

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Supporting a Curriculum in an Early Education and
Childcare Setting (Higher)

CODE DM66 12

COURSE

SUMMARY

This Unit allows the candidate to develop the knowledge and understanding of curricula required for working under supervision with children age 3-8 years within early education and childcare settings. The candidate will gain knowledge and understanding of current curriculum models in relation to children's care, learning and development and understand the importance of planning and evaluation of curricular experiences. They will also gain an understanding of the role of the adult in supporting children's learning through an appropriate curriculum framework.

This Unit is an optional Unit in the *National Certificate Group Award: Early Education and Childcare (Higher)* but is also suitable for candidates wishing to study the Unit on its own. The Unit is suitable for candidates who wish to gain employment, or may be employed, in the childcare and education sector working under supervision or who wish to progress onto higher level early education and childcare qualifications.

OUTCOMES

1. Explain the importance of a curriculum in an early education and childcare setting.
2. Explain the importance of planning and evaluating curricular experiences within an early education and childcare setting.
3. Evaluate the role of the adult in supporting children's learning through a curriculum within an early education and childcare setting.

Administrative Information

Superclass: GA

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RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre there are a variety of prior learning experiences which are relevant to candidates wishing to undertake this Unit.

However, candidates would also benefit if they had some knowledge and understanding of child development up to the age of 8 years and an understanding of the basic principles of play.

They may also benefit from having attained one of the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ Standard Grade at Credit level in any relevant subject
- ◆ A Course or Unit in Care at Intermediate 2
- ◆ Courses or Units in any relevant subject at Intermediate 2
- ◆ Scottish Group Award at Intermediate 2
- ◆ SVQ or SVQ Units at level 2 in a related subject.

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Higher (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6*)

**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.*

CORE SKILLS

There is no automatic certification of core skills or core skills components in this Unit.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Supporting a Curriculum in an Early Education and Childcare Setting (Higher)

Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit Specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

OUTCOME 1

Explain the importance of a curriculum in an early education and childcare setting.

Performance Criteria

- a) Explain what is meant by the term curriculum.
- b) Describe current curriculum models relevant to early education and childcare settings.
- c) Describe the key components of current curriculum models relevant to early education and childcare settings.
- d) Explain how current curriculum models can be used to support the care, learning and development of the child within an early education and childcare setting.

OUTCOME 2

Explain the importance of planning and evaluating curricular experiences within an early education and childcare setting.

Performance Criteria

- a) Describe possible planning processes used to support the implementation of curricular experiences within an early education and childcare setting.
- b) Explain accurately the selection, layout and presentation of resources that would support curricular experiences within an early education and childcare setting.
- c) Explain the importance of evaluating planned curricular experiences within an early education and childcare setting.

OUTCOME 3

Evaluate the role of the adult in supporting children's learning through a curriculum within an early education and childcare setting.

Performance Criteria

- a) Evaluate the role of the worker with delegated responsibility in supporting curricular experiences within an early education and childcare setting.
- b) Explain the importance of working as part of a team in supporting curricular experiences within an early education and childcare setting.
- c) Explain the importance of working with parents in supporting the provision of a curriculum within an early education and childcare setting.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Written and/or recorded oral evidence is required to demonstrate that the candidate has achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

The evidence for this Unit should be obtained under controlled, supervised conditions and should last no more than 1 hour 30 minutes. The candidate should have access to published curricular guidelines during the assessment. A single question paper, with both extended and restricted response questions, such as illustrated in the National Assessment Bank item for this Unit, could be used. This should be taken on the completion of the Unit. Achievement can be decided by the use of a cut off score.

Specific Advice

Outcome 1: **Both** age groups: 3-5 years and 5-8 years, have to be covered with one example given for each.

Outcome 2(a): **Two** out of the three types of planning: short, medium and long term should be covered.

Outcome 2 (b): **Two** out of the three types of resources: human, physical and material should be covered.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Supporting a Curriculum within an Early Education and Childcare Setting (Higher)

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.

This Unit provides the underpinning knowledge and understanding required for the Unit: *Supporting a Curriculum within an Early Education and Childcare Setting: Workplace Experience (Higher)*

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

Candidates will gain an understanding of:

- ◆ what is meant by the term curriculum generally and specifically in relation to early education and childcare settings
- ◆ a range of curriculum models used in a variety of early education and childcare settings to meet the needs of the child
- ◆ the role of planning and evaluation in relation to the implementation of a curriculum within an early education and childcare setting
- ◆ the role of the adult in relation to the provision of a curriculum within an early education and childcare setting
- ◆ the role of the support workers working under supervision within a childcare and education setting.

Outcome 1

PC (a): Candidates should be given the opportunity to define curriculum in the widest possible sense. Candidates could explore their own experiences of curricula and then apply these to a variety of early education and childcare settings. Curriculum should be defined as a framework for learning and both formal and informal curricula be examined. The notion of a child-centred curriculum in relation to early education and childcare settings should be explored fully.

PC (b): Candidates should be given the opportunity to examine more formal national documentation in relation to the curriculum relevant to early education and childcare settings. This should include up-to-date Scottish Executive publications such as curriculum guidelines. Curricula should be examined for a variety of age ranges within a variety of settings. Examples of these may be Curriculum Framework for Children 3-5 and the 5-14 Curriculum Guidelines.

Candidates should be familiar with the underlying principles behind various curriculum models and how they are designed to support the learning and development of the child. Candidates should consider informal curriculum guidance that may exist in a range of early education and childcare settings. This may be in the form of guidelines or good practice statements.

PC(c): Candidates should examine the key components of curriculum generally - these should be seen as what and how children learn (content and process). Characteristics of specific curriculum frameworks should be described. Candidates should be familiar with the terminology used in a variety of curriculum frameworks to describe key components, e.g. the Key Aspects and Features of Learning of the Curriculum Framework for Children 3-5. Consideration should be given to curricula for a variety of age ranges and how the components of these may vary according to the ages and specific needs of the child.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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PC (d): Candidates should be given the opportunity to examine the practical application of various curriculum models and how they are used to support the care, learning and development of the child.

Some points that candidates should consider are how curriculum models:

- ◆ meet the needs of children
- ◆ cover all-round development
- ◆ take into account additional support needs
- ◆ are inclusive
- ◆ provide focus and structure
- ◆ provide balance, breadth, cohesion, continuity, progression.

Outcome 2

Planning, implementation and evaluation of curriculum should be placed in the context of a cycle of provision.

Outcome 2 (a): Candidates should be aware of how planning informs the curriculum in a variety of childcare and education settings. Candidates should be aware of the importance of observation, recording and sharing information with others. Candidates could examine a variety of means of recording and planning according to national and local guidelines. This may include planning sheets in early education and childcare settings or Records of Work in a primary school setting. Consideration should be given to the use of short, medium and long term planning and how these can be used to support the learning and development of the child within a child centred curriculum model. The following points could be presented to the candidate for discussion in relation to each type of planning:

Long term planning supports:

- ◆ breadth
- ◆ balance
- ◆ continuity
- ◆ progression.

Medium term planning supports:

- ◆ extending learning
- ◆ identifying resources
- ◆ developing long term planning
- ◆ adult led.

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Short term planning supports:

- ◆ individual needs
- ◆ group needs
- ◆ differentiation
- ◆ identifying resources
- ◆ free flow play.

Candidates should explore a variety of curricular experiences in relation to the various models. The importance of play, either free flow or adult led, in the child centred curriculum should also be explored. Consideration should be given to other means of delivery of the curriculum particularly in the context of primary education.

Outcome 2 (b): Candidates could take into account the following when planning curricular experiences:

- ◆ selection of resources
- ◆ layout of material
- ◆ presentation.

Selection of Resources

When selecting resources the following should be considered:

- ◆ Age appropriate and meet the developmental needs of children, including those children with additional support needs
- ◆ Reflects a multicultural society
- ◆ Provides opportunities to stimulate and extend interest
- ◆ Meets health and safety guidelines
- ◆ Clean and complete, e.g. puzzles, games with no pieces missing
- ◆ Material resources do not need to be commercially produced but that material can be adapted or made to fit the purpose
- ◆ All resources are readily available when required. Candidates should consider this particularly in relation to shared resources
- ◆ Sufficiency of resources.

Layout of material

When considering the layout of resources the following should be considered:

- ◆ Accessibility: particular consideration should be given to children who may have additional support needs
- ◆ Health and safety issues
- ◆ Attractiveness of the area to the child
- ◆ Location: children should be encouraged to explore, appreciate and respect their surroundings
- ◆ Areas should be maintained according to the practice of the setting. Children should be encouraged to leave areas prepared for the next child to use but it is the role of the adult to maintain resources
- ◆ Flow of movement from one area to another encouraging children to connect experiences.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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Presentation

When considering the presentation of resources the following could be considered:

- ◆ Displays should be attractive and be accessible to the child and the maintenance of them should be on-going.
- ◆ Labels should be correctly spelt and appropriate script used. Candidates could explore the use of ICT to produce written material for presentation purposes.
- ◆ Art work and pictures should be appropriately mounted and displayed.

PC (c): Candidates should consider evaluation as part of the planning cycle. From evaluation they should begin to consider how to develop the curricular needs of the child further and how evaluation can be used to plan effectively to meet the future needs of the child. Candidates should examine a variety of mechanisms for sharing and recording evaluations of curricular experiences. Candidates should look at both formal and informal evaluations and ways of passing on information gained from evaluations onto others, particularly parents. These could include:

- ◆ The use of photographs and video
- ◆ Informal and formal meetings with parents
- ◆ Writing profiles and reports
- ◆ Displays and children's work with appropriate captions.

Outcome 3

PC (a): Candidates should give an explanation of the role of the worker with delegated responsibility for providing care and support to children. Candidates should, where candidates have a work placement, reflect on their own practice and may also reflect on the practice of colleagues. Candidates should explore the vital role adults have to play in supporting children in their learning by considering their individual needs and achievements, and the range of learning experiences that will help children to progress in different aspects of learning and development. They could consider their role in relation to the planning cycle already described, e.g. as planner, facilitator, motivator and assessor. They should be encouraged to consider the skills required to carry out these roles.

Candidates need to be aware of their responsibility of intervening and interacting in a sensitive way to extend learning through play, increase challenges for children or develop interests further. Children learn best in a safe environment when they feel secure and confident and candidates should look at the ways in which children can be supported to feel this way in an early and childcare education setting. The role of the adult in relation to individuals, small groups (2-4 children) and large groups (5-8 children) could be considered.

PC (b): Candidates should be aware of the importance of working as part of a team within an early education and childcare setting. They should be aware of the multi-disciplinary approach used within many early education and childcare settings and should investigate the roles and responsibilities of possible team members. They should know the advantages to the child and parent of working as part of a team. Candidates could investigate how effective teamwork relies on flexible roles, clearly defined aims and objectives, good communication skills (verbal and non-verbal), openness, trust and reliability. They should also be aware of ways of dealing constructively with conflict within a team.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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PC (c): Candidates should be aware that the parent/carer is central in supporting and extending children's learning through a curriculum within an early education and childcare setting. This can be encouraged by interacting with parents and developing positive relationships. Initiatives that encourage this include: home visits, story sacks, a library, PTA, letters, pamphlets, parents' evenings and supporting the language of the home. Parents are their child's primary educators and candidates must take account of the child's previous learning, showing an awareness of gathering information from the parent and their views on their child's care and education through formal and informal contact. The viewpoint of parents is unique, in their capacity to see their child's abilities in a variety of different contexts. Candidates can be made aware of this influence on the settling in period for the child. Candidates should be aware of the importance of profiles and observations in informing the interactions between carers and parents.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

It may be possible to integrate the teaching and learning required for this Unit with other Units from the *National Certificate Group Award: Early Education and Childcare*. This should not reduce the time allowed for the delivery of this Unit. This Unit can be delivered in a flexible manner, i.e as distance learning.

In delivering this Unit there should be a balance between teacher led delivery and candidate centred research. Where possible candidates should be given opportunities for practical workshop sessions. It is not necessary for candidates to have work or placement experience to achieve this Unit but this would be desirable. Where candidates have experience within an early education and childcare setting they should be encouraged to reflect on their own practice and the practice of others. Candidates should have access to relevant curricular documentation and guidelines as well as up to date topical periodicals and magazines.

This Unit can be explored using a variety of methods:

- ◆ Small group discussion
- ◆ Case studies
- ◆ Individual research: candidates should be encouraged to use both paper based and web based reference material
- ◆ Examination of relevant curricular documentation and guidelines
- ◆ Outside speakers from child care settings
- ◆ Video/audio material
- ◆ Practical workshop sessions.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

The assessment for this Unit is laid out clearly in the Evidence Requirements section of the Statement of Standards of this specification. The standard to be applied is exemplified in the National Assessment Bank item for this Unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this Unit, they should be of a comparable standard. As indicated, question paper based assessment should be carried out under supervision. A variety of approaches could be used. A holistic approach to assessment should be taken with assessments integrated across Outcomes and where possible other Units.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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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 document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (SQA, 2004).