

Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Understanding Dementia

Unit code: DH41 34

Unit purpose: The Unit is designed for candidates who are providing support for individuals with dementia in a paid or voluntary setting or within the family. What is fundamental is an understanding of the right and need of the individual with dementia to be consulted and involved in choices and decisions that involve them.

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

- ◆ Explain what dementia means
- ◆ Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the communication needs, and issues for individuals with dementia and their carers.
- ◆ Be aware of interventions that can be used in the support of individuals with dementia
- ◆ Show an awareness of the importance of the living environment and how this can affect an individual with dementia

Credit value: 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.*

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: This Unit requires the candidate to be able to demonstrate the application of their learning to practice. Candidates should be in a role, formal or informal, where they provide support to one or more individuals with dementia.

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.

Candidates will have the opportunity to develop the following core skills:

Communication: through the inclusion of reflective accounts with particular emphasis on the different forms and range of effective communication and facilitating communication with individuals with dementia.

Working with others: by demonstrating partnership with individuals and appropriate others, and ability to understand and analyse own support role in relation to teamwork.

Problem solving: through planning, critical thinking, applying a range of interventions which support individuals with dementia and evaluating own work practice.

General information for centres (Cont)

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 would normally be taught as part of the group award HNC Social Care. However it may also stand alone, and could be useful as part of a professional development programme.

Assessment: This Unit will be assessed through the completion of a 3-part case study demonstrating the values, knowledge and skills, which underpin person centred practice when working with an individual with dementia. Each of the 3 parts of the case study will correlate to each of the 3 outcomes.

The candidate will be required to demonstrate the application of learning to their work with an individual with dementia.

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 meaning of dementia and the different forms it can take

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ A definition of the term ‘dementia’
- ◆ Different forms that dementia can take, including early onset dementia
- ◆ Risk factors for individuals with dementia
- ◆ Relevance of previous life experience during the course of the illness
- ◆ Theories and comparisons between the social and medical models of disability
- ◆ Person centred approach to care
- ◆ Policy and legislation: The Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000 and The National Care Standards 2001

Evidence requirements

Assessment for Outcome 1 is combined with the assessment for Outcomes 2 and 3 and will be a case study of an individual with dementia. The candidate will be required to:

- ◆ Introduce the individual, whilst maintaining confidentiality, and identify the type of dementia, if possible
- ◆ Explain why the type of dementia will have a specific impact on the individual
- ◆ Demonstrate an understanding of how an individual’s previous life experience and history affects them when they have dementia
- ◆ Demonstrate an understanding of the social and medical models of disability and give examples of how each relates to the individual with dementia
- ◆ Demonstrate an understanding of current policy and legislation to include equality, diversity, discrimination and confidentiality.

Assessment guidelines

This will be the first section of the case study (and should highlight the life journey of the individual, including background and history, diagnosis and the current situation).

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Understanding Dementia

Outcome 2

To promote an awareness of interventions/activities which may assist communication with individuals with dementia

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Ways in which communication may be affected in individuals with dementia
- ◆ Changes in communication as the dementia progresses and in different types of dementia
- ◆ Knowledge of interventions and activities to assist communication
- ◆ Behaviour as a means of communication
- ◆ An awareness of current research into communication and dementia

Evidence requirements

Assessment for Outcome 2 will be the second stage of the case study. The candidate will be required to:

- ◆ Demonstrate their understanding of the importance of maintaining communication with the individual with dementia
- ◆ Identify intervention/activity and understand how they may benefit the individual with dementia
- ◆ Give examples of different forms of effective communication available when communicating with individuals with dementia
- ◆ Consider their own responsibility in interpreting how individuals with dementia may communicate through their behaviour

Assessment guidelines

Outcome 2 is assessed by the continuation of the case study. Candidates must identify an intervention/activity to assist communication with an individual with dementia. The project must include details of why the particular intervention/activity was chosen for that particular individual. They must describe the process of implementation and intervention/activity over a period of time and identify and evaluate the results of the intervention/activity.

Outcome 3

To promote an awareness of the effect of the living environment on a individual with dementia

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Environmental adaptations that may be appropriate for individuals with dementia and the ethical implications of these
- ◆ The application of assistive technology and design in developing and maintaining quality of life for the individual with dementia.
- ◆ Knowledge of The National Care Standards 2001 in relation to the physical environment

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Understanding Dementia

- ◆ An awareness of the impact of environmental changes on the individual with dementia and their carers
- ◆ An awareness of current research into environmental design for individuals with dementia

Evidence requirements

This will be the third and final section of the case study.

The candidate will be required to:

- ◆ Demonstrate their understanding of the effect of the physical environment on an individual with dementia
- ◆ Assess possible changes to the physical environment that may be beneficial to the individual with dementia
- ◆ Demonstrate their understanding of the need to modify the physical environment in line with changes in the course of the individual's dementia

Assessment guidelines

This will be the third and final section of the case study. The candidates will be expected to demonstrate how the individual's current living environment affects their wellbeing, independence and choice. They should also suggest possible improvements to the living environment based on current research.

Administrative Information

Unit code:	DH41 34
Unit title:	Understanding Dementia
Superclass category:	PN
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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Understanding Dementia

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 Unit has been designed to help candidates acquire a sound knowledge of current thinking on dementia and an understanding of how an individual's previous experience will affect the course of the illness. This should enable them to base their care on a commitment to person centred work, communication with individuals with dementia, appropriate interventions/activities and an awareness of the impact of the environment.

Candidates need to be engaged in a support role when they undertake this Unit. This can be in a paid or voluntary capacity, or caring for a family member with dementia.

The Unit considers all types of dementia and includes those who have early onset dementia, possibly due to a genetic link, and those who are at a significantly higher risk of developing dementia at an earlier age than the general population.

The Unit is also appropriate for those working exclusively with individuals who have Down's syndrome, as all of the interventions and activities are equally appropriate when working with this group. Material sourced should include that of Janicki M, P and Ansello E F. 2000 *'Community Supports for Ageing Adults with Lifelong Disabilities'*, Janicki M, P and Dalton A, J 1998 *'Dementia, Ageing and Intellectual Disabilities: A Handbook'*, Wilkinson H and Janicki M, P 2001 *'The Edinburgh Principles with Accompanying Guidelines and Recommendations'* and Kerr D 1997 *'Down's Syndrome and Dementia, A Practitioner's Guide'*.

This Unit is designed to support candidates to gain a sound knowledge of up-to-date thinking and practice on dementia.

Outcome 1

This Outcome introduces the meaning of the term dementia, that is, an umbrella term that covers a number of different illnesses.

The Unit focuses on the individual impact of each type of dementia, and the individual impact of the same type of dementia on different people. The individuality of the experience of dementia is a key theme. Candidates will need to become aware of the impact of an individual's social history and life experiences on their experience of dementia.

Candidates should be aware that the social model of disability is more valid for their practice, with its view that dementia is only one aspect of an individual's life circumstances, than the medical model which focuses on the shortcomings of the individual.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

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The significance of the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000, the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 and the National Care Standards 2001 should be considered, relating to the care of people with dementia.

Consideration should be given to the works of Marshall M *'I Can't Place This Place At All'* – and Kitwood T and Benson S 2000 *'The New Culture of Dementia Care'*.

Outcome 2

The focus of Outcome 2 is to increase awareness of the importance of maintaining communication with individuals with dementia, for whom communication may be increasingly difficult.

Candidates must be made aware of the role that communication plays in maintaining personhood. Candidates should be made aware of the various means by which all people communicate and that communication is possible on a meaningful level with individuals with dementia for whom the ability to communicate verbally has apparently been lost. They should also be made aware of the effect of culture (eg. personal space, sensory contact) when communicating with individuals with dementia. Candidates should be made aware of their own responsibility to encourage and enhance communication and should be introduced to strategies for increasing the effectiveness of communication; the use of art, music, reminiscence and sensory awareness among others. Candidates should explore the interventions and activities which could be used to assist communication, these may include: music, reminiscence, art, life history, sensory awareness (including aromatherapy). It is important that candidates realise that all behaviour is a form of communication, and that rather than trying to 'manage' behaviour, it is more important to establish what the person is attempting to communicate through their behaviour.

The works of Killick J and Allan K 2001 *'Communication and the Care of People with Dementia'* should be referred to in this context, along with work by Goldsmith M 1996 *'Hearing the Voice of People with Dementia'*, Feil N 1993 *'The Validation Breakthrough'*, Marshall and Kitwood.

Outcome 3

The focus of Outcome 3 is to promote an awareness of the impact that the living environment may have on an individual with dementia.

Candidates must be made aware of how, and what, adaptations may be made to the living environment of an individual with dementia. This may have different relevance and impact at different stages of the dementia. There may be environmental adaptations that are costly and complex or others that are simple to administer at home. It will be recognised by the candidate that some aspects of the environment can have either a positive or a negative impact on an individual with dementia and that this may change throughout the course of their illness. They should use this awareness to maintain and develop the quality of life for individuals with dementia.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

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Candidates should refer to the work and research of:

Marshall M ed.2000 *'A Guide to using Technology with Dementia Care, A Social and Technological Response to Meeting the Needs of Individuals with Dementia and Their Carers'* and Judd S, Marshall M and Phippen P 1998

'Design for Dementia' and colleagues at the Dementia Services Development Centre
www.dementia.stir.ac.uk.

Candidates must be aware of their roles and responsibilities as carers when considering the impact of the environment on the individual with dementia and their family members or peers.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

This Unit will be assessed through the completion of a 3-part case study demonstrating the values, knowledge and skills that underpin person centred practice. The case study should clearly demonstrate knowledge of current theories in relation to dementia.

The candidate will be required to demonstrate the application of learning to their work with an individual with dementia.

Each candidate should work with an individual with dementia to complete a 3-part case study. Each part should be submitted on completion of the relevant Outcome.

The case study should be completed as part of the candidate's work schedule but should focus on aspects of their work not previously explored.

Particular care should be taken with regard to the use of language. Emphasis should be placed on the individual and not the illness; therefore, the term 'individual with dementia' should be used rather than 'suffering from dementia' or 'demented'.

Open learning

This Unit could be delivered by open learning. For information on normal open learning arrangements, please refer to the SQA guide *Assessment and Quality Assurance of Open and Distance Learning* (SQA, 2000).

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 Arrangements* (SQA, 2001).

General information for candidates

Unit title: Understanding Dementia

This Unit is designed to familiarise you with current thinking and research on working with an individual with dementia and to help you to apply this in your practice. The emphasis is on working with individuals with dementia in a person centred way putting their needs first.

You will need to be in a support role to undertake this Unit. This can be in paid employment, voluntary work or a carer role in a family or similar situation.

The Unit has 3 Outcomes. The first will enable you to consider what dementia means, as an umbrella term, and the forms that it may take. The second encourages you to look at the importance of communicating with individuals with dementia through an activity or intervention, of your choice. The final Outcome gives you the opportunity to look at the impact that the living environment can have on an individual with dementia.

The Unit is assessed by a 3-part case study, which may be carried out with the same individual. Part 1 will introduce your individual, with all personal details anonymised. This will include the type of dementia they have, if known and relevant, as well as a brief personal history.

The second part of the case study enables you to focus on a specific intervention/activity that you will carry out with an individual with dementia. This will be based on improving communication through for example life story work, reminiscence work, aromatherapy, music, art or another intervention/activity of your choice that you can carry out over a short period.

The third part will enable you to give details of the home living environment of the individual with dementia and how environmental changes or adaptations may have a positive or negative effect on this.

You will need to show that you can work in partnership with an individual with dementia at all stages and, where appropriate, with his or her family members or other colleagues.

The written case study will give you the opportunity to show that you are aware of the need for a person centred approach when working with an individual with dementia, and that paying attention to communication and environmental issues can affect the overall care and support of an individual with dementia.