



Higher National Unit specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Support the Learning Environment

Unit code: F2VE 36

Unit purpose: To enable candidates to take responsibility for the delivery of learning experiences within an ethical professional environment. It also prepares candidates to support the enhancement of the learning environment and to select a range of learning opportunities that develop the learner's professional practice including the use of legislation, policy and research.

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

- 1 Support the identification, planning and delivery of learning experiences, and the enhancement of the learning environment to meet learner needs.
- 2 Access and select a range of learning opportunities appropriate to learner needs and stage of learning, involving service users and carers and/or other professionals.
- 3 Critically analyse and address ethical issues and power differentials in practice and learning situations.
- 4 Use theory and practice to take appropriate responsibility for the development of the learner's professional practice within relevant legislation, policy and guidance.

Credit points and level: 2 HN credits at SCQF level 9: (16 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 9*)

**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 the ability to think analytically and systematically. They should be able to use these skills to give an account of their experiences, reflect on them, make valid conclusions and express strengths and development needs, both personal and organisational. These may be evidenced by the achievement of a qualification at SCQF level 8 (or equivalent) or above. Candidates will be expected to have relevant experience in a social services, education or health setting.

Acceptance of candidates' competence 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 will be 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.

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.

Assessment: The focus of this Unit is on the development of competence to use a selection of principal skills, techniques and practices to support the learning environment. It is suitable for holistic assessment and the recommended assessment mechanism is a collection of practice evidence gathered from a range of sources.

The 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 a candidate has achieved the Outcomes should be naturally occurring during their day to day activity, therefore encouraging candidates to reflect on the nature of what they do on a daily basis.

Candidates' practice evidence of their ability to support the learning environment can be drawn 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. Also within their collection of evidence candidates should provide a critically reflective narrative identifying their learning for the Unit, critically reflecting on what they might have done differently and what they need to work on in the future.

It is a requirement that there is evidence of direct observation of the candidate's current practice with a learner or learners eg these may be in the form of witness statements from, for example, managers, colleagues, service users, the learners themselves or practitioners in other related disciplines. There is also an expectation that there must be direct observation by an occupationally competent assessor.

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.

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 the identification, planning and delivery of learning experiences, and the enhancement of the learning environment to meet learner needs

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Reasons for choice, provision and development of learning experiences
- ◆ Quality and change in learning environments and their improvement
- ◆ Methods of identifying own learning needs and the needs of others
- ◆ Organisational systems and networks necessary to support learners

Outcome 2

Access and select a range of learning opportunities appropriate to learner needs and stage of learning, involving service users and carers and/or other professionals

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Appropriate learning opportunities for stage of learning
- ◆ How to match learning opportunities to learner needs and stage
- ◆ Effective communication with service users and carers and/or other relevant professionals
- ◆ How to involve others in defined learning experiences to meet learner needs

Outcome 3

Critically analyse and address ethical issues and power differentials in practice learning situations

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ The impact of power on relationship between candidate and learner in practice situations
- ◆ Legislation and policy relating to discrimination, diversity and equal opportunities
- ◆ Professional ethics and value base in work with learners
- ◆ Ethical issues in practice learning situations

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Support the Learning Environment

Outcome 4

Use theory and practice to take appropriate responsibility for the development of the learner's professional practice within relevant legislation, policy and guidance

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Roles and responsibilities of those involved in the provision of learning
- ◆ Legislation, policy and guidance appropriate to practice context
- ◆ Up-to-date theory in the practice context
- ◆ Methods of developing learner practice within current legislation, policy, guidance and theory

Evidence Requirements for the Unit

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ critically analyse their own learning needs and the learning needs of others
- ◆ critically analyse the reasons for their choice of learning opportunities
- ◆ critically evaluate and amend learning experiences as appropriate to learner needs
- ◆ reflect on the effectiveness of addressing issues that require change in order to improve the learning environment
- ◆ reflect on the effectiveness of the involvement and support of others in the provision of agreed learning opportunities
- ◆ address ethical issues in learning situations and critically evaluate the impact of power on the learning relationship and assist learners to do so in practice
- ◆ critically analyse how they developed the learner's professional practice in their setting specifically in relation to agency policy, guidance, legislation, theory and relevant research

Direct observation of candidate interaction with the learner is mandatory.

Assessment Guidelines for the Unit

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 including observation to span more than one Unit.

Appropriate methods for a candidate to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of contributing to the provision of a supportive learning environment include witness statements, formal and informal feedback, learning material devised, direct observation and analysis of own practice

Combining evidence from more than one Unit should be encouraged wherever possible. It will give candidates the chance 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.

Administrative Information

Unit code: F2VE 36

Unit title: Support the Learning Environment

Superclass category: PM

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Version	Description of change	Date

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Support the Learning Environment

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 80 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 three Units that comprise the:

- ◆ PDA in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 9
- ◆ PDA in Practice Learning at SCQF level 9

Where this Unit is delivered as part of the PDA in Practice Learning (Social Services) at SCQF level 9, the centre should be aware that there may be additional entry requirements for candidates in line with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) policy.

This Unit is intended for candidates from a range of situations relating to social services, education or health settings. Examples include people whose role involves supporting learners, such as staff members (eg link supervisors, first line managers, residential care officers, housing support workers), those who use human services (service users), people who are carers for others who use human services and volunteers in human service settings. This list is not exhaustive but provides a flavour of the diversity of people who might wish to access this Unit from a social service or other relevant setting.

The knowledge and skills obtained from the Outcomes of this Unit will form the foundation for the candidate's work with learners. Candidates will learn how to identify and provide learning opportunities appropriate to the learner's needs and stage of learning. They will support learners to analyse and deal with ethical issues and power differentials in practice learning situations. They will learn skills to improve learning environments and about roles, responsibilities and effective communication with those involved in the delivery of learning experiences. Candidates will also learn skills that develop learners' professional practice including the use of legislation, policy and research. In order to support the learning and development of others with regard to legislation, policy and research, it will be important for candidates to ensure that their own knowledge is up-to-date.

The overall purpose of the Unit is to provide candidates with an understanding of what needs to be in place to create a supportive learning environment and to enable them to take appropriate responsibility for the delivery of learning experiences within an ethical and professional learning environment. It will also prepare candidates to support the enhancement of the learning environment to meet learner needs. In addition, it will provide candidates with knowledge of how to introduce issues of ethical practice and considerations of the abuse of power in practice learning.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Support the Learning Environment

Outcome 1 considers what constitutes a learning experience and how it can be planned and delivered. In addition candidates will learn about the importance of the learning environment, about the influence of organisational systems and networks and how to adjust and improve the environment for learners. Candidates will explore methods for the identification of learning needs relevant for themselves and the learning needs of others. Examples would be the work of Kolb, Gardner, Bloom and Honey & Mumford.

Outcome 2 encourages candidates to critically select the most effective learning experiences for learner needs and stage of learning. This means that candidates will need to be both familiar with the specific requirements for learners and also how people learn. Candidates will also consider effective communication with others involved in the learner's learning process and progress such as service users and carers, university or college personnel and other professional colleagues. Candidates will explore the use of learning contracts/working agreements to support the matching of learning opportunities to learner needs and making explicit the different roles and responsibilities of all those involved.

In Outcome 3, candidates will support learners to examine ethical issues in practice and analyse power in relationships, including the relationship between candidate and learner. They will support learners to consider the effectiveness of legislation and policy, in relation to discrimination and equal opportunities.

In Outcome 4 candidates will need to use their knowledge of legislation, policy, theory and research to convey this knowledge to learners and take into account learner needs and stage of learning. Candidates will also need to be clear about the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the learner's progress and take responsibility for their own contribution to it.

On successful completion of the Unit, candidates will be able to plan and deliver learning experiences that are appropriate to a learner's needs and stage of learning, improve the quality of learning environments and effectively communicate with others involved in the learning experience prepared for the learner. They will also be able to take responsibility for supporting the learner's professional development in relation to legislation, agency policy and guidance utilising up-to-date research and theory. They will be able to integrate an analysis of ethical issues and the impact of power into practice and learning situations including their own relationships with the learner and others involved in 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 their experiences and to be able to make conclusions for their future behaviour and development.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Support the Learning Environment

The delivery mechanisms adopted by centres should be flexible to allow comprehensive access and participation, including distance and e-learning. A holistic 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.

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 can be encouraged to seek opportunities to generate evidence that would span more than one of the Outcomes. For example, identifying and planning learning experiences (Outcome1) and matching them appropriately to learner needs and stage of learning (Outcome2) might be evidenced through the completion of a working agreement/learning contract and a reflective commentary on its completion. Evidence relating to ethical practice (Outcome3) and work within relevant legislation and policy (Outcome 4) might be contained in a reflective commentary on the use of supervision or group presentation in this regard.

Candidates should demonstrate that they have achieved the Unit Outcomes by gathering evidence from a range of sources eg assignments, video, audio, oral presentation, witness statements etc. As far as possible for most candidates the evidence should be 'naturally occurring' during the course of their day to day activity. Some candidates will not be able to rely solely on naturally occurring evidence, in which case supplementary assessment activity such as role play or simulation will need to be developed by centres. The approach aims to encourage candidates to critically analyse what they do on a daily basis.

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.

Whilst it is recognised that the collection of evidence method will be suitable for most candidates undertaking this award the individual unit specifications do not require this as a mandatory approach. It is important to recognise that dependant on individual candidate needs other methods may be equally applicable.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Support the Learning Environment

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 analyse and review their own and their learners' experiences
- ◆ candidates' application of relevant theories, methodologies and standards

There may be opportunities to combine evidence including observation 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.

Combining evidence from more than one Unit should be encouraged wherever possible. It will give candidates the chance 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

The collection of evidence should offer candidates flexibility in relation to evidence gathering against the Unit Outcomes. Each candidate's collection of evidence will be unique. Although unique, all collections of evidence 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. Each Unit contains mandatory Evidence Requirements but the type of evidence candidates present for assessment is not prescribed unless listed as an additional requirement.

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 facilitation of student supervision, study groups or planning, delivering and/or evaluating training events. Evidence can come in a variety of forms including assignment, video, audio, oral presentation, witness statements etc.

It is a requirement that there is evidence of direct observation of the candidate's current practice with a learner or learners eg these may be in the form of witness statements from, for example, managers, colleagues, service users, the learners themselves or practitioners in other related disciplines. There is also an expectation that there must be direct observation by an occupationally competent assessor.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Support the Learning Environment

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 the candidate's critically reflective accounts of how they have met each of the Outcomes for each Unit.
- 2 formal and informal feedback on practice from a learner or learners with whom the candidate has been working.
- 3 formal and informal feedback on practice from an appropriate: mentor, assessor, service user, carer, peer manager or other professional.
- 4 a self-assessment, including critical analysis by the candidate on feedback received.
- 5 product evidence to specifically demonstrate knowledge gained eg working agreement/learning contract, induction programme, reports, extracts of minutes, supervision notes and practice documents etc.
- 6 a critically reflective narrative of the learning from each Unit as a whole. This is the candidate's 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 might have done differently and what they need to work on in the future.
- 7 the necessity of observation.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There are opportunities to develop the following Core Skills in this Unit:

Communication (at SCQF level 6): could be evidenced through reporting, assessments and use of effective communications with learners, colleagues and other professionals. For example, analytical communication skills will be practiced and developed through presentations, negotiations and collaborations with learners, colleagues and other professionals.

Working with Others (at SCQF level 6): could be evidenced through feedback and critical analysis of collaborations with learners, colleagues and a wide range of professionals.

Problem Solving (at SCQF level 6): critical thinking, planning and organising, reviewing and evaluating could be evidenced through supervised practice, assessments and discussions with supervisor or mentor about the most appropriate courses of action for learning for an individual or group of learners.

Information Technology (at SCQF level 6): could be evidenced through the use of technology to research, critically analyse and present complex reports. Further IT skills may be developed if a candidate opts to submit assessment evidence in the form of an e-portfolio.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Support the Learning Environment

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. However, this would require to be managed effectively with the organisation to ensure the authenticity of the candidate's work.

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: Support the Learning Environment

The Unit is designed to enable you to identify and provide learning opportunities appropriate to the learner's needs and stage of learning. You will learn how to analyse and deal with ethical issues and power differentials in practice and learning situations. You will also learn skills to improve learning environments and about roles, responsibilities and effective communication with those involved in the delivery of learning experiences. In addition you will learn skills that develop learners' professional practice including the use of legislation, policy and academic learning.

In this Unit you have to achieve four Outcomes. Collectively these Outcomes cover a selection of principal skills, techniques and practices to support learning as part of a wider inter-professional context for a range of learners in practice learning environments.

Outcome 1 enables you to consider what constitutes a learning experience and how it can be planned and delivered. You will learn about the importance of the learning environment, about the influence of organisational systems and networks and how to adjust and improve the environment for learners. You will explore methods for the identification of learning needs relevant for yourself and the learning needs of others. Examples would be the work of Kolb, Gardner, Bloom and Honey & Mumford.

Outcome 2 encourages you to critically select the most effective learning experiences for learner needs and stage of learning. This means that you will need to be both familiar with the specific requirements for learners and also how people learn. You will also consider how to communicate effectively with others involved in the learner's learning process and progress such as service users and carers, university or college personnel and other professional colleagues. You will explore the use of learning contracts/working agreements to support the matching of learning opportunities to learner needs and making explicit the different roles and responsibilities of all those involved.

In Outcome 3 you will support learners to explore the impact of ethical issues, power differentials on practice and on learning relationships and the effectiveness of legislation and policy on discrimination and equal opportunities.

In Outcome 4 you will need to demonstrate how you support learners to use theory and knowledge of legislation, policy and guidance and current research relevant to your practice setting. You will also need to be clear about the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the learner's progress and take responsibility for your own contribution to it.

The overall purpose of the Unit is to provide you with an understanding of what needs to be in place to create a supportive learning environment and to enable you to take appropriate responsibility for the delivery of learning experiences within an ethical and democratic learning relationship. It will also prepare you to support the enhancement of the learning environment to meet learner needs. In addition, it will provide you with knowledge of how to introduce issues of ethical practice and considerations of the abuse of power into practice learning.

General information for candidates (cont)

Unit title: Support the Learning Environment

On successful completion of the Unit, you will be able to plan and deliver learning experiences that are appropriate to a learner's needs and stage of learning, improve the quality of learning environments and effectively communicate with others involved in the learning experience prepared for the learner. You will also be able to take responsibility for supporting the learner's professional development in relation to legislation, agency policy and guidance utilising up-to-date research and theory. You will be able to integrate an analysis of ethical issues and the impact of power into practice and learning situations including your own relationships with the learner and others involved in the learning process.

The assessment for the Unit requires you to produce evidence that you can:

- ◆ critically analyse your own learning needs and the learning needs of others
- ◆ critically analyse the reasons for your choice of learning opportunities
- ◆ critically evaluate and amend learning experiences as appropriate to learner needs
- ◆ reflect on the effectiveness of addressing issues that require change in order to improve the learning environment
- ◆ reflect on the effectiveness of the involvement and support of others in the provision of agreed learning opportunities
- ◆ address ethical issues in learning situations and critically evaluate the impact of power on the learning relationship and assist learners to do so in practice
- ◆ critically analyse how you developed the learner's professional practice in your setting specifically in relation to agency policy, guidance, legislation, theory and relevant research

You will also be directly observed interacting with the learner.

The assessment for the Unit requires you to produce evidence that you can describe effective and ineffective communication; describe positive and negative aspects of learning environment; evaluate and use your own previous experiences of learning to support learning and development of others; provide examples of your awareness of the impact of difference, diversity and power on the learning environment and on the learner; use methods to help others learn; reflect on your own ways of communicating with learners; identify agency legislation, policy and/or guidance important for learners; and provide accessible information about, and support to learners to learn about agency legislation, policy and/or guidance.

You may already have some of this evidence from previous experience. You can discuss credit transfer and RPL when you devise your plan of action with your assessor.

It is important that you collect this evidence from your ongoing practice with learners and build a collection of evidence of your work. This 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 draw evidence from any context across health, education and social services and involve work with individual learners and/or groups, such as through facilitation of student supervision, study groups or planning, delivering and/or evaluating training events.

General information for candidates (cont)

Unit title: Support the Learning Environment

Centres will advise you about any specific requirements. Some examples 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 working agreement/learning contract , induction programme, reports, extracts of minutes, supervision notes and practice documents etc.
- ◆ a critically reflective narrative of learning from the Unit as a whole
- ◆ video, audio, oral presentations
- ◆ role play and simulations
- ◆ direct observation of practice is mandatory

If you take this Unit along 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.