



Higher National Unit specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Create an Environment for Learning

Unit code: F1WC 37

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed to enable candidates to contribute to the creation of a learning environment that enables and supports learning for self and others and where practice is valued and developed. Successful candidates will be able to tailor learning opportunities and work with others to meet the needs and abilities of individual learners.

On completion of the Unit candidates should be able to:

- 1 Initiate the creation of optimum learning environments for learners, taking account of individual learner differences.
- 2 Negotiate, plan and manage change to ensure learners access opportunities to learn and work with other professions.
- 3 Work closely with others in a variety of education to adapt to change and inform development of learning programmes.
- 4 Ethically practice in a way which acknowledges power differences inherent within a learning situation.

Credit points and level: 1 HN credit at SCQF level 10: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 10*)

**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 well developed communication and inter-personal skills and be able to demonstrate their ability to critically review and consolidate knowledge, skills, practices and thinking in their disciplines. This may be demonstrated by relevant professional qualifications at SCQF level 9 (or equivalent) or above with relevant experience in a social services or other related setting. Acceptance of relevant equivalent qualifications and experience will be at the discretion of the centre.

Core Skills: Although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components in this Unit, there are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of Working with Others, Problem Solving and Communication at SCQF level 6. Additionally, there may be opportunities to develop the Core Skill of Information Technology.

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.

General information for centres (cont)

Assessment: The focus of this Unit is on the development of competence to use a wide range of principal skills, some specialised skills and advanced applications to create an environment for the promotion of learning. Assessment mechanisms should gather evidence from a range of sources.

This collection of evidence approach allows candidates flexibility in relation to evidence gathering and scope to present their evidence in a way that best fits with their learning needs and styles. The evidence gathered to demonstrate that candidates have achieved the Outcomes should be naturally occurring during their day to day activity, therefore encouraging them to critically reflect on the nature of what they do on a daily basis.

Candidates' practice evidence of their ability to create a learning environment can be taken from a variety of sources including feedback from peers, managers, learners, service users, carers and other professionals. This will be collated alongside evidence of the candidate's knowledge and understanding of the topics covered by the Unit. Candidates should also provide a critically reflective narrative identifying their learning for the Unit, critically reflecting on what they have done well, what they might have done differently and what they need to work on in the future.

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.

Please see specific knowledge and/or skills required in relation to each Outcome and Evidence Requirements for the Unit after the Outcomes.

The whole of the content listed in the knowledge and skills sections must be taught and available for assessment.

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

Initiate the creation of optimum learning environments for learners, taking account of individual learner differences

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Learning organisations and learning cultures
- ◆ Theories of adult learning, models and methods, including teaching and learning styles
- ◆ Learning materials (including e-learning) to support learning for self and others
- ◆ Individual learner differences

Outcome 2

Negotiate, plan and manage change to ensure learners access opportunities to learn and work with other professions

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Theories and processes of change and the role of the change agent
- ◆ Changes impacting on inter-professional working and collaborative practice
- ◆ Management of change in delivering suitable learning opportunities to meet individual learner's learning needs throughout the learning programme
- ◆ Inter-professional roles, functions and responsibilities

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Create an Environment for Learning

Outcome 3

Work closely with others involved in a variety of education to adapt to change and inform development of learning programmes

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Design and develop learning programmes in the light of drivers for change relevant to candidates' own practice
- ◆ Applicable standards and frameworks for learning programmes
- ◆ Quality assurance frameworks for learning programmes

Outcome 4

Ethically practice in a way which acknowledges power differences inherent within a learning situation

Knowledge and/or Skills

Origins, uses and abuses of power in professional practice

- ◆ Legislation and policy relating to discrimination and equal opportunities
- ◆ Ethics and values base
- ◆ Building an empowering and enabling relationship which is anti-discriminatory

Evidence Requirements for the Unit

Candidates must provide evidence to cover all Knowledge and Skills in the Outcomes above by demonstrating their ability to contribute to the creation of a learning environment that enables and supports learning for self and others and where practice is valued and developed. The evidence will demonstrate the application of knowledge, sources of Knowledge and a critical understanding of principal theories and concepts relevant to this Unit.

Candidates will provide evidence of:

- ◆ supportive statement(s) from the learner, or others, of the candidate's ability to create an ethical environment for learning
- ◆ critically evaluating their work with the learner and other professionals in negotiating, planning and managing appropriate learning opportunities and programmes in the light of changing circumstances and learner needs. This should include a critical understanding of the principal theories relating to change
- ◆ critically evaluating the process they used to create ethical learning conditions for a particular learner or group including attention to oppression and empowerment
- ◆ critically analysing their practice and the practice of their organisation including working with others and how adult learning theory is used in supporting someone else's learning

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Create an Environment for Learning

Assessment guidelines

This Unit stands alone and can be assessed in its own right. However, when delivered as part of a Group Award it may be appropriate for candidate evidence to span more than one Unit.

Appropriate methods for candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how to establish optimum learning environments include witness statements, formal and informal feedback, learning material, self-evaluation, direct observation, critical analysis of practice and products from real work practice such as a learning agreement.

Administrative Information

Unit code: F1WC 37

Unit title: Create an Environment for Learning

Superclass category: PM

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History of changes:

Version	Description of change	Date

Source: SQA

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Create an Environment for Learning

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 has been designed as a stand alone Unit. It can be delivered as a stand-alone Unit if a centre has determined that the knowledge and skills developed within this Unit are all that are required to enhance the capability of candidates. Alternatively, the Unit can be delivered as part of an SQA Group Award such as a Professional Development Award (PDA). For example, it is one of eight Units that comprise the:

- ◆ PDA in Practice Learning at SCQF level 10
- ◆ PDA in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10

Where this Unit is delivered as part of the PDA in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 10, the centre should be aware that there may be additional entry requirements for candidates in line with Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) policy.

This Unit is intended for candidates from a range of occupational and professional situations within social services, education or health settings. Examples include first line managers supervising staff, people in a variety of posts delivering training courses to staff, those supervising learners in practice learning and workplace assessors. This list is not exhaustive but provides a flavour of the diversity of people who might wish to access this Unit from a social services or other relevant setting. The Unit is designed to enable candidates to provide demanding learning environments to support learning for themselves and others where practice is valued and advanced. Successful candidates will be able to tailor learning opportunities and selected work with other professionals to meet the needs and abilities of individual learners whilst managing and adapting to the complexity of change.

The knowledge and skills obtained from the Outcomes of this Unit will form the foundation for candidates' work with learners. Candidates need to demonstrate their ability to work at someone else's pace and devise learning programmes to suit different learners' styles (eg activists or theorists) and learning needs (eg purpose of learning, stage of learning, disabilities/additional support needs). Self-aware practice is also important to create an ethical learning environment where there is no discrimination or misuse of power. Work with other people within their own setting and work with other professionals across sectors (eg health and education) and settings (eg fieldwork, residential, day care) is also central to the Outcomes of this Unit. Critical selection of learning opportunities taking into account changing requirements, patterns of work or government drivers will be vital.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Create an Environment for Learning

The overall purpose of the Unit is to provide candidates with a critical understanding of how to work effectively with learners within the changing context of health, education and social services. It will provide knowledge of how to promote equal opportunities for learners and an understanding of how to work anti-oppressively. Creating an environment for learning will enable candidates to demonstrate that they have acquired the knowledge to develop sound working relationships with learners and other professionals and an understanding of how to promote learners' rights to choice. It will also support candidates in the acquisition of knowledge about the design and development of learning programmes and selection of learning opportunities (eg identifying learner needs, the process of planning learning programmes, methods of delivery, choice of materials, monitoring learning programmes, adapting learning programmes). An understanding of adult learning theories (eg Kolb, Knowles, Bloom) will also support the candidates in facilitating the learning of others whilst coping with a changing environment.

By undertaking this Unit candidates will demonstrate and gain a range of skills to support the creation of optimum learning environments. These include the ability to provide effective learning opportunities and programmes for learners with different skills and capacities and the ability to practise in ways which demonstrate an awareness of other people's roles and responsibilities whilst acknowledging their own impact on the learning environment. Critically reviewing appropriate learning methodologies and designing creative programmes in the light of up to date research, attention to standards and strategies to enable others' learning will also be included. Critically analysing and adapting to change will also be a feature of the learning from this Unit as well as working with other professionals to enhance delivery of the learning programme.

On successful completion of the Unit, candidates will be able to access, plan and manage a range of learning opportunities, devise learning programmes suitable for learners with different learning needs and abilities, support learners through the process of their learning, create a learning environment that does not oppress the learner, provide opportunities for learners to work with and learn from others within their own and other professions, work closely with others involved in the education process to adapt to change and recognise and critically review their own impact on the learning process.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

Delivery

This Unit involves candidates in a significant amount of experiential learning. Candidates are required to critically analyse and critically reflect on this experience and to be able to make conclusions for their future behaviour and development.

It is expected that the facilitation of learning for this Unit will be through a range of approaches including face-to-face inputs, blended and other forms of directed and self-directed learning.

The delivery mechanisms adopted by centres should be flexible to allow comprehensive access and participation, including distance and e-learning. An outcomes-based approach, centred round the learning needs of the individual, may best meet the requirement for flexible delivery. The delivery of the Unit must take account of its practical nature and of the occupational and professional backgrounds of candidates.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Create an Environment for Learning

At the outset, Centres should make candidates aware of the requirements of the Unit, including the need to gather evidence, critically analyse and report on their experiences. They should also inform candidates at the outset about the type of evidence they will have to provide in order to complete the Unit successfully. It is likely that delivery will consist of some initial orientation and briefing sessions after which candidates will manage their learning independently to a significant extent. Centres will make suitable arrangements to support and guide candidates throughout. This could involve regular meetings with candidates on an individual basis or in groups or through e-learning.

Assessment

Centres should advise candidates about assessment requirements. The Unit takes a holistic approach to assessment and all four Outcomes are closely and systematically connected. Candidates should be encouraged to seek opportunities to generate evidence that would span more than one of the Outcomes. For example, aspects of managing change to ensure learners access opportunities to learn and work with other professions (Outcome 1) is likely to be closely linked to working with others involved in education to adapt to change and inform development of learning programmes (Outcome 3). Both can be addressed in candidates' critically reflective and critically analytical account of their practice or be evidenced in a learning agreement of some kind.

Candidates should demonstrate that they have achieved the Unit Outcomes by gathering evidence from a range of sources. As far as possible for most candidates the evidence should be 'naturally occurring' during the course of their day to day activity. Where candidates are not able to rely solely on naturally occurring evidence, appropriate supplementary assessment activity such as role play or simulation will need to be developed by centres. This approach aims to reduce the need for contrived assessed activity in circumstances where Outcomes are effectively being evidenced in candidates' work. The approach aims to encourage candidates to critically reflect on the nature of what they do on a daily basis.

An example of this holistic approach to gathering evidence for all 8 Units of the Award can be found in the Arrangements document.

Centres should provide advice and guidance to candidates on gathering evidence. The evidence should be presented as a coherent and logical whole rather than a collection of disparate items. Essentially, it is a record of the learning journey undertaken by candidates.

The evidence produced by candidates should demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to each Outcome. Overall, this should encompass a demonstration of:

- ◆ the professional performance improvements that candidates have achieved as a result of participating in this learning and related practical activities
- ◆ candidates' ability to critically evaluate and critically review their own and their learners' experiences of the learning environment
- ◆ candidates' application of relevant theories, methodologies and standards to enhance the learning environment

There may be opportunities to combine evidence for this Unit with evidence from other Units, especially where candidates are undertaking a relevant Group Award or a number of Units as part of a programme of Continuous Professional Development.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Create an Environment for Learning

Combining evidence from several Units should be encouraged wherever possible. It will give candidates the opportunity to develop a more comprehensive record of their learning, but will also highlight the close connections and relationships between the different strands involved in professional development. It may also enable candidates to make use of the same piece of evidence in different contexts.

Collection of Evidence

Assessment mechanisms should offer candidates flexibility in relation to evidence gathering against the Outcomes. Each candidate's evidence will be unique and will be expected to meet a set of minimum required content criteria as advised by the centre. Candidates are encouraged to offer fewer rather than more pieces of work to evidence several Outcomes. This is not intended to deter candidates from taking a rigorous approach to their assessment tasks, but rather to allow them scope to focus their evidence. The statement of standards for the Unit lists the mandatory Evidence Requirements, but the type of evidence candidates present for assessment is not prescribed unless specifically stated.

It is likely that content will include items covering both product and process. Evidence of support for learning can be drawn from any context across health, education and social services and involve work with individual learners and/or groups, such as through the facilitation of group supervision, or planning, delivering and/or evaluating training events. Evidence can come in a variety of forms including assignment, video, audio, presentations, witness statements etc.

Centres will advise on specific requirements but candidates will need to provide evidence of knowledge, values and skills and may include some of the following, for example:

- 1 Critically reflective narrative of the learning from the Unit as a whole. This is candidates' summary of how the evidence they have provided meets the Outcomes. It can include a clear map indicating where the evidence provided links to the Outcomes. It is likely that this will also describe what they have done well, what they might have done differently and what they need to work on in the future
- 2 Candidates' critically reflective accounts of how they have met each of the Outcomes
- 3 Evidence of direct observation of candidates' current practice with a learner or learners
- 4 Witness statements from, for example, managers, colleagues, service users, the learners themselves or practitioners in other related disciplines
- 5 Formal and informal feedback on practice from a learner or learners with whom candidates have been working
- 6 Formal and informal feedback on practice from, as appropriate, mentor, assessor, a service user, carer, peers, managers, and other professionals
- 7 A self-assessment, including critical reflection by candidates on feedback received
- 8 Product evidence to specifically demonstrate knowledge gained in relation to the purposes, design and choice of evaluation strategies and collaboration in this regard. For example, assignments, reports, extracts of minutes, supervision notes and practice documents etc

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Create an Environment for Learning

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

All elements of the Core Skill of Problem Solving at SCQF level 6, namely planning and organising, critical thinking, and reviewing and evaluating could be developed and enhanced.

Support in developing an effective research strategy for accessing and critically evaluating paper based and electronic sources of complex information will be of value. The production and discussion of initial draft documents for the completed range of evidence is a useful way to ensure the development of skills in presentation and collation of relevant materials. Although communication skills are not formally assessed, candidates should be expected to produce and present written work to a professional standard, and to communicate essential ideas and concepts effectively. Terminology and spelling used in annotation should be technically accurate. As such, opportunities exist to develop Communication at SCQF level 6. The availability of suitable software to support an effective professional presentation could further assist the development of Core Skills Information Technology.

Candidates may have the opportunity to develop the Core Skill of Working with Others as they undertake group work, and one to one supervision with their candidate. Candidates should be made aware of techniques to put subjects at ease, or to create appropriate environments, using reflective listening and non-verbal communication, including making eye contact and relaxed body language. They should know how to initiate actions confidently and in a way that progresses communication and they should continually modify and adapt their approach to produce desired effects.

Open learning

This Unit requires candidates to take responsibility for their own learning. If it is to be delivered by means of open learning it will be necessary to ensure candidates have access to relevant material to enable them to assimilate the underpinning concepts and knowledge. Candidates will also need access to guidance and support throughout the learning and development process.

Candidates with disabilities and/or additional support needs

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. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (www.sqa.org.uk).

General information for candidates

Unit title: Create an Environment for Learning

The Unit is designed to enable you to influence and shape demanding learning environments that facilitate and support learning for yourself and others and where practice is valued and advanced. It will develop your capacity to tailor learning opportunities for individual and group needs and enhance your work with others in order to meet programme requirements and address the abilities of individual learners whilst managing and adapting to the complexity of change.

In this Unit you have to achieve four Outcomes. Collectively these Outcomes cover a range of skills to create effective learning environments and programmes whilst managing change. They will involve you in the critical selection and negotiation of planned and managed learning opportunities for individuals or groups whilst taking account of individual learner differences and managing changes in the learning environment. You will be able to work closely with others who are involved in supporting learning. You will also network with other professionals to broaden the range of opportunities and learning available. You will be able to work ethically in a way that does not oppress the learner and acknowledges the power differences inherent in the learning situation.

The overall purpose of the Unit is to provide you with a critical understanding of how to work effectively with learners within the changing context of health, education and social services. It will give you knowledge of how to promote equal opportunities for learners and design appropriate learning programmes as a result. You will be able to demonstrate that you have gained the knowledge to develop sound working relationships with learners and other professionals and an understanding of how to promote learners' rights to choice. You will be supported in the acquisition of knowledge about the design and development of learning programmes and the selection of learning opportunities. An understanding of adult learning theory will also guide you in facilitating the learning of others whilst coping with a changing environment.

On successful completion of this Unit, you will be able to create optimum learning environments to enhance others' learning. You will be able to access, plan and manage a range of learning opportunities, critically devise learning programmes suitable for learners with different learning needs and abilities, support learners through the process of their learning, create an ethical learning environment that does not oppress the learner, manage change within the learning environment, provide opportunities for learners to work with and learn from others within your own and other professions and recognise and critically review your own impact on the learning process.

The assessment for the Unit requires you to produce evidence that you can create an ethical learning environment to enable others' learning. It is important that you gather this evidence from your ongoing practice with learners and build a collection of evidence of your work. This tool should offer you flexibility in relation to evidence gathering against the Outcomes. Your collection of evidence will be unique, although it will be expected to meet a set of minimum required content criteria as advised by the centre and will include evidence of knowledge, values and skills. You can use evidence from any context across health, education and social services and involve work with individual learners and/or groups, such as through the facilitation of student supervision, study groups or planning, delivering and/or evaluating training events.

General information for candidates (cont)

Unit title: Create an Environment for Learning

Your evidence collection is likely to consist of several different types of item covering both product and process. Centres will advise you about any specific requirements. Some examples of items of evidence you might provide are:

- ◆ critically reflective accounts of how you have met each of the Outcomes
- ◆ witness testimony from others involved in the learning process (learners, colleagues, service users, assessors, other professionals, university or college tutors etc)
- ◆ product evidence to specifically demonstrate knowledge gained eg exercises used to assist learners to critically appraise good practice in a variety of practice specific contexts. For example, assignments/exercises, reports, extracts of minutes, supervision notes and practice documents etc
- ◆ a critically reflective narrative of learning from the Unit as a whole
- ◆ video, audio, presentations

If you take this Unit in conjunction with one or more other Units, you may be able to present evidence for more than one Unit at the same time. In this way, you can provide a much fuller record of several interconnected aspects of your personal development. It is possible, therefore, to use evidence generated as part of this Unit to gain credit for more than one Unit.