

**Arrangements for:
National Certificate in
Early Education and Childcare**

Group Award Code: G8K1 46

Validation date: May 2007

Date of original publication: August 2005

Version: 05

Acknowledgement

SQA acknowledges the valuable contribution that Scotland's colleges have made to the development of National Qualification Group Awards.

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1 Introduction

This is the Arrangements Document for the National Certificate Group Award in Early Education and Childcare, at SCQF level 6, which was validated on 30 May 2007. This document includes: background information on the development of the Group Award, its aims, guidance on access, details of the Group Award structure, and guidance on delivery.

This Group Award provides a broad-based study of the range of topics, both theory and practice based, related to early education and childcare that are required for progression to areas of study or employment at support worker level within an early education and childcare setting.

2 Rationale for the revision of the Group Award

At the request of the sector, the National Certificate Group Award (NCGA) in Early Education and Childcare was developed in 2004 and consisted of 18 credits. As this NC was the first of its kind and no specific design principles were in place, the basic structure and content of the Award was agreed through a substantial consultation exercise. However, through SQA's wider Portfolio Review it was agreed that all National Certificate Group Awards should consist of 12 credits. This revised 12 credit Award now meets the national design criteria, and brings it into line with all other Group Awards being developed. This was determined through a consultation exercise and all component Units have remained in the revised Award.

Changing legislation, the revision of occupational standards, the introduction of National Care Standards and the introduction of a new HNC: Early Education and Childcare along with proposed mandatory regulation and registration of the early education and childcare workforce from 2006, made revising current provision a priority. This revised Group Award therefore replaces the college devised programmes that had been introduced following the withdrawal of the Scottish Group Award. This qualification is a vital component of the total review of the suite of Early Education and Childcare Qualifications, which are being reviewed and revised in the light of the changing nature of the sector.

The role of the support worker in early education and childcare has developed significantly as the sector has expanded, particularly in the voluntary and private sector. The completion of this Award will allow the candidate to register with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) at support worker level. As part of the regulatory requirements, support workers will be required to undergo continuous professional development and the component Units from this Award are suitable for this purpose. The sector is a dynamic one and is currently under review by the Scottish Executive, and it is important that the Group Award content is revised from time to time to reflect any future changes.

The revised Group Award reflects the importance of relating theory to practice. The wide range of options, including external assessment Units, Core Skills and general and specific early education and childcare Units will allow centres to tailor the Award to meet the needs of local employers. The inclusion of two Courses in the Group Award — Early Education and Childcare (Higher) and the project based Course Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher) ensure academic rigour. Whilst the Units are mandatory, the external assessment components are optional. Candidates who sit and achieve either/or both of the external assessment Units enhance their academic profile.

The content of this Group Award articulates with the content of the HNC Early Education and Childcare and prepares candidates for progression into this Award. The completion of the HNC allows candidates to register with the SSSC at practitioner level.

3 Aims of the Group Award

3.1 Principal aims of the Group Award

The aims of this Group Award are to:

- ◆ Provide an insight into the wide range of factors which might impact upon a child's health and development
- ◆ Increase candidates' awareness of the need to view health and development holistically
- ◆ Increase candidates' awareness of the cultural diversity in our society and its impact on the health and development needs of children
- ◆ Increase candidates' understanding of what can be considered as effective early education and childcare provision
- ◆ Increase candidates' awareness of the role and range of professionals and agencies contributing to the development and health of children aged 0–12 years

3.2 Other aims of the Group Award

The Group Award provides opportunities for candidates to:

- ◆ Acquire knowledge and understanding of concepts, theories, principles and practical skills required to work under supervision within the early education and childcare sector
- ◆ Develop skills in Problem Solving
- ◆ Develop skills in Working with Others
- ◆ Develop Communication, Numeracy and ICT skills
- ◆ Experience work placement in the early education and childcare sector
- ◆ Develop positive attitudes that reflect the Codes of Practice of the SSSC
- ◆ Become reflective practitioners

3.3 Target groups

This National Certificate in Early Education and Childcare is aimed at school leavers, adult returners or those in employment in the Early Education and Childcare sector as a basis for building on good practice, continuing professional development or who wish to progress to further study in Early Education and Childcare.

This Award will form an important part of the national provision, both for those who have identified the field of Early Education and Childcare as their chosen career path and also for any candidates following a programme of study at Higher level who may wish to extend their educational experience.

3.4 Employment opportunities

The successful completion of this Award will allow the candidate to register with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) at support worker level.

4 Access to Group Award

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, the minimum recommended entry requirement for the Award is four Standard Grades at Credit level or equivalent.

In addition, it is recommended that candidates have skills in oral and written communication.

5 Group Award structure

5.1 Framework

The National Certificate Group Award in Early Education and Childcare consists of 12 Unit credits and has a total credit value of 72 SCQF credit points*.

Group Award classification	SCQF level	SCQF credit points
Higher	6	72

**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.*

Conditions of Award

The National Certificate Group Award in Early Education and Childcare is a 12 credit Award comprising of the following sections:

- ◆ 5 credit mandatory section — Underpinning knowledge
- ◆ 4 credit mandatory section — Workplace experience
- ◆ 3 credit optional section

Mandatory Units

9 credits:

Code	Title	Credit value	
		SQA	SCQF
*H4KL 76	Child Development	1	6
*H4KM 76	Child Development: Theory	1	6
*H4KN 76	Services for Children and Young People	1	6
DM41 12	Play in Early Education and Childcare	1	6
DM5L 12	Developing an Understanding of Working with Children	1	6
DM42 12	Play in Practice	2	12
DM5M 12	Developing an Understanding of Working with Children: Workplace Experience	2	12

Optional Units

3 credits from:

Code	Title	Credit value	
		SQA	SCQF
DM5J 12	Supporting Children's Rights and Entitlements	1	6
DM5K 12	Supporting Children's Behaviour	1	6
DM5N 12	Experiential Approaches to Early Education and Childcare	2	12
DM5P 11	Prevention of Infection	1	6
F19M 11 or F19M 12	First Aid	1	6
DM5T 12	HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C Infections	1	6
DM5V 11	Maintenance of a Safe Environment for Children	1	6
DM5W 11	Partnerships in Early Education and Childcare	1	6
F19L 11	Child Development and Health	1	6
DM5Y 11	Creative and Aesthetic Experiences for Children	1	6
DM60 11	Care and Feeding of Children	1	6
DM61 12	Supporting the Care and Feeding of Babies	1	6
DM62 12	Supporting the Care and Feeding of Babies: Workplace Experience	1	6
DM63 12	Supporting Language, Literacy and Numeracy in an Early Education and Childcare Setting	1	6
DM64 12	Supporting ICT in an Early Education and Childcare Setting	1	6
DM65 11	Supporting Children with Additional Support Needs	1	6
DM66 12	Supporting a Curriculum in an Early Education and Childcare Setting	1	6
DM67 12	Supporting a Curriculum in an Early Education and Childcare Setting: Workplace Experience	1	6
DM68 12	Supporting Playwork Practice	1	6
DM69 12	Supporting Playwork Practice: Workplace Experience	1	6
External assessment credits			
*X714 76	Childcare and Development	1	6
X06L 12	Play in Early Education and Childcare	1	6
Core Skills credits			
F3GB 11 OR *H23W 75	Communication Literacy	1	6
F3GF 10 OR *H225 74	Numeracy Numeracy	1	6
F3GF 11 OR *H225 75	Numeracy Numeracy		
D01D 11	Information Technology (Core Skill)	1	6

*Refer to history of changes for revision details

5.2 Core Skills

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components in this Award. There is a suggested exit requirement of Communication at Intermediate 2 or equivalent.

The Unit *Experiential Approaches to Early Education and Childcare* has Working with Others at Intermediate 2 embedded. If a candidate completes the project for X06L 12 *Play in Early Education and Childcare* they will automatically be credited with Problem Solving at Intermediate 2.

5.3 Links to Occupational Standards

Aspects of the underpinning knowledge in the National Occupational Standards for Playwork level 3 and Children's Care Learning and Development from levels 2 and 3 are reflected in this National Certificate. As a result, the competences, knowledge and understanding achieved by candidates broadly reflect these standards.

The Units, both mandatory and optional, in this Award have been linked to elements of the following:

Children's Care Learning and Development — level 2

- ◆ Contribute to positive relationships
- ◆ Help keep children safe
- ◆ Support children's development
- ◆ Use support to develop own practice in children's care learning and development
- ◆ Prepare and maintain environments to meet children's needs
- ◆ Support children's play and learning
- ◆ Contribute to the effectiveness of teams
- ◆ Support the development of babies and children under 3
- ◆ Support a child with disabilities or special educational needs
- ◆ Support children and young people's play

Children's Care Learning and Development — level 3

- ◆ Promote children's development
- ◆ Protect and promote children's rights

Playwork — level 3

- ◆ Contribute to an organisational framework that reflects the needs and protects the rights of children and young people
- ◆ Develop and promote positive relationships
- ◆ Work with colleagues in a team

In the National Certificate in Early Education and Childcare, the areas where the above standards are reflected are:

- ◆ Supporting and developing children's play
- ◆ Developing good communication skills
- ◆ Developing awareness and self-reflective practice
- ◆ How to help protect children from abuse
- ◆ Understanding child development
- ◆ Promoting anti-discriminatory practice

6 Approaches to delivery and assessment

The delivery of this Award is at the discretion of individual centres. However it is suggested that the Units DM3X 12 *Child Development: Birth to 12 Years* and DM40 12 *Holistic Approaches to Child Health* be delivered prior to the Unit DM3Y 12 *Developmental Theory in Early Education and Childcare*.

In delivering this Award, Centres should look for opportunities for integration of learning and teaching, eg elements of the Units DM41 12 *Play in Early Education and Childcare* and DM63 12 *Supporting Language, Literacy and Numeracy in an Early Education and Childcare Setting* could be integrated to offer a more holistic view to candidates. The Units in the mandatory placement should be integrated to reflect best early education and childcare practice. Candidates should be supervised in placement by someone who is registered with the SSSC at practitioner level.

In determining the structure of the Group Award, careful consideration has been given to candidate progression, either into employment or further study, and it is likely that centres will consider the content of the HNC and local employment requirements when considering choice of optional Units.

Learning and teaching approaches should include lectures, individual and group work reinforced by handouts and worksheets which should incorporate problem-solving exercises. Practical work is essential and should underpin theoretical work in addition to developing practical skills related to the work of an early education and childcare professional. Candidates should be encouraged to use and become familiar with a wide range of early education and child care sources and resources, including ICT. It is recommended that suitably qualified staff with recent and relevant occupational experience deliver this Group Award to ensure that learning and teaching is linked to the workplace.

7 General information for centres

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).

Internal and external verification

All instruments of assessment used within this/these Group Award(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 and Quality Assurance for Colleges of Further Education* (www.sqa.org.uk).

8 General information for candidates

This National Certificate in Early Education and Childcare is aimed at school leavers, adult returners or those in employment in the Early Education and Childcare sector as a basis for building on good practice, continuing professional development or who wish to progress to further study in Early Education and Childcare. This Award also provides a theoretical background to those candidates who may wish to progress onto other Higher Education Courses which are related to the care, learning and development of children, for example teacher training.

The Early Education and Childcare sector is a growth industry across Scotland. There exists within the sector a wide range of employment opportunities at a variety of levels. In 2006 the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) began mandatory registration of all people working with children aged 0–12 years in Scotland. The completion of this Award will allow the candidate to register with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) at support worker level.

Content

The Units in the Group Award provide a thorough understanding of Early Education and Childcare practice relevant to the role of the support worker, working within the modern Early Education and Childcare sector.

Knowledge and Understanding

Candidates should develop the ability to recall and understand facts and principles detailed in Unit specifications.

Problem Solving

Problem solving skills should be developed so that candidates can:

- ◆ select relevant information from reference sources and other texts, charts, graphs and diagrams
- ◆ present information appropriately in a variety of forms, including written summaries, extended writing, tables and graphs
- ◆ process information accurately
- ◆ plan, implement and evaluate practical tasks related to care learning and development of children
- ◆ draw valid conclusions and give explanations supported by evidence

Practical Abilities

Practical work is essential to develop the basic skills required for early education and childcare professionals working under supervision. Candidates develop the skills required to meet the needs of children within the early education and childcare setting. Practical work is also essential to underpin theoretical work, re-enforcing the understanding of concepts and principles.

Practical skills should be developed so that candidates can:

- ◆ contribute to planning, implementation and evaluation of a range of experiences designed to meet the needs of children
- ◆ record information relating to these experiences according to national policy and local practice
- ◆ reflect on their contribution and the contribution of others
- ◆ work as part of a team

9 Glossary of terms

SCQF: This stands for the Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework, which is a new way of speaking about qualifications and how they inter-relate. We use SCQF terminology 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: One HN credit is equivalent to 8 SCQF credit points. This applies to all HN Units, irrespective of their level.

SCQF levels: The SCQF covers 12 levels of learning. NQ Units will normally be at levels 2–6.

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

Dedicated Core Skill Unit: This is a Unit that is written to cover one or more particular Core Skills, eg National Units in Information Technology or Communications.

Embedded Core Skills: This is where the development of a Core Skill is incorporated into the Unit and where the Unit assessment also covers the requirements of Core Skill assessment at a particular level.

Signposted Core Skills: This refers to the opportunities to develop a particular Core Skill at a specified level that lie outwith automatic certification.

Qualification Design Team: The QDT works in conjunction with a Qualification Manager/Development Manager to steer the development of the National Certificate/National Progression Award from its inception/revision through to validation. The group is made up of key stakeholders representing the interests of centres, employers, universities and other relevant organisations.

Consortium-devised National Certificates/National Progression Awards are those developments or revisions undertaken by a group of centres in partnership with SQA.