

## Higher National Unit Specification

### General information for centres

**Unit title:** Working With Autism

**Unit code:** DH45 34

**Unit purpose:** The purpose of this Unit is to enable candidates to work sensitively and effectively with people with autism. Fundamental to the Unit is an understanding of, and commitment to rights, equality and diversity. Crucial to this Unit is an understanding of effective communication. The Unit is designed for candidates who are providing support for individuals with autism.

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

- ◆ Identify the nature and the spectrum of autism
- ◆ To illustrate an understanding of the triad of impairments and its implications for the provision of care
- ◆ To investigate issues surrounding consistency in work practice and develop an awareness of intervention strategies

**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.*

**Recommended prior knowledge and skills:** Candidates should have good communication skills, both written and oral. These may be evidenced either by the achievement of nationally recognised qualifications 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 proven communication skills candidates should preferably have undertaken some real work experience, paid or voluntary, in a care setting.

**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 have opportunities to develop the following core skills:

## General information for centres (cont)

**Communication:** through the inclusion of reflective accounts, with particular emphasis on listening, observation and facilitating/developing effective communication between all parties

**Working with others:** by demonstrating partnership with service users and appropriate others (taking into account their roles), and ability to understand and analyse own support role in relation to teamwork

**Problem solving:** through planning, critical thinking, applying a range of techniques and evaluating own work practice

**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 part of the group award HNC Social Care or Certificate in Supporting Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (level 7). However, it may also stand-alone and could be useful as part of a professional development programme.

To achieve the Unit candidates will have to correct evidence when working with individuals diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorders, therefore candidates will need to have access to children, young people or adults on the Autistic Spectrum.

**Assessment:** This Unit should be assessed through a single instrument of assessment in the form of a written assignment the length of which should be between 2000 and 2500 words, excluding any references.

The assignment can be seen as comprising three parts with each part corresponding to each of the 3 learning outcomes. This assignment can therefore be completed sequentially once the candidate has equipped themselves with the relevant knowledge and skills upon completion of each learning outcome. Each part should be completed in approximately 700-800 words.

The first part of the assignment should include a definition of the term 'autism' which is consistent with current theory, reference to the autistic spectrum and discussion of the triad of impairments as well as a comparative reflection of historical thinking in relation to autism.

Part two should focus on the effects of autism on the individual, in particular on the individual's communication, socialisation and imagination and the implication of such effects on their care plan of care. It is important to note that parts 2 and 3 of the assignment should focus specifically on a service user within the candidate's own workplace and that confidentiality must be maintained at all times.

The final part of the assignment requires that the candidate describes and reflects upon appropriate intervention for the specific individual and recognise the need for consistency, appropriate communication and the importance of values intrinsic to the social care task as well as an evaluation of the effectiveness of the intervention.



## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards**

**Unit title:** Working with Autism

**Unit code:** DH45 34

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**

Identify the nature and the spectrum of autism

#### **Knowledge and/or skills**

- ◆ Theories of autism
- ◆ Triad of impairments
- ◆ Information processing
- ◆ Autistic spectrum
- ◆ Diagnostic criteria
- ◆ Historical perspective

#### **Evidence requirements**

This Unit will be assessed through a written report of a project that integrates all three outcomes in the Unit. The part of the project that assesses Outcome 1 will include a description of current thinking on the nature of autism. For this, candidates will be required to:

- ◆ provide a definition of autism consistent with current theories of autism
- ◆ refer to the autistic spectrum
- ◆ give an accurate description of the triad of impairments and its implications for the individual
- ◆ compare historical and current thinking surrounding autism, including definition and causes

#### **Assessment guidelines**

700-800 words maximum.

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)**

**Unit title:** Working with Autism

### **Outcome 2**

To illustrate an understanding of the triad of impairments and its implications for the provision of care

#### **Knowledge and/or skills**

- ◆ Relevant legislation/guidelines/charters ie care standards, same as you, valuing people
- ◆ Triad of impairments
- ◆ Change/transition
- ◆ Rights and responsibilities
- ◆ Advocacy
- ◆ Effective communication

#### **Evidence requirements**

Candidates should be able to:

- ◆ describe the effects of an impairment of communication on an individual and how this is addressed through the care plan in line with current legislation/guidelines/organisational policy/charters
- ◆ describe the effects of an impairment of socialisation on an individual and how this is addressed through the care plan in line with current legislation/guidelines/organisational policy/charters
- ◆ describe the effects of an impairment of imagination on an individual and how this is addressed through the care plan in line with current legislation/guidelines/organisational policy/charters

#### **Assessment guidelines**

Approximately 700-800 words would be appropriate for this part of the assessment.

### **Outcome 3**

To investigate issues surrounding consistency in work practice and develop an awareness of intervention strategies and be able to evaluate them

#### **Knowledge and/or skills**

- ◆ Intervention strategies
- ◆ Life changes
- ◆ Environment
- ◆ Sensory issues
- ◆ Behaviour
- ◆ Consistency
- ◆ Monitoring and evaluation

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)**

**Unit title:** Working with Autism

### **Evidence requirements**

Candidates should complete a case study with an individual from their workplace:

- ◆ describing an appropriate intervention with a specific individual, explaining the rationale for/implementation of, monitoring/review of
- ◆ demonstrating an understanding of the need for consistency in/continuity of approach to that individual
- ◆ demonstrating an understanding of the nature and importance of effective communication in relation to this individual
- ◆ demonstrating how the intervention is appropriate in relation to the promotion of equality, diversity and rights
- ◆ evaluate (over a period of time) how effective the intervention was

### **Assessment guidelines**

Approximately 700-800 words would be appropriate for this part of the assessment.

## **Administrative Information**

<b>Unit code:</b>	DH45 34
<b>Unit title:</b>	Working with Autism
<b>Superclass category:</b>	PN
<b>Date of publication:</b>	December 2004
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## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes**

### **Unit title:** Working with Autism

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**

This Unit is primarily designed to help candidates acquire a sound knowledge of current thinking on the nature of autism. This should then enable them to support the person with autism appropriately utilising their knowledge of the challenges faced by the individual.

This Unit should be assessed through a single instrument of assessment to ensure a sound knowledge and application of best practice in service provision for a person with autism. Within this assignment the outcomes may be presented sequentially, 800-1000 words each, or integrated. Length of assignment should not exceed 2400-3000 words.

This Unit would normally be part of the group award HNC Social Care or the Certificate in Supporting Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders. However, it may also stand-alone and could be useful as part of a professional development programme.

To achieve this Unit candidates will have to collect evidence when working with people diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorders, therefore candidates will need to have access to children, young people or adults on the Autistic Spectrum.

#### **Outcome 1**

Candidates should develop an understanding of historical and current theories on the complexity and nature of people within the autistic spectrum. This includes Asperger's Syndrome and Pervasive Development Disorder, together with related associated conditions – Fragile X syndrome, Rett's Syndrome, Turner's Syndrome, Tuberous Sclerosis, Childhood Disintegrative Disorder (CDD) and Phenylketonuria (PKU). The association between Autism and Epilepsy should also be explored.

The diagnostic features of autism, or triad of impairments, should focus on concepts such as: literal thinking, theory of mind/mindblindness, Thinking in pictures, rigidity of thought, echolalia, obsessional repetitive behaviour, self-injurious behaviour, understanding of social rules, and information processing.

#### **Outcome 2**

Candidates should develop an understanding of the relevant legislation/guidelines/charters etc which have an impact on the design and delivery of a care package. This will include:

- ◆ national care standards
- ◆ 'same as you' document
- ◆ 'valuing people' document

## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

## **Unit title:** Working with Autism

- ◆ community care act
- ◆ adults with incapacity act
- ◆ European charter for autism

In relation to the triad of impairments, the candidate should explore the knowledge gained in Outcome 1 and demonstrate an understanding of how these impairments are addressed in the development of a care plan.

Candidates should be encouraged to develop/display a sound value base. To this end the following principles should be explored – dignity, privacy, choice, respect, independence, individualisation, discrimination, rights and responsibilities, effective communication, equality, diversity, equity, oppression, conflict, confidentiality, health and safety. The differing models of advocacy should be investigated and candidates should identify the advantages and disadvantages for a person with autism.

### **Outcome 3**

Candidates should have an awareness of the different intervention strategies available which can be used to enable the person with autism to develop appropriate coping mechanisms. Issues may cover anxieties, health, stress, sensory overload, unpredictability and a change/transition which can all manifest themselves in behaviours that can challenge a service.

Intervention strategies will include:

- ◆ de-escalation
- ◆ distraction and diversion
- ◆ guiding and steering
- ◆ concrete communication: visual schedule – boardmaker, picture exchange communication systems (PECS), symbols, objects, T.E.A.C.C.H approach
- ◆ therapies – reflexology, sensory room, massage, aromatherapy
- ◆ medication
- ◆ approaches to supporting the bereaved

Candidates should be aware that to support a person with autism the environment (including furniture and fittings) require to be structured and consistent with meaningless change minimised. Consistency and continuity in all aspects of the person's life should be paramount. The candidate should show an awareness/understanding of organisational policy relating to the development, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review of care plans.

### **Suggested/Further Reading**

Autism Spectrum Disorders – Rita Jordan (Pub. David Fulton 1999, ISBN: 1-85346-666-2)

Autism in the Early Years: A Practical Guide – Cumine, Leach and Stevenson  
(Pub. David Fulton, ISBN: 1-85346-599-2)

## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

### **Unit title:** Working with Autism

Asperger Syndrome: A Practical Guide for Teachers – Cumine, Leach and Stevenson  
(Pub. David Fulton, ISBN: 1-85346-499-6)

Learning to live with High Functioning Autism: A Parent's Guide for Professionals – Mike Stanton (Pub. Jessica Kingsley, ISBN: 1-85302-915-7)

Behavioural Concerns and Autistic Spectrum Disorders – John Clements and Ewa Zarkowska  
(Pub. Jessica Kingsley, ISBN: 1-85302-742-1)

Children with Autism, Diagnosis and Interventions to Meet their Needs – Trevarthen, Aitken, Papoudi and Roberts (Pub. Jessica Kingsley 1998, ISBN: 1-85302-555-0)

Autism: Explaining the Enigma – Uta Frith  
(Pub. Basil Blackwell 1989, ISBN: 0-631-16824-9)

Nobody Nowhere – Donna Williams (Pub. Doubleday 1992, ISBN: 0-385-40298-8)

Somebody Somewhere – Donna Williams (Pub. Doubleday, ISBN: 0-385-40487-5)

Asperger Syndrome: A Guide for Parents and Professionals – Tony Atwood  
(Pub. Jessica Kingsley, ISBN: 1-85305-577-1)

Asperger Syndrome: Practical Strategies for the Classroom, A Teacher's Guide – Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council  
(Pub. The National Autistic Society, ISBN: 1-89928-001-4)

Autism: How to Help your Young Child – Leicestershire County Council and Fosse Health Trust (Pub. The National Autistic Society, ISBN: 1-89928-065-0)

The Autistic Spectrum: A Guide for Parents and Professionals – Lorna Wing  
(Pub. Constable, ISBN: 0-9475-160-9)

Autism: The Facts – Baron-Cohen and Bolton  
(Pub. Oxford University Press 1996, ISBN: 0-521-38608-X)

I Am Special: Introducing Children and Young People to their Autistic Spectrum Disorder – Peter Vermeulen (Pub. Jessica Kingsley, ISBN: 1-85302-916-5)

Children with Autism and Asperger Syndrome: A Guide for Practitioners and Carers – Patricia Howlin (Pub. John Wiley and Sons Ltd., ISBN: 0-47198-328-4)

Understanding and Teaching Children with Autism – Jordan and Powell  
(Pub. John Wiley and Sons Ltd 1995, ISBN: 0-47195-714-3)

## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

**Unit title:** Working with Autism

Autism: An Introduction to Psychological Theory – F. Happe (Pub. ULC Press Ltd. 1994)

Autism and Asperger's Syndrome – Uta Frith (Pub. Cambridge University Press 1991)

Autism and the Developmental Mind – P. Hobson (Pub. Laurence Erlbaum Associates 1993)

Autism Professional Perspectives and Practice – K. Ellis (Pub. Chapman and Hall 1990)

The Other Side of Autism – Stella Carlton (Pub. Self-Publishing Association Ltd 1993)

### **Publications:**

Good Autism Practice – Ed. Glenys Jones and Hugh Morgan  
(Pub. Bild Publications, ISSN: 1466-2973, Published Bi-Annually)

### **Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit**

In order to deliver this Unit, centres should identify placements where support is available from appropriately qualified/experienced staff in the specialised area of Autism.

### **Open learning**

The Unit could be delivered by open or distance 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).

### **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* (BA 2399, SQA, due 2004).

## **General information for candidates**

### **Unit title:** Working with Autism

This Unit is designed to acquaint you with current thinking in relation to people with autism and to help you to apply this to your support work. The emphasis is on identifying and addressing the specific needs and challenges faced by the person with autism. Your main aim is to use your knowledge of autism to assist the individual to manage their behaviour.

You need to be in a support role to undertake this Unit.

The Unit has three outcomes. The first outcome investigates historical and current thinking on the nature of autism – manifestation and possible causes as well as associated disorders. The second outcome then encourages you to identify the implications for the provision of care for a person with autism. The final outcome gives you the opportunity to apply the skills and knowledge from the previous outcomes in a practical way through the identification, implementation and evaluation of an appropriate intervention.

The Unit is assessed by completion of an assignment which covers all three outcomes. The Case Studies required for outcomes two and three may or may not relate to the same individual. For Outcome 3 you will need to work with a person with autism, identifying an area in which they require support to develop coping mechanisms (this may build on work completed for Outcome 2). You will then design, implement and evaluate an appropriate plan of care.

You will need to show that you have a sound knowledge of the nature of autism and how this impacts on the individual. Your response to the identified needs should illustrate an awareness of value-base issues – for example, effective communication, the promotion of rights, anti-discriminatory practice, confidentiality, health and safety.