

Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Supporting Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders

Unit code: DM6D 34

Unit purpose: The purpose of this unit is to specify the practice requirements and the underpinning knowledge for candidates to effectively support individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

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

- ◆ Support a positive environment that builds on the strengths and realistic expectations of individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders.
- ◆ Support individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders to function socially.
- ◆ Support individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders to cope with anxiety, distress and the impact of change.

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 can 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.

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 opportunities to develop the following core skills:

Communication (Oral communication): Given the communication needs of children, young people and adults with Autistic Spectrum Disorders this unit should provide numerous opportunities for candidates to collect evidence for the oral communication core skill when being observed and through reflective accounts and diary entries.

Communication (Written communication): Working in any context where the well being of individuals is being supported necessitates the use of written communication to convey information about individuals, events, plans etc. Therefore, when completing this unit candidates should be able to collect evidence for written communication.

General information for centres (cont)

Information Technology: Although the use of information technology is not a requirement of the unit, some organisations use information technology systems to input records and reports, for processing other information and to retrieve information about individuals. In this instance candidates should be able to collect evidence towards this unit. Candidates may also use information technology to produce their assessments.

Working with Others: This is central to the unit and one of the outcomes is specifically targeted at multi-disciplinary team working and working with others within your own and in other organisation. Throughout the unit it is expected that candidates will be working in partnership with the individuals with ASD and where relevant their carers and key people in their lives.

Problem solving (Critical thinking; Planning and Organising; Reviewing and Evaluating): Critical thinking; Planning and Organising; Reviewing and Evaluating are all critical when working with individuals with ASD and the need to carry out these skills is integral to the unit. Therefore evidence should be able to be collected when completing the unit

Context for delivery: This Unit is part of the PDA Certificate: Supporting Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders. This qualification builds upon the SVQ Health and Social Care level 3 and many candidates taking this qualification and unit may already have achieved the SVQ level 3 qualification. The unit can also be taken alongside the SVQ Health and Social Care level 3 if a candidate is collecting evidence whilst working with individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders. In order to achieve this unit candidates will have to collect evidence when working with individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders, therefore candidates will need to have access to children, young people or adults on the Autistic Spectrum.

Assessment: To achieve this unit you will need demonstrate competence against the practice outcomes whilst working with individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders in a real work setting both within your own organisation and externally. To complete this unit it is essential that you can work with children, young people and/or adults with ASD either as a practitioner or within an appropriate work placement.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Supporting Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders

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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

Support a positive environment that builds on the strengths and realistic expectations of individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Facilitate low arousal environments
- ◆ Modify environments to support individuals with ASD
- ◆ Provide safe, secure, consistent and inclusive environments
- ◆ Introduce changes into environments

Evidence requirements

Candidates will be required to provide evidence, whilst working with individuals with ASD, that they can:

- ◆ facilitate and modify the environment to support individuals with ASD, ensuring that the environment is safe, secure, consistent and inclusive
- ◆ introduce changes in the environment in ways that minimise the anxieties of individuals and the disruption of normal routines and practice
- ◆ apply relevant knowledge and understanding whilst supporting a positive environment for individuals with ASD

Outcome 2

Support individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders to function socially

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Value and respect the differing and unique experiences and qualities of individuals with ASD
- ◆ Work positively with individuals using a holistic empathetic approach
- ◆ Support the growth, development and social functioning of individuals with ASD
- ◆ Support individuals with ASD to communicate more effectively
- ◆ Work collaboratively with individuals, key people and others to maximise the individual's behavioural, social and communication functioning

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Supporting Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders

Evidence requirements

Candidates will be required to provide evidence, whilst working with individuals with ASD they can:

- ◆ work positively with and use (and support individuals to use) existing and new interests, skills and abilities to facilitate communication and social functioning
- ◆ contribute to the assessment of risks for activities to promote the development and social functioning of individuals with ASD
- ◆ communicate effectively, using appropriate cues and equipment, in the individuals' preferred method of communication
- ◆ apply relevant knowledge and understanding whilst supporting individuals with ASD

Outcome 3

Support individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders to cope with anxiety, distress and the impact of change

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Support individuals in ways that minimise anxiety and distress
- ◆ Plan with individuals how to manage change
- ◆ Support individuals through the change process

Evidence requirements

Candidates will be required to provide evidence, whilst working with individuals with ASD, that they can:

- ◆ structure their work with individuals in ways which make life more predictable, aids communication and helps to promote choice and personal autonomy for individuals with ASD
- ◆ contribute to the assessment of risks for activities to promote the development and social functioning of individuals with ASD
- ◆ prepare individuals in advance for any predicted changes and provide active support to enable individuals and key people to identify issues associated with change
- ◆ work with individuals to promote choice and extend their range of options and coping strategies in ways that are likely to minimise anxiety and distress
- ◆ apply relevant knowledge and understanding whilst supporting individuals with ASD to cope with anxiety, distress and the impact of change.

Assessment guidelines for the Unit

To achieve this unit you need to demonstrate competence against the practice outcomes whilst working with individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders in a real work setting (usually within the candidate's own working environment or within an appropriate work placement). For outcomes 2 and 3 you will also need to provide evidence of working with individuals with ASD outside your work setting or work placement.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Supporting Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders

Evidence should be gathered wherever possible from naturally occurring events in the workplace. The evidence generated will be in the form of direct observations of practice and reflective accounts and may be supported by answers to questions.

The knowledge required to underpin the practice should be gained from observations of practice and reflective accounts and may be supported by answers to oral and written questions, written assignments and projects.

Administrative Information

Unit code:	DM6D 34
Unit title:	Supporting Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders
Superclass category:	PN
Date of publication:	April 2005
Version:	01
Source:	SQA

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Supporting Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders

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 for candidates who work or wish to work with individuals diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD). However it can be used for candidates who have not yet worked with individuals with ASD but who are interested in working with individuals with ASD, in which case the candidate needs to be able collect the evidence in real work settings with individuals with ASD.

This unit is part of the PDA Certificate: Supporting Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders. The unit may also be used as a stand-alone unit, or could usefully form part of a professional development programme. To achieve the unit candidates will have to collect evidence when working with individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders, therefore candidates will need to have access to children, young people or adults diagnosed as being on the Autistic Spectrum.

The knowledge required to underpin the practice should be gained from observations of practice; reflective accounts and may be supported by answers to oral and written questions, written assignments and projects.

Outcome 1

Candidates should know and be able to demonstrate how to facilitate low arousal environments ensuring that the environment is reassuring, calm, organised, focused, structured to reduce and manage aversive experiences, promotes the predictability of events and allows for relaxation and therapeutic intervention. They should also be able to modify the environment to support individuals with ASD by reducing clutter, noise and distraction; facilitating inclusion and supporting the specific needs and anxieties of the individuals. Safety and security of individuals with ASD is always important so the environment needs to be safe, secure, consistent and inclusive. The candidate should, however, take account of any restrictions, risks and the health, safety and security of individuals. Finally, the candidate should be able to introduce changes in the environment in ways that minimise the anxieties of individuals and the disruption of normal routines and practice.

Outcome 2

Candidates should know about and be able to demonstrate that they can:

- ◆ work positively with the individuals using a holistic empathetic approach which takes account of all aspects of their lives, behaviour and functioning and that:
 - enhances their motivation
 - communicate more effectively
 - reduce their levels of anxiety
 - understand the different functioning of individuals who do not have ASD

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Supporting Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders

- ◆ use, and support individuals to use, their interests and naturally occurring events and situations, appropriate aids, rehearsal procedures, approaches and interventions to support individuals to:
 - build on their strengths
 - discovers their potential
 - minimises regression due to low expectations
 - function more effectively socially
- ◆ help individuals to develop new skills and abilities that will enable them to communicate and function socially
- ◆ encourage individuals to try new and potentially stressful activities in a supportive, safe and secure environment that is not confrontational
- ◆ identify and access information about the communication and language needs of individuals
- ◆ use the individuals' preferred method of language and communication, allowing sufficient time between communications for the individual to process and respond the information
- ◆ structure their communications with individuals with ASD:
 - logically and literally, avoiding communications that require individuals to make inferences about the actual meaning
 - in ways that make life more predictable; help to promote choice and personal autonomy and prepare individuals for and enables them to communicate in new and changing situations and environments
- ◆ use verbal and non verbal cues to identify:
 - whether individuals have understood the communication
 - increased levels of stress and anxiety in the individuals
- ◆ safely and correctly set up and use, and/or help individuals to safely and correctly set up and use, communication aids and specific communication equipment
- ◆ work in partnership with individuals, key people and others within and outside their organisation to contribute to:
 - assessing the individual's needs
 - identifying and managing risks
 - developing and reviewing holistic person centred development plans for individuals with ASD
 - implementing approaches that build on the individual's existing abilities and maximise the individual's potential.
 - contribute to evaluating the impact of interventions, therapies and approaches on individuals with ASD
- ◆ reflect on own practice and seek additional help, advice and support:
 - in areas that are outside their experience and competence to deal with to enable them to cope with anxieties, stress and distress

Outcome 3

Candidates should know about and be able to demonstrate that they can:

- ◆ use frameworks and procedures to enable individuals to cope in social situations prepare individuals in advance for any predicted changes
- ◆ structure their work with individuals in ways which make life more predictable, aids communication and helps to promote choice and personal autonomy

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Supporting Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders

- ◆ take appropriate action when an individual's anxiety levels are likely to present a risk to themselves, others, the candidate and the environment
- ◆ provide active support to enable individuals and key people to identify and communicate:
 - any changes that have taken place or are about to take place and the likely impact of the change
 - their preferences associated with the change
 - any methods they can use or need to develop to cope with and manage the change
 - any risks associated with the change
- ◆ work with individuals to promote choice and extend their range of options and behaviour in ways that are likely to minimise anxiety and distress
- ◆ support individuals to adapt to change and transitions in ways that are likely to cause minimum anxiety and distress

Guidance on the knowledge and understanding of ASD

Candidates should have, and be able to apply the relevant knowledge about values; legislation and organisational policy and procedures; different aspects of ASD; the impact of ASD on the lives of individuals and others with whom they are associated; supporting individuals with ASD and developing their own practice when working with individuals with ASD, their parents, carers and other key people.

How to value, respect and ensure that the rights and choices of individuals with ASD are met including:

- ◆ the rights and responsibilities of individuals with ASD
- ◆ methods and ways of supporting individuals with ASD that:
 - support equality and diversity
 - are effective when dealing with, and challenging discrimination when working
 - with individuals with ASD, key people and others
 - promote communication with individuals with ASD

Legislation and organisational policy and procedures that are applicable to working with individuals with ASD, including:

- ◆ current local and national and legislation and organisational requirements,
- ◆ procedures and practices for working with individuals with ASD

The different aspects of ASD, including:

- ◆ the history of autistic spectrum disorder and conditions
- ◆ ASD and the triad impairments (i.e. problems with social skills and relationships;
- ◆ language and in communicating with others and with thinking and behaving flexibly)
- ◆ how the individual impairments within the triad might and do manifest themselves
- ◆ with the individuals
- ◆ the interventions and approaches that are used to support individuals with ASD
- ◆ how ASD:
 - impacts on the lives of individuals with ASD
 - can affect the all aspects of the individual's identity, including their self-esteem and self-image and daily and social functioning

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Supporting Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders

- impacts on parents, families, carers and other key people (i.e. those people who are key to an individual's health and social well-being) in the individual's life
- ◆ the importance, contents and processes involved in developing holistic person centred development plans for individuals with ASD
- ◆ how to positively promote all aspects of the individuals with ASD identity, self-esteem and self-image
- ◆ types of environments that are appropriate to individuals with ASD including those with high functioning ASD and Aspergers
- ◆ how to introduce and support individuals with transitions between activities and localities
- ◆ the types of communication that is helpful and that which is less helpful for individuals with ASD
- ◆ the reasons for, and how to minimise anxiety for the individuals with ASD with whom the candidate works

How to develop practice when working with individuals with ASD, their parents, carers and other key people, including:

the types of issues that might arise when working with individuals with ASD, parents, families, carers and other key people in the individual's life and others with whom the candidate might work, how to deal with these and who to refer to for issues outside the candidate's scope

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

It is recommended that candidates collect the evidence for each of the outcomes whilst undertaking their normal working practices (or within an appropriate work placement) with individuals with ASD. If someone who is not working with children young people or adults with ASD wishes to undertake this unit, they will need to have access to a relevant work placement where support is available from appropriately qualified/experienced staff in the specialised area of Autism to allow them to collect the evidence against the outcomes.

The context in which the practice requirements could be met may include social and health care settings, educational settings, recreational and leisure settings and community settings where the candidate is able to work with individuals with ASD.

Open learning

This Unit is suitable for Open Learning, provided the candidate has access to a suitable work placement and there is authentication of the candidate's evidence.

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

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Supporting Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders

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 Individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders

This unit outlines the essentials of practice when working with individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders. The unit will be assessed in real work settings with children, young people or adults diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

You need to be able to work with individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders within your own work setting (or in another realistic work setting) and when supporting individuals with ASD outside the original setting.

The unit has three outcomes. The first outcome requires you develop an appropriate environment for people with ASD. The second relates to supporting the social functioning of individuals with ASD including their communication needs and preference. Outcome 3 requires that you are able to support individuals through stress, distress and change and the impact it has on individuals with ASD. All outcomes require that you demonstrate your competence in practice with the knowledge being assessed throughout the practice or, where applied knowledge is unclear, through to oral and written questions, written assignments and projects.