

## National Unit Specification: general information

**UNIT** Assisting With Support for Learning: The Role of the Support for Learning Assistant (Intermediate 2)

**NUMBER** D2KR 11

### COURSE

### SUMMARY

Enabling Support for Learning Assistants to acquire the knowledge base required to provide a positive contribution to learner support in educational settings.

### OUTCOMES

- 1 Describe how to establish effective relationships with learners with support for learning needs.
- 2 Describe how to establish working relationships with teachers and others with responsibilities within educational settings.
- 3 Describe ways in which learners with support for learning needs may be assisted in the context of an educational setting.
- 4 Describe the legislation, current initiatives and guidelines which influence the curriculum in Scotland and which support Special Education provision in Scotland.

### RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Access is at the discretion of the centre, however experience of working in a support for learning capacity would be beneficial. The ability to write at a level equivalent to at least Communication at Intermediate 2 would also be beneficial.

### CREDIT VALUE

1.5 Credits.

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### Administrative Information

**Superclass:** GA

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**Version:** 01

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## **CORE SKILLS**

Information on the automatic certification of any core skills in this unit is published in *Automatic Certification of Core Skills in National Qualifications* (SQA, 1999).

## National Unit Specification: statement of standards

### UNIT       Assisting With Support for Learning: The Role of the Support for Learning Assistant (Intermediate 2)

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 the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

#### OUTCOME 1

Describe how to establish effective relationships with learners with support for learning needs.

##### Performance criteria

- a) The description of a range of conditions which may lead to a need for support for learning is accurate.
- b) The description of ways in which learners may face discrimination is valid in terms of current analysis of support for learning needs.
- c) The identification of qualities required in a Support for Learning Assistant reflects an understanding of good practice in support for learning.
- d) The identification of the elements of an effective relationship with the learner reflects an understanding of good practice in support for learning.

##### Evidence requirements

Please refer to *Evidence requirements for the unit* at the end of the Statement of Standards.

#### OUTCOME 2

Describe how to establish working relationships with teachers and others with responsibilities within educational settings.

##### Performance criteria

- a) The description of the role of the teacher is accurate in relation to local and national guidelines.
- b) The description of the role of Support for Learning Assistant is accurate in terms of local and national guidelines.
- c) The description of the roles of other educational/health professionals is accurate in terms of current practice in support for learning.
- d) The identification of the elements of an effective relationship with teachers and other educational/health professionals reflects an understanding of good practice in support for learning.

##### Evidence requirements

Please refer to *Evidence requirements for the unit* at the end of the Statement of Standards.

## National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

**UNIT**           Assisting With Support for Learning: The Role of the Support for Learning Assistant (Intermediate 2)

### **OUTCOME 3**

Describe ways in which learners with support for learning needs may be assisted in the context of an educational setting.

#### **Performance criteria**

- a)       The description of the support for learning needs of learners is accurate in terms of the responsibilities of Support for Learning Assistants.
- b)       The description of how Support for Learning Assistants can assist in meeting the needs identified is consistent with local guidelines.
- c)       The description of professionals, other individuals and organisations available to meet the specialist needs of learners is consistent with current practice in support for learning.

#### **Evidence requirements**

Please refer to *Evidence requirements for the unit* at the end of the Statement of Standards.

### **OUTCOME 4**

Describe the legislation, current initiatives and guidelines which influence the curriculum in Scotland and which support Special Education provision in Scotland.

#### **Performance criteria**

- a)       Identification of current educational and curriculum initiatives and guidelines, relevant to the educational setting within which the Support for Learning Assistant works is valid and comprehensive.
- b)       The identification of key legislation and related documents is accurate and relevant in terms of special education in Scotland.
- c)       The description of processes for assessing and meeting support for learning needs is accurate in terms of national and local guidelines.
- d)       The identification of settings that provide support for learning is accurate in terms of local and national guidelines.
- e)       The description of available resources to provide for special educational needs is accurate in relation to current practice.

#### **Evidence requirements**

Please refer to *Evidence requirements for the unit* at the end of the Statement of Standards.

## **National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)**

**UNIT**           Assisting With Support for Learning: The Role of the Support for Learning Assistant (Intermediate 2)

### **EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE UNIT**

#### **Outcome 1**

Written or oral evidence across all performance criteria.

#### **Outcome 2**

Written or oral evidence across all performance criteria.

#### **Outcome 3**

Written and oral evidence generated by case studies and notes from classwork across all performance criteria.

#### **Outcome 4**

Written or oral evidence across all performance criteria.

## **National Unit Specification: support notes**

**UNIT**           Assisting With Support for Learning: The Role of the Support for Learning Assistant (Intermediate 2)

This part of the unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 60 hours.

### **GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT**

Corresponding to Outcomes 1-4:

#### **Outcome 1**

Candidates should have an understanding of the concept of special educational needs and support for learning and knowledge of a range of conditions which may lead to such needs. Some conditions may relate directly to disability such as: physical conditions which affect the motor movements of individuals or which impair vision or hearing; illnesses such as diabetes or epilepsy, learning disabilities and other complex difficulties associated with communication. Other conditions will relate to behaviours in learners which challenge mainstream educational provision.

Candidates should recognise that the identification of special educational needs cannot simply be related to a particular condition. In any of the categories above, there are wide variations in terms of the severity of the condition; and each individual learner will have his/her own unique set of circumstances and blend of needs which may affect learning needs.

Candidates should be aware of how “models” of disability affect the relationships of learners and professionals. Traditionally, learners with special educational needs were seen in terms of a “deficit” model. In this model, learners are seen as having a deficiency that prevents them from accessing educational provision. Special provision (extra resources, different procedures and so on) is then seen as making up for this deficit in the learner. Such a view locates the difficulties a learner faces entirely within the learner.

Candidates should be aware of an alternative model that locates the difficulties that a learner faces in the interaction between the learner and his/her environment. This recognises that difficulties may arise from certain conditions but it also sees difficulties arising from prejudiced views about these conditions, from low expectations, from inappropriate demands made on learners, from poorly designed schools, from poverty and so on. In this unit, the educational system, in the past, has had some responsibility for creating difficulties for learners. With the more recent focus on individual needs, special provision should be seen as appropriate support, not supplying extra support, for the learning needs of individual learners.

## National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

**UNIT**           Assisting With Support for Learning: The Role of the Support for Learning Assistant (Intermediate 2)

Candidates should be certain that personal qualities are required in Support for Learning Assistants if they are to form effective relationships with learners. Such qualities as:

- a) warmth – friendliness that is not conditional, possessive or partial;
- b) empathy – a willingness to listen and learn from a learner how the world appears from his/her point of view;
- c) genuineness – being truthful and honest with learners;
- d) reliability – demonstrating to the learner that one is dependable.

Candidates should be aware that an effective relationship with learners should be based on the following elements:

- a) mutual respect – the Support for Learning Assistant should value the learner and have concern for his/her dignity and feelings;
- b) shared participation – the learner should be involved in his/her own learning;
- c) shared goals – learners and Support for Learning Assistants should have an investment in the achievement of goals.

### **Outcomes 2-3**

Candidates should be aware that teaching staff are responsible for the management of learners in the classroom and in other parts of the school; and that they will draw up learning programmes for learners in accordance with local and national guidelines.

Candidates should recognise that there are several roles that Support for Learning Assistants may be asked to perform. These may involve:

- a) personal support – eg. helping a learner with feeding, toileting, scribing etc;
- b) pastoral support – support for a learner who may be concerned or distressed;
- c) ancillary tasks – these are tasks that support teaching staff in the management of the school or they may include, supervising learners in the school or in school transport, preparing materials, etc.

Candidates should be aware of the roles and procedures adopted by professionals who may be part of the team supporting the learning needs of learners. In particular the roles of the:

- a) educational psychologist;
- b) speech and language therapist;
- c) school nurse;
- d) physiotherapist.

## National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

**UNIT**           Assisting With Support for Learning: The Role of the Support for Learning Assistant (Intermediate 2)

Candidates should be aware that the learning needs of learners are supported most effectively when professional staff work together as a team. They should be aware that team work is based on:

- a) mutual respect between professionals – an awareness of the roles of others and valuing their contribution;
- b) co-operation – a willingness of the views and values of others and respecting these;
- c) effective communication – sharing information between team members accurately and appropriately.

### Outcome 4

It is important that candidates have an awareness of the relevant educational and curriculum guidelines and initiatives which apply in the particular section of Scottish education where they work.

At present (1999) this could be:

Early Intervention	Nursery and Primary
5-14	Primary and Secondary
Standard Grades	Secondary
Higher Grades/Higher Still	Secondary and Further Education
Group awards	Secondary and Further Education
Relevant Local Initiatives	
Curriculum Framework for	Nursery
Pre-School Years	

Candidates should be aware of the way in which special education has developed in Scotland. They should know in broad outline the changes to the legislative framework that supports special education provision and the influence this has had on procedures.

Candidates should be aware in broad outline of procedures for identifying learning needs and how these may be presented in an Individualised Educational Programmes (IEPs) and/or Record of Needs.

Candidates should be aware that learning needs may be supported in a range of settings. Some of these will be wholly integrated into mainstream provision and needs are supported through existing guidance and pastoral structures. Some settings will include particular technical or professional resources and these may be provided in mainstream schools or in special schools. In certain instances, it is appropriate that learning needs are supported in residential schools.

Candidates should be aware of the contribution made by voluntary organisations in supporting the learning needs of learners.



## **National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)**

**UNIT**           Assisting With Support for Learning: The Role of the Support for Learning Assistant (Intermediate 2)

### **GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT**

This unit can draw heavily on the experience of the candidates and should encourage, through small group and whole class discussion, the sharing of information regarding the variety of settings the candidate may work in.

Areas such as legislation which provides the basis for special education can prove illuminating to candidates if approached in a historical way, which places legislation in the context of society's views on special needs at that time. Only the most important legislation need be outlined and dates are less important than the candidate knowing the implications of the legislation.

Candidates should be encouraged to find out about local initiatives and a research basis, individually or in groups, could be used to cover the sector related curriculum initiatives and guidelines.

The unit may be delivered in the usual 'fully taught' way but a flexible learning approach may also be used with the tutor supplying stimulus material and the candidates submitting assignments to cover other aspects of the unit.

A wholly distance learning approach would not be suitable, as group discussion is essential for certain topics such as qualities required by the Support for Learning Assistant. One must remember that many of these Assistants work alone in small schools and a beneficial part of the course is the opportunity to meet and share ideas and problems with other Assistants.

The issue of teamwork needs sensitive handling by the tutor and as some Assistants are not integrated into a Support for Learning team, the tutor should encourage those who have a positive experience of teamwork to share this and strategies for improving teamwork could be added although not a prescribed part of the unit.

### **GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT**

The unit lends itself to short answer questions and extended response questions.

Project work on the Assistants own establishment, relevant local guidelines and the range of activities he/she carries out with a learner or learners is also suitable.

Short case studies on a learner or learners could also be used to cover the range of the Assistant's work and the needs of learners as well as the resources available and the range of other professionals and agencies offering support.

## **National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)**

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### **SPECIAL NEEDS**

This unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. Special needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering special alternative outcomes for units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment and Certification Arrangements for Candidates with Special Needs/Candidates whose First Language is not English* (SQA, 1998).