



Group Award Specification for the:

**Professional Development Award in
Advanced Fertility Support at SCQF
level 8**

Group Award Code: GK5D 48

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1 Introduction

This document was previously known as the Arrangements document. The purpose of this document is to:

- ◆ assist centres to implement, deliver and manage the qualification
- ◆ provide a guide for new staff involved in offering the qualification
- ◆ inform course managers teaching staff, assessors, learners, employers and HEIs of the aims and purpose of the qualification
- ◆ provide details of the range of learners the qualification is suitable for and progression opportunities

Offering initial support and information to bereaved clients who have suffered miscarriage is at the heart of the miscarriage support service. Teaching Fertility Management to those who wish to achieve successful pregnancy after suffering miscarriage is the next step in this process. It is important to ensure that therapeutic support can be provided via a range of methods appropriate to client needs.

The Professional Development Award (PDA) in Advanced Fertility Support at SCQF level 8 is the second of two qualifications developed specifically for this purpose.

This award is suitable for a range of learners:

- ◆ Those with some experience in advice and guidance but none or limited in the Miscarriage Support field, eg Counsellors, nurses and midwives, tutors and teachers, volunteer advisors from other areas (such as Samaritans or the Citizens Advice Bureau)
- ◆ Those with some experience in the Miscarriage Support, Advice and Guidance field who wish to gain a national qualification, perhaps for the purposes of continued personal development eg experienced volunteer advisors and counsellors.

The content of this PDA has been designed to provide learners with an advanced level of knowledge, understanding and skills required to work, in a paid or unpaid capacity in this area. They will learn about the female reproductive system and fertility cycle and how to interpret and use fertility management charts. They will also develop the skills and qualities required to help women manage their own fertility in order to achieve pregnancy following loss.

SQA would like to thank Scottish Care and Information on Miscarriage (SCIM) for their support in developing these national awards.

2 Qualification structure

This Group Award is made up of 3.5 SQA Unit credits. It comprises 28 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8.

A mapping of Core Skills development opportunities is available in Section 5.3.

2.1 Structure

Code	Unit title	SCQF level	SCQF credit points	SQA credit
H8W7 34	Advising on Fertility Management for Women at Risk of Miscarriage	7	12	1.5
H8X1 35	Online Therapeutic Support for Pregnancy Loss	8	16	2

3 Aims of the qualification

The principal aim of this qualification is to develop in learners the knowledge and skills essential for facilitating women to manage their fertility in order to achieve pregnancy after loss.

3.1 General aims of the qualification

- 1 To develop evaluative thinking and the ability to manage and absorb large amounts of information.
- 2 To develop problem-solving skills.
- 3 To develop as self-directed and self-reflective learners.
- 4 To develop the ability to be flexible and to work co-operatively within a team structure.
- 5 To develop transferable skills such as study and research skills, presentation techniques, personal effectiveness.
- 6 To enable progression within the SCQF including progression to FE or HE.
- 7 To provide opportunities for career planning and enhance employment prospects.
- 8 To develop the learner's Core Skills profile.

3.2 Specific aims of the qualification

- 1 To develop the learner's understanding of the broad context and principles under which the advice and guidance sector provides support to women who have suffered miscarriage.
- 2 To develop the learner's knowledge of the female reproductive system and fertility cycle.
- 3 To develop the learner's knowledge in the interpretation and use of fertility charts.
- 4 To enhance learner's ability to effectively deliver fertility management sessions.
- 5 To develop the learner's knowledge of the benefits of online therapeutic support.
- 6 To ensure the learner is aware of the importance of a formal Client Assessment and Client Agreement process.
- 7 To develop the learner's ability to offer effective online therapeutic support
- 8 To allow the learner to develop as a reflective advice and guidance practitioner.

4 Recommended entry to the qualification

Entry to this qualification is at the discretion of the centre. The following information on prior knowledge, skills, experience or qualifications that provide suitable preparation for this qualification has been provided by the Qualification Design Team as guidance only.

Learners would be expected at a minimum to have communication skills at SCQF level 6 or equivalent and some prior experience in the Counselling/Advice and Guidance sector.

Learners may have other SQA qualifications, eg SVQ in Advice and Guidance, HNC in Counselling or the equivalent from other awarding bodies, or should be able to demonstrate (perhaps by way of CV and interview) their prior knowledge and experience (including where appropriate, supervised hours) gained from working or volunteering in a relevant role.

Achievement of the PDA in Fertility Support: an Introduction prior to undertaking this award is strongly recommended, particularly for those without suitable prior qualifications and/or experience.

Competency in the use of *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* would be advisable, eg Core Skill in *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* at SCQF level 5

In terms of Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG), previously known as the Disclosure process, organisations offering advice, guidance and support should have a 'protection procedures policy' in place. The employee/volunteer may be asked to sign a policy statement. Also, they may be asked at the time of making application, as part of the recruitment and selection process, to disclose background information, offer a history of any offences, spent or outstanding and agree to a check being made should that be required.

Volunteer Development Scotland is a useful stop for information and advice on the recruitment of new staff and volunteers. www.vds.org.uk

4.1 Core Skills entry profile

The Core Skill entry profile provides a summary of the associated assessment activities that exemplify why a particular level has been recommended for this qualification. The information should be used to identify if additional learning support needs to be put in place for learners whose Core Skills profile is below the recommended entry level or whether learners should be encouraged to do an alternative level or learning programme.

Core Skill	Recommended SCQF entry profile	Associated assessment activities
Communication	SCQF level 6	Learners are required to communicate with clients (both verbal and written skills) at an advanced level from the outset.
Numeracy	SCQF level 4	Numeracy is not directly assessed within this award but may be developed in the interpretation of charts.

Core Skill	Recommended SCQF entry profile	Associated assessment activities
Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	SCQF level 5	Learners are required to effectively communicate with clients by using internet-based communication technologies.
Problem Solving	SCQF level 6	Learners will gather, interpret and utilise detailed information on female fertility to provide specific support to their clients. They will also be involved in an investigation into the benefits of online therapeutic support.
Working with Others	SCQF level 6	Learners will be required to work effectively with colleagues, peers and clients.

5 Additional benefits of the qualification in meeting employer needs

This qualification was designed to meet a specific purpose and what follows are details on how that purpose has been met through mapping of the Units to the aims of the qualification. Through meeting the aims, additional value has been achieved by linking the Unit standards with those defined in National Occupational Standards and/or trade/professional body requirements. In addition, significant opportunities exist for learners to develop the more generic skill, known as Core Skills through doing this qualification.

5.1 Mapping of qualification specific aims to Unit

Code	Unit title	Aims							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
H8W7 34	Advising on Fertility Management for Women at Risk of Miscarriage	X	X	X	X				X
H8X1 35	Online Therapeutic Support for Pregnancy Loss	X				X	X	X	X

Specific aims of the qualification

- 1 To develop the learner's understanding of the broad context and principles under which the advice and guidance sector provides support to women who have suffered miscarriage.
- 2 To develop the learner's knowledge of the female reproductive system and fertility cycle.
- 3 To develop the learner's knowledge in the interpretation and use of fertility charts.
- 4 To enhance learner's ability to effectively deliver fertility management sessions.
- 5 To develop the learner's knowledge of the benefits of online therapeutic support.
- 6 To ensure the learner is aware of the importance of a formal Client Assessment and Client Agreement process.
- 7 To develop the learner's ability to offer effective online therapeutic support.
- 8 To allow the learner to develop as a reflective advice and guidance practitioner.

5.2 Mapping of Core Skills development opportunities across the qualification

Unit code	Unit title	Communication		Numeracy		ICT		Problem Solving			Working with Others	
		Written	Oral	Using Number	Using Graphical Information	Accessing Information	Providing/Creating Information	Critical Thinking	Planning and Organising	Reviewing and Evaluating	Working Co-operatively with Others	Reviewing Co-operative Contribution
H8W7 34	Advising on Fertility Management for Women at Risk of Miscarriage	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
H8X1 35	Online Therapeutic Support for Pregnancy Loss	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X

5.3 Mapping of NOS

The content of these Units has been produced in line with relevant aspects of the Advice and Guidance National Occupational Standards.

Code	Unit title	SSC Code	NOS
H8W7 34	Advising on Fertility Management for Women at Risk of Miscarriage	AG1	Establish Communication with clients for advice and guidance
		AG2	Support clients to make use of the advice and guidance service
		AG3	Develop interactions with advice and guidance clients
		AG5	Assist Advice and Guidance Clients to decide on a course of action
		AG15	Review own contribution to the service
		AG16	Evaluate and develop own contribution to the service

Code	Unit title	SSC Code	NOS
H8X1 35	Online Therapeutic Support for Pregnancy Loss	AG1	Establish Communication with clients for advice and guidance
		AG2	Support clients to make use of the advice and guidance service
		AG3	Develop interactions with advice and guidance clients
		AG5	Assist Advice and Guidance Clients to decide on a course of action
		AG7	Assist clients through advice and guidance to review their achievement of a course of action
		AG13	Enable advice and guidance clients to access referral opportunities
		AG15	Review own contribution to the service
		AG16	Evaluate and develop own contribution to the service

5.4 Assessment Strategy for the qualification

Code	Unit title	Assessment			
		Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3	Outcome 4
H8W7 34	Advising on Fertility Management for Women at Risk of Miscarriage	Range of short answer questions.	Completion and accurate interpretation of three client charts.	Can be assessed together; minimum of three observed sessions (observation checklist) Portfolio of evidence from practice to include, evidence of planning sessions, reflection and evaluation and identification of future improvements to be implemented (Personal Development Planning).	
H8X1 35	Online Therapeutic Support for Pregnancy Loss	An investigation, presented in the form of a report, based on learners own organisation or on a case study provided by the centre.	Can be assessed together; a portfolio of evidence from practice, gathered over an agreed period of time, to meet the Evidence Requirements; containing Client Assessments and Agreements, personal and reflective accounts based on practice, observation checklists on actual work-practice, relevant client records and a Professional Personal Development Plan.		

6 Guidance on approaches to delivery and assessment

This qualification may be delivered by a range of SQA Approved Centres, eg FE Colleges, Workplace-based, Third Sector or Private Training Providers.

As such, delivery will vary depending on the presenting Centre. This may take the following forms:

- ◆ part-time/evening-twilight class
- ◆ face-to-face, classroom-based learning
- ◆ blended learning, ie a blend of classroom and distance/online learning
- ◆ workplace/education-training provider partnership working

Centres should use a learner-centred, participative and practical approach to learning and teaching.

Group learning and role play may be appropriate as it allow learners to share their ideas and experiences with other learners from different working backgrounds.

A range of high level communication skills should be explored. Verbal and written, body-language, listening, summarising, paraphrasing, acknowledgment of the clients thoughts and feelings and checking understanding through questioning are all components of excellent communication.

Interpersonal skills such as empathy, unconditional positive regard (UPR), congruence and offering the client encouragement to talk should also be practiced. Exploration skills and the ability to deal with difficult situations should be developed.

Generic aspects such as record keeping, confidentiality, ethical boundaries and other organisational requirements that underpin the service should be explored, including procedures for client care and mechanisms for raising complaints.

Legislation such as the Data Protection Act, Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) and the Equality Act should be discussed and the relevant aspects pinpointed.

Teaching of the technical defining features of the Units should include:

- ◆ An overview of the anatomy and physiology of the female reproductive system and the effects of a range of hormones on the menstrual cycle
- ◆ Purpose and use of fertility management charts
- ◆ Fertility management session delivery requirements
- ◆ Range of online therapeutic support methods and their relative benefits for clients and for the service
- ◆ Requirements and importance of a formal documented Client Assessment and Client Agreement process
- ◆ Selection and use of the appropriate online therapeutic support method

An ongoing process of monitoring and evaluation allows the service to continually improve its effectiveness in meeting the needs of clients. It also allows the learner the opportunity to evaluate their own performance and identify areas for professional development. Learners should be made aware of a range of appropriate methods for obtaining feedback (both on the service provided and on own performance) and of the value of developing as a reflective practitioner.

Where evidence is gathered from practice, learners and centres should ensure that client confidentiality is maintained at all times.

6.1 Recognition of Prior Learning

SQA recognises that learners gain knowledge and skills acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts.

In some instances, a full Group Award may be achieved through the recognition of prior learning. However, it is unlikely that a learner would have the appropriate prior learning and experience to meet all the requirements of a full Group Award.

The recognition of prior learning may **not** be used as a method of assessing in the following types of Units and assessments:

- ◆ HN Graded Units
- ◆ Course and/or external assessments
- ◆ Other integrative assessment Units (which may or not be graded)
- ◆ Certain types of assessment instruments where the standard may be compromised by not using the same assessment method outlined in the Unit
- ◆ Where there is an existing requirement for a licence to practice
- ◆ Where there are specific health and safety requirements
- ◆ Where there are regulatory, professional or other statutory requirements
- ◆ Where otherwise specified in an Assessment Strategy

More information and guidance on the *Recognition of Prior Learning* (RPL) may be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk.

6.3 Opportunities for e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all learner evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment.

6.4 Support materials

A **list of existing ASPs** is available to view on SQA's website.

6.5 Resource requirements

Centres will be required to have the use of a range of communication technology equipment, including telephones, computers (or laptops or tablets) with internet connection.

Appropriate accommodation conducive to private conversations and secure storage for confidential records (paper or electronic) should be available.

Staff who are appropriately qualified and experienced in this sector are required for carrying out learner observations and evidence assessment.

7 General information for centres

Equality and inclusion

The Unit specifications making up this Group Award have been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners will be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence. Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

Internal and external verification

All instruments of assessment used within this/these qualification(s) should be internally verified, using the appropriate policy within the centre and the guidelines set by SQA.

External verification will be carried out by SQA to ensure that internal assessment is within the national guidelines for these qualifications.

Further information on internal and external verification can be found in SQA's *Guide to Assessment* (www.sqa.org.uk/GuideToAssessment).

8 General glossary of terms

Embedded Core Skills: is where the assessment evidence for the Unit also includes full evidence for complete Core Skill or Core Skill components. A learner successfully completing the Unit will be automatically certificated for the Core Skill. (This depends on the Unit having been successfully audited and validated for Core Skills certification.)

Finish date: The end of a Group Award's lapsing period is known as the finish date. After the finish date, the Group Award will no longer be live and the following applies:

- ◆ learners may not be entered for the Group Award
- ◆ the Group Award will continue to exist only as an archive record on the Awards Processing System (APS)

Lapsing date: When a Group Award is entered into its lapsing period, the following will apply:

- ◆ the Group Award will be deleted from the relevant catalogue
- ◆ the Group Award specification will remain until the qualification reaches its finish date at which point it will be removed from SQA's website and archived
- ◆ no new centres may be approved to offer the Group Award
- ◆ centres should only enter learners whom they expect to complete the Group Award during the defined lapsing period

SQA credit value: The credit value allocated to a Unit gives an indication of the contribution the Unit makes to an SQA Group Award. An SQA credit value of 1 given to an SQA Unit represents approximately 40 hours of programmed learning, teaching and assessment.

SCQF: The Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) provides the national common framework for describing all relevant programmes of learning and qualifications in Scotland. SCQF terminology is used throughout this guide to refer to credits and levels. For further information on the SCQF visit the SCQF website at www.scqf.org.uk.

SCQF credit points: SCQF credit points provide a means of describing and comparing the amount of learning that is required to complete a qualification at a given level of the Framework. One National Unit credit is equivalent to 6 SCQF credit points. One National Unit credit at Advanced Higher and one Higher National Unit credit (irrespective of level) is equivalent to 8 SCQF credit points.

SCQF levels: The level a qualification is assigned within the framework is an indication of how hard it is to achieve. The SCQF covers 12 levels of learning. HNCs and HNDs are available at SCQF levels 7 and 8 respectively. Higher National Units will normally be at levels 6–9 and Graded Units will be at level 7 and 8. National Qualification Group Awards are available at SCQF levels 2–6 and will normally be made up of National Units which are available from SCQF levels 2–7.

Subject Unit: Subject Units contain vocational/subject content and are designed to test a specific set of knowledge and skills.

Signposted Core Skills: refers to opportunities to develop Core Skills arise in learning and teaching but are not automatically certificated.

History of changes

It is anticipated that changes will take place during the life of the qualification and this section will record these changes. This document is the latest version and incorporates the changes summarised below. Centres are advised to check SQA's APS Navigator to confirm they are using the up to date qualification structure.

NOTE: Where a Unit is revised by another Unit:

- ◆ No new centres may be approved to offer the Unit which has been revised.
- ◆ Centres should only enter learners for the Unit which has been revised where they are expected to complete the Unit before its finish date.

Version Number	Description	Date

Acknowledgement

SQA acknowledges the valuable contribution that Scottish Care & Information on Miscarriage (SCIM) have made to this qualification.

9 General information for learners

This section will help you decide whether this is the qualification for you by explaining what the qualification is about, what you should know or be able to do before you start, what you will need to do during the qualification and opportunities for further learning and employment.

This award has been designed to provide you with the skills and knowledge required to provide advanced fertility management information and support to women who would like to achieve pregnancy following miscarriage.

Access to the qualification is at the discretion of the centre, however you will be expected (at a minimum) to have Communication skills at SCQF level 6 or equivalent and some prior experience in the Counselling/Advice and Guidance sector.

Achievement of the PDA in Fertility Support: an Introduction prior to undertaking this award is strongly recommended as it provides much of the underpinning knowledge and understanding required by workers and/or volunteers in this sector.

You may have other SQA qualifications, eg SVQ in Advice and Guidance, HNC in Counselling or the equivalent from other awarding bodies, or be able to demonstrate by way of CV and interview, your prior knowledge and experience (including where appropriate, supervised hours) gained from working or volunteering in an associated role. (eg Nursing, midwifery, counselling service)

Competency in the use of Information and Communication Technology would be advisable, eg Core Skill in *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* at SCQF level 5.

You will learn about female anatomy and physiology, the use of fertility management charts, the importance of a documented client assessment and agreement process and the selection and use of online methods of therapeutic support. You will then gather evidence by putting this knowledge into practice with clients.

You'll also be asked to respond to set questions, carry out an investigation into the benefits of online therapeutic support and develop a portfolio of evidence from your practice with clients which will include observed sessions and reflective accounts.

You will of course adhere to the legislation and professional guidance that ensures good practice when dealing with clients. Any identifying client documentation must be anonymised to comply with Data Protection.

You will develop as a reflective practitioner and have the opportunity to evaluate your practice and the overall service provided to the clients via face to face, telephone and internet based communication methods.

During this award you will have opportunities to develop your Core Skills in *Communication, Working with Others* and *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 6, *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* at SCQF level 5 and *Numeracy* at SCQF level 5 as well as your transferable skills, eg in time-management, record keeping, negotiation, and personal presentation.