

Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Supporting Children and Families

Unit code: DM79 34

Unit purpose: This unit is designed to enable candidates to understand developmental and societal issues relevant to family structure and function in the context of parenting and child development. It is also about helping candidates to understand their role as a care worker in helping families to meet the developmental needs of their children.

This Unit prepares candidates for this role by providing underpinning knowledge in relation to: societal, personal, economic and political factors which affect parenting ability and style; family development, structure and function; the scope of the parenting task; parenting styles; tools and models that can assist with developing parenting capacity.

It should enable candidates to apply skills and knowledge relevant to care practice to the development of appropriate support and interventions when working with parents.

It is primarily intended for candidates who are working, or intend to work, in the field of early education, childcare and education or family support work. It is also relevant to those working with children and young people in community or residential settings.

On completion of the unit the candidate should be able to:

- ◆ Describe the societal, personal, economic and political factors that affect parenting ability and style
- ◆ Describe ways in which family interactions and needs may be assessed
- ◆ Describe appropriate intervention strategies to help support and develop parenting capacity
- ◆ Demonstrate ways in which workers can assist families to identify and acknowledge problematic areas of family life, and where support is required
- ◆ Demonstrate ways in which workers can support provide effective and practical support and advice to families.

Credit points and level: 1 HN Credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7*)

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

General information for centres (cont)

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: Candidates should have good communication skills and some prior experience of working with families is desirable but not essential. This unit requires knowledge of theory and skills in either general social care or early education or childcare. Completion of the mandatory units of the HNC in Social Care or HNC Early Years would be advantageous, but not essential. However, candidates who have not completed these mandatory units may require to undertake additional study in aspects of social policy, sociology and psychology.

Core skills: There may be opportunities to gather evidence towards core skills in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of core skills or core skills components.

In meeting the competences of this unit the candidate will develop core skills in:

Communication; through the preparation of reports, case studies and written answers to questions

Problem Solving; through the demonstration of critical thinking, planning and organising of actual or simulated interventions, and in the preparation and compilation of reports.

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 can be taught as part of a group award or as a stand alone unit. If taught as a stand alone unit candidates must demonstrate they have the relevant underpinning knowledge (relating to wider issues of family structure and societal context), to enable them to understand and apply learning to a range of care settings.

Assessment: It is suggested that this Unit is assessed by an essay for Outcome 1 and a case study for Outcomes 2 and 3 combined.

Variations on this are at the professional discretion of the tutor.

The case study should preferably be an example from the candidate's real work experience, but if this is not possible a tutor devised case study may be used.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

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The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, knowledge and/or skills, and evidence requirements are mandatory.

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. Candidates 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 factors that impact on parenting ability and style

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ The societal, personal, economic and political factors that affect parenting ability and style
- ◆ The societal expectations of parenting behaviour and capacity
- ◆ Patterns of family development, structure and function
- ◆ Parenting styles
- ◆ The concept of resilience in the context of parenting and child development
- ◆ The match between child development needs and parenting skills and ability
- ◆ Ethical issues relating to working with families whose behaviour may adversely affect other family members or those in the local community
- ◆ Ethical issues relating to working with families whose behaviour may conflict with legal duties relating to child protection, or with societal expectations of parents.
- ◆ The influence of personal values and beliefs on assessing family needs and engaging with families.

Evidence requirements

An essay, maximum 1000 words, that explains some of the factors that affect parenting style and ability. Candidates should be able to:

- ◆ explain some of the key societal, personal, economic and political factors that affect parenting ability and style
- ◆ describe briefly patterns of family structure, communication and parenting style
- ◆ explain briefly some of the ways in which individual values and beliefs can influence effective work with parents

Assessment guidelines

Candidates may use the case study, derived from real work experience or the tutor devised one to demonstrate understanding of the above points as an alternative to presenting an essay.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Supporting Children and Families

Outcome 2

Describe methods of assessing family and parenting needs


Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ The context, purpose and process of assessment, including legal factors
- ◆ Systematic and different methods of gathering information
- ◆ Ways to encourage and sustain service user participation and involvement in assessment
- ◆ Ways of analysing and interpreting data used in assessment
- ◆ Relevant criteria used to select assessment methods and tools
- ◆ The process of making decisions based on evidence
- ◆ The ways in which multi agency working can contribute to effective assessment

Evidence requirements

Evidence for Outcomes 2 and 3 should be presented as part of a case study, (real or tutor devised, maximum 1500 words which may be supported by specific questions) in which candidates describe how they worked with families and why.

Candidates should be able to:

- ◆ explain the context, purpose and process of assessment 
- ◆ describe the role and responsibilities of workers in the assessment process
- ◆ describe ways to undertake assessment of family needs
- ◆ describe methods to gather and interpret information

Assessment guidelines

Evidence should be presented as part of a case study, and may be supported by specific questions or class based assessments. This case study should address at least two factors that affect parenting ability and make reference to at least two patterns of family structure and parenting styles.

This case study will also meet the assessment requirements for outcome 3.

Outcome 3

Describe methods of working with families to enhance parenting capacity and meet children's needs

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Ways to initiate, develop and sustain effective professional working relationships with families
- ◆ Methods and tools to help families develop insight and understanding about family development and operation
- ◆ Methods and tools to help families develop insight and understanding about their own circumstances and needs

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Supporting Children and Families

- ◆ The range of service provision available to help families
- ◆ The ways in which multi agency working can contribute to effective family support
- ◆ Theoretical frameworks and models for working with families
- ◆ Methods of encouraging and achieving behavioural change, and intervention and support models that can support families
- ◆ Behavioural factors that influence change
- ◆ How to apply individual skills necessary for effective support and intervention

Evidence requirements

Evidence for Outcomes 2 and 3 should be presented as a case study, (real or tutor devised, maximum 1500 words which may be supported by specific questions) in which candidates describe how they worked with families and why.

Candidates should be able to:

- ◆ describe one theoretical framework used to assist families achieve change
- ◆ identify at least two practice models used to assist families
- ◆ demonstrate understanding of the relative merits of the chosen model
- ◆ demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the skills required for assessment, planning, intervention and evaluation.

Assessment guidelines

See Outcome 2

Administrative Information

Unit code:	DM79 34
Unit title:	Supporting Children and Families
Superclass category:	PN
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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Supporting Children and Families

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 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

The primary focus of this unit is on preparing candidates for direct work with families with children under the age of 16 where effective support may enhance parenting capacity. This focus may be on families who may be adversely affected by disadvantage or deficit, or where suitable intervention may help to avoid such adverse effects on child development and parenting ability. The main purpose of such interventions will be to contribute to ensuring that children's developmental needs are met and that they are safe.

The unit is likely to form part of the group award designed to equip candidates with the professional skills and knowledge related to the occupational area. The unit is likely to be delivered towards the end of the award, by which time candidates should have developed a broader knowledge base that underpins practice in the occupational area concerned. If delivered as part of the HNC in Social Care, this knowledge may be derived from Social Care Theory for Practice, Social Policy and its Application to Social Services Provision, Psychology for Social Care Practice, Protection of Individuals from Abuse, Sociology for Social Care Practice.

Outcome 1 should be taught first, as this provides candidates with the opportunity to examine general themes and concepts relating to working with families.

Outcomes 2 and 3 are concerned with assessing family need and providing effective support and intervention designed to help families experiencing difficulties

Outcome 1

This outcome enables candidates to become familiar with the individual and societal factors that affect parenting capacity and child development. Candidates should understand the effect and significance of factors such as child abuse, disability, domestic violence, deprivation, trauma, mental health upon the development of patterns of family life. Candidates should also examine the impact of dysfunctional family life upon family members, their communities, and wider society.

As part of the teaching process, candidates should become familiar with the part played by psychological and sociological perspectives in helping to develop understanding of family structure and function. Of particular relevance are; behavioural theories such as; cognitive behavioural theory, child and adolescent development, systems theory.

In particular the following work will be of direct relevance:

'Children's Needs-Parenting Capacity: the impact of parental mental illness, problem alcohol and drug use, and domestic violence on children's development'. H. Cleaver, I Unell, J Aldgate (1999).

'Child Development for Child Care and Protection Workers'. Brigid Daniel, Sally Wassell and Robbie Gilligan, London (1999).

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Supporting Children and Families

'Attachment theory for social work practice', David Howe.

'Engaging with Fathers', Brigid Daniel and Julie Taylor

It is important that candidates examine differing societal perspectives about families, and compare attitudes prevalent in different sectors of society towards family structure.

As part of the teaching for this unit, candidates should be encouraged to reflect upon their own attitudes and values about working with families, and the ways in which they may influence professional practice. In addition, candidates should also be able to demonstrate how social work values may impact upon work in this field.

Outcome 2

An important element of this outcome will be the development of candidate's ability to understand the complexity of assessment. This will include an understanding of the principles and theory of assessment, and an understanding of the relative value of different assessment models.

Teaching for this outcome should consider the role of the worker in the assessment process, ways in which families can participate in assessment, issues of safe caring and what constitutes ethical practice.

The following works will be of relevance;

'Framework for the assessment of children in need and their families', Department of Health.

'The Child's World, Assessing children in need', ed. Jan Horwath

'Assessment in Child Care', ed. Martin C. Calder and Simon Hackett

Outcome 3

This outcome focuses upon practice interventions designed to support and help families. Candidates should be able to identify and use specific skills and knowledge developed in other units that focus upon professional practice for social care and/or early years. Underpinning actual or planned interventions will be an understanding of skills in assessment, planning and evaluation, together with effective communication skills. In addition, candidates should have a sound understanding of child protection legislation and practice, and its relevance to protecting individuals from abuse or harm.

In particular the following work will be of direct relevance

'Parent Power, Bringing up Responsible Children and Teenagers', John Sharry

'Parenting Teenagers', Bob Myers (1996) Jessica Kingsley Publishers

'The RHP companion to Family Support', ed. Nick Frost, Andy Lloyd and Liz Jeffrey. Russell House Publishing

'Working with Parents', ed. Ann Wheal

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Supporting Children and Families

'Listening to children', NSPCC

'Building the Future, social work with children, young people and their families, Neil Thompson

The work of Kate Cairns, Claudia Jewett and Robbie Gilligan is also relevant.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

Outcome 1 will be assessed by an essay.

Assessment of outcomes 2 and 3 should normally be by means of a case study describing an actual or planned intervention in relation to a family experiencing difficulties. Wherever possible, this should be based on candidate's practice experience. This assessment could be supported by the use of pre-set questions.

Open learning

This Unit is suitable for open learning.

Candidates with additional support needs

This Unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Additional Support Needs* (www.sqa.org.uk).

General information for candidates

Unit title: Supporting Children and Families

This unit is intended for those of you who have, or intend to have, a role working with families. It will provide you with the underpinning knowledge necessary to help you make informed choices about appropriate support and intervention to help families experiencing difficulties.

It will be of use to you if you are working, or intend to work in services designed to meet the needs of this service user group across a range of delivery options.

It is also of relevance to workers in services which may not have a specific focus on family work, but who may require a level of knowledge about this subject to enhance and improve the service offered.

You will learn about family development, structure and function, and the societal, personal, economic and political factors which affect parenting ability. It will also help you to understand what your role might involve when helping parents to meet the developmental needs of their children. You will also learn about the tools and models that can assist with developing parenting capacity.

You will be assessed by means of an essay and a case study describing an actual or planned intervention in relation to a family situation where some form of disadvantage or deficit is having, or may have, an adverse effect upon child development, safety and parenting ability.