledge and skills relating to scalp massage treatment, the effects of scalp massage on the systems of the body, absolute and relative contraindications and contra-actions to treatment.

Learners will develop their practical skills by consulting with clients and devising treatment plans which meet treatment objectives. They will prepare for and perform the scalp massage treatment, give the client aftercare and specific homecare advice and evaluate the treatment.

The unit covers the correct application of massage techniques including pressure point, effleurage, petrissage, frictions and tapotement.

Throughout learners must demonstrate knowledge of and adherence to relevant health and safety procedures, in relation to self, client, equipment, and salon environment.

Key areas of knowledge will be:

- Absolute and relative contraindications to treatment — contagious skin disease, dysfunction of the nervous system, recent scar tissue, undiagnosed lumps and swellings, undergoing medical treatment, diabetes, epilepsy, high / low blood

pressure, thrombosis, pregnancy, piercings, cuts and abrasions, during cancer treatment.

- Contra-actions — reactions to products and/or treatment, lightheaded, nausea, dizziness, tiredness, erythema.
- General effects of massage — physical and psychological.
- Massage Techniques — pressure point, effleurage, petrissage, frictions, tapotement.
- Effects of massage techniques on specific systems of the body — lymphatic system, circulatory system, and muscular system.
- Bones and muscles of the treatment area:
 - frontal, occipital, parietal, temporal, clavicle, cervical vertebrae.
 - deltoid, sternocleidomastoid, platysma, frontalis, occipitalis, temporalis.
- Working safely in the salon.
- Safe current hygiene procedures.
- Salon and working code of conduct, dress code, personal conduct and presentation.

National Unit Support Notes (continued)

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- Resources required for treatment protocol.
- Knowledge of the importance of adhering to appropriate current legislation and an understanding of:
 - Health and Safety at Work Act.
 - Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations.
 - Electricity at Work Regulations.
 - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at Work Regulations.
 - General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- Centre requirements relating to treatment areas, storage, and disposal of waste.
- Consultation techniques and treatment planning.
- Requirement for parental/guardian consent to treatment for minors.
- Client preparation and positioning.
- Massage medium — oil or cream.
- Correct application and method of scalp massage techniques.
- Correct therapist stance and posture.
- Client comfort and safety.
- Effective communication with client and others.
- Industry standard procedure and timings.
- How to effectively evaluate the treatment.

Practical activities should be carried out in a realistic salon working environment which involves working with clients, working with others in a team and will develop good working practice.

Guidance on approaches to delivery of this unit

There should be an induction to the unit enabling the learner to understand fully what is required and the approaches which will be adopted.

Learners should have the opportunity to learn and develop practical skills in a salon environment where they will experience realistic salon conditions and practices.

Due to the practical nature of the unit, each part of learning and teaching should incorporate both theory and practical, to facilitate learning. Oral questions may be asked to establish the learner's underpinning knowledge and understanding and monitor progress. Learners will therefore understand the relevance of the knowledge more easily as they experience the practical application.

Practical demonstration followed by supported role-play with peers will enable the learner to practice and gain confidence of treatment before progressing to the working environment.

Formative assessment throughout will enhance performance. The learner should be shown how to correctly apply each massage technique — pressure point, effleurage, petrissage, frictions, tapotement.

National Unit Support Notes (continued)

Unit title: Scalp Massage: An Introduction (SCQF level 5)

The importance of communicating effectively during consultation to gain all the required information should be highlighted. Aftercare and specific homecare should be provided after treatment application to meet the needs of the individual client, which should enable the learner to demonstrate an understanding of the knowledge component (performance criteria) detailed in the unit specification.

Opportunities should be taken within unit delivery to integrate relevant current legislation knowledge in a realistic context. Learners should be aware of how legislation affects everyday practice in the salon. They will develop an understanding of their responsibilities regarding relevant legislation and be able to check their own working practices and working areas for any risks to themselves or others.

The learner should be encouraged to develop good working practices which meet both organisational and current national health and safety policies and procedures, enhancing their employability skills profile. Learners must also be made aware of salon ethics and the importance of confidentiality when working with clients and others.

It is important that learners are made aware that the handling, disposing and storing of equipment and materials must comply with both the organisation's and manufacturer's instructions and legal requirements.

Achievement of this unit will be dependent on learners being able to carry out practical activities in a realistic salon environment which involves working with peers, clients, working with others in a team and developing good working practice.

The unit, therefore, should incorporate a variety of approaches to learning and teaching, including:

- Tutorials supported by handouts
- Demonstration

- Discussion
- Practical activities
- Visiting speakers
- Virtual Learning Environment tools and platforms
- Evaluation

Note:

Absolute contraindication: An absolute contraindication is a condition that prevents the service from being carried out and may require referral.

Relative contraindication: A relative contraindication is a condition which requires assessment of suitability for the service and/or if adaptations are required.

Skills Active, National Occupational standards, (2021), Glossary — SKABBR2
Provide facial skincare treatments, Skills Active, UK, page 9.

National Unit Support Notes (continued)

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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 requirements are fully expressed in the statement of standards section of this unit specification

The opportunity exists to assess the anatomy and physiology component for each unit individually, combine across groupings of units, or combine across all units.

The assessment for outcome 1 should be carried out in closed-book supervised conditions.

Outcomes 2 and 3 should be assessed by performance using an assessor observation checklist in a realistic salon environment and supported by a completed client consultation record card. The client consultation record card must include, and support evidence requirements as indicated in outcomes 2 and 3.

Performance evidence for outcomes 2 and 3 should be gathered on the same assessment occasion reflective of industry standard procedure and timings. Practical performance on two different clients must be observed to demonstrate knowledge and understanding. Practical performance must be carried out in line with current health and safety guidance and procedures. As part of outcome 3, learners should review their performance through reflective practice in line with clients aims and needs.

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**.

National Unit Support Notes (continued)

Unit title: Scalp Massage: An Introduction (SCQF level 5)

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

This unit provides opportunities for learners to develop Core Skills in Communication, Working with Others, Problem Solving and Numeracy.

Learners can develop their interpersonal skills during the consultation process and throughout the treatment using oral and written communication to interact with their peers and clients. They are required to work co-operatively with others to ensure client care and to meet the treatment needs of the client. Learners will talk and listen to clients and understand the importance of working together to achieve treatment aims and provide appropriate aftercare, home care and product advice.

Through planning and organising the treatment learners will develop problem solving skills. Client consultations will provide the opportunity to treatment plan and consider contributing factors and possible contraindications which may affect the treatment outcome. A level of critical thinking is required to review the overall treatment.

Learners will use simple numerical data in everyday contexts. For example, to measure the amount of product for each treatment to minimise waste.

Employability skills such as time keeping, treatment timing, customer care, personal presentation and hygiene control can be demonstrated within the assessment of this unit. There is also the opportunity to consider good citizenship through recycling products and consumables, waste control measures and having an appreciation of the sustainability of product brands used.

History of changes to unit

Version	Description of change	Date
03	Pre 16 updated Habia guidance	09/10/2025
02	Updates to evidence requirements and approaches to delivery and assessment	July 2025
04	Pre 16 updated Habia guidance	11/11/2025
05	Pre 16 updated Habia guidance	04/12/2025

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Unit template: June 2017

General information for learners

Unit title: Scalp Massage: An Introduction (SCQF level 5)

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.

On completion of this unit, you should be able to demonstrate knowledge and skills relating to scalp massage. You will gain knowledge of the effects of scalp massage, relevant massage techniques, absolute and relative conditions which prevent and restrict treatment.

This unit is designed to enable you to have an understanding and knowledge of scalp massage, the effects of massage techniques and be able to prepare and perform a scalp massage treatment.

You will learn about bones and muscles related to scalp massage, effects of massage techniques on systems of the body, absolute and relative contraindications to treatment, contra-actions to treatment, preparation of self and working area and application of correct massage techniques in scalp massage routine.

You will also learn to prepare for and perform a consultation before applying massage techniques which meet the needs of the client, give aftercare and specific homecare advice and evaluate the treatment.

Throughout you will demonstrate knowledge of and adherence to current relevant health and safety procedures, hygienic salon practices, appearance which reflects salon and industry standards and effective communication and consultation techniques.

You will be assessed as follows:

Outcome 1

The evidence for this outcome will be carried out in closed-book conditions. You must demonstrate their knowledge of scalp massage.

Outcome 2 and 3

Performance evidence for outcomes 2 and 3 should be holistically assessed reflective of industry standard procedure and timings.

You will be required to demonstrate by observed practical assessment on a minimum of **two** occasions on **two** different clients that you are able to prepare for and carry out a scalp, massage treatment.

Performance should be supported by observation records and accurately completed client consultation records.

This unit provides opportunities for you to develop Core Skills in Communication, Working with Others, Problem Solving and Numeracy.

General information for learners (continued)

Unit title: Scalp Massage: An Introduction (SCQF level 5)

You can develop your interpersonal skills during the consultation process and throughout the treatment using oral and written communication to interact with your peers and clients. You are required to work co-operatively with others to ensure client care and to meet the treatment needs of the client. You will talk and listen to clients and understand the importance of working together to achieve treatment aims and provide appropriate aftercare, home care and product advice.

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Employability skills such as time keeping, treatment timing, customer care, personal presentation and hygiene control can be demonstrated within the assessment of this unit. There is also the opportunity to consider good citizenship through recycling products and consumables, waste control measures and having an appreciation of the sustainability of product brands used.