Higher National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Childhood Practice: Early Learning

Unit code: FD75 36

Superclass:	PN
Publication date:	September 2017
Source:	Scottish Qualifications Authority
Version:	02

Unit purpose

This Unit has been designed to allow you to analyse the leadership and management of contemporary ideas and research on cognition and language development and other factors that influence early learning. This Unit will provide you with the opportunity to analyse and evaluate and the relationship to leadership and management of early learning services within the context of Childhood Practice.

On completion of the Unit you should be able to:

1 Demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of contemporary research and ideas of early learning.
2 Analyse and evaluate other factors that influence early learning.
3 Evaluate leadership and management perspectives of early learning.

Recommended prior knowledge and skills

Candidates should already have qualifications that meet the requirements of the Scottish Social Services Council for practitioner at SCQF level 7 and have relevant qualifications at SCQF level 8.

Candidates should be working at lead practitioner or manager level within a service for children and young people.

Candidates should have well-developed communication and interpersonal skills and be able to demonstrate the ability to think analytically and reflectively.

General information (cont)

Credit points and level

1 Higher National credit at SCQF level 9: (8 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.

Core Skills

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of *Communication, Working with Others* and *Problem Solving* in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

Candidates who use the Internet to conduct research will also have opportunities to develop skills in *Information and Communications Technology* and *Numeracy* depending on the variety of data gathered and how the data is presented.

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

Outcome 1 – the candidate will be required to produce briefing paper (1000 words) to support a piece of action research. The briefing paper should include four pieces of contemporary research into your practice. (250 words each)

Outcomes 2 and 3 – has an integrated assessment in which the candidate will be required to deliver a presentation. The presentation should last up to 20 minutes and be followed by a further 10 minutes of questions from the audience. Candidates will also be asked to produce written notes on their presentation.

The presentation will allow candidates to show their knowledge of differing styles and skills required for managing early learning and how these are applied in their own practice. The presentation should be based upon your leadership and management of early learning, and should include candidate's knowledge and understanding of two factors which may influence the early learning of children, for example, the role of the parent and a new initiative or policy.

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 refer to *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

Demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of contemporary research and ideas of early learning.

Knowledge and/or Skills

♦ Contemporary research into:
  – cognition in young children
  – language development in young children
  – social and emotional development in young children
  – physical health and wellbeing

♦ Critically analyse and apply particular research to practice
♦ Relate relevant contemporary research to practice in supporting early learning

Evidence Requirements

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

♦ Critically analyse contemporary research:
  – cognition in young children
  – language development in young children
  – social and emotional development in young children
  – physical health and wellbeing
  – Critically analyse and apply particular research to practice

♦ Knowledge of how to access, and apply relevant research into practice
♦ Relate relevant contemporary research to practice

Assessment Guidelines

Candidates will be required to produce briefing paper (500 words) to support a piece of action research. The briefing paper should include two pieces of contemporary research into your practice of 250 words each.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Childhood Practice: Early Learning

Outcome 2

Analyse and evaluate other factors that influence early learning.

Knowledge and/or Skills

♦ Current policy and guidance for early learning
♦ Current legislation relating to early learning
♦ Parental rights and involvement in early learning
♦ Current initiatives to support early learning

Evidence Requirements

♦ Analyse policy and guidance influencing early learning
♦ Demonstrate and understand of current legislation underpinning early learning
♦ Evaluate the impact of parental involvement on early learning
♦ Evaluate the impact of current initiatives to support early learning

Assessment Guidelines

The assessment for Outcomes 2 and 3 are integrated. See assessment guidance for Outcome 3.

Outcome 3

Evaluate leadership and management perspectives of early learning.

Knowledge and/or Skills

♦ Knowledge of leadership styles for early learning
♦ Knowledge of management skills for early learning
♦ Understand the difference between management and leadership styles in relation to early learning
♦ Understand the importance of dispersive leadership
♦ Understand the female perspective

Evidence Requirements

♦ Identify a range of management styles for early learning
♦ Identify the role of the leader in early learning
♦ Analyse the links between leadership and management skills and how these relate to early learning
♦ Evaluate your role facilitating dispersive in leading and managing early learning

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Childhood Practice: Early Learning

Assessment Guidelines

Integrated assessment for Outcomes 2 and 3.

Candidates will be required to deliver a presentation. The presentation should last up to 20 minutes and be followed by a further 10 minutes of questions from the audience. Candidates will also be asked to produce written notes on their presentation (500 words).

The presentation will allow candidates to show their knowledge of differing styles and skills required for managing early learning and how these are applied in their own practice. The presentation should be based upon your leadership and management of early learning, and should include candidate's knowledge and understanding of two factors which may influence the early learning of children, for example, the role of the parent and a new initiative or policy.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Childhood Practice: Early Learning

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This Unit is an optional Unit within the Mandatory/Optional section of the PDA Childhood Practice at SCQF level 9.

The Unit may also be used as a freestanding Unit by candidates in relevant employment who wish to develop and/or enhance their skills as a form of Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

The Unit is linked to the Unit: *Leadership and Management Practice* and there will be opportunities for the candidate to utilise many of the transferable skills developed. These may include but are not confined to:

♦ critical evaluation
♦ self motivation
♦ knowledge of current best practice
♦ investigative skills
♦ professional papers
♦ government policies, etc

This Unit has been designed to allow candidates to explore their own leadership and management role in facilitating access to contemporary ideas and research into, amongst other aspects, development in young children and parental involvement and how these factors influence the delivery of early learning.

Candidates will demonstrate their own knowledge of contemporary research and analyse how this knowledge underpins their practice in their settings. They will also demonstrate their knowledge of policy, guidance and initiatives which currently support the delivery of early learning.

Finally candidates will evaluate their own approach to leadership and management within their role as a lead practitioner in early learning. This should include an exploration of the difference between being a manager and being a leader in their own role. They should also evaluate their approach to ensuring that leadership roles, within their own setting, are dispersed through the staff team.

In Outcome 1 candidates could interpret the ideas from contemporary research and what these ideas mean for their own practice as lead practitioners.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Childhood Practice: Early Learning

Current research could include research into:

- New techniques and discoveries in neuroscience
- The role that social and cultural experiences play in informing child development
- The dynamic process of interaction between mind and environment
- The community aspect which supports children social wellbeing
- Multiple and emotional intelligence
- Social and emotional development and how it relates to gender race and ethnicity
- Language development and how it can be supporting identity and diversity
- The optimum hours for children in day care

The field of early learning has commonly expressed set of beliefs and values linked to contemporary research. Candidates could define their views on such things as:

- The role of play
- The learning environment
- Active learning
- Scaffolding learning
- Holistic subjectivity
- Children's participation
- Provocations in learning

Candidates could evaluate current practice to identify where this research is visible in their own settings and further identify where this contemporary research could be integrated into and improve their pedagogical practice.

The work of Gopnic, Karmiloff-Smith, Elfer, Goldschmeid and Selleck may be useful as might the work of the Scottish Government's 'Growing up in Scotland' research (GUS).

In Outcome 2 candidates should demonstrate their familiarity with current policy and guidance, from both central and local government, which relates to our youngest children. They could also evaluate the impact of these factors on children, families and communities.

This guidance and policy should include amongst others:

- Early Years Framework
- Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)
- The National Care Standards (revised 2017)
- Child at the centre
- How Good is our Early Learning and Childcare
- Pre-birth to Three: supporting our youngest children
- Parents as Partners
- Building the Ambition: National Practice Guidance (2015)

Local guidance and initiatives may include:

- Support for families facing challenging circumstances
- Partnership working with families and communities
- Levels of funding and resources available to under 3 provision

Unit title: Childhood Practice: Early Learning

In Outcome 3 candidates could identify a range of leadership and management styles to include recent research and the issues arising from it such as:

♦ Leadership as interactive and interpersonal engagement
♦ The introduction of female perspectives in leadership and management
♦ Leaderships as the function of a group and not an individual
♦ The value of the team process and collaboration which leads to dispersive leadership
♦ The effect of organisational culture on management and leadership
♦ The effect of the psychological environment which staff experience mentally and emotionally

Learners should be familiar with Scottish Social Services resources to promote the development of leadership within the workforce and Enhancing leadership capability: The strategy for enhancing the leadership capability of Scotland's social services: Delivery plan 2017-2020.

Candidates should also explore their own definitions of management and leadership and evaluate their approach to management and leadership in their specialist roles in respect of:

♦ Co-ordination
♦ Direction
♦ Policy making
♦ Decision making
♦ Problem solving
♦ Communicating
♦ Motivating
♦ Evaluating
♦ Delegating

They could further evaluate their approach to authority and the six factors of authority: power, freedom, trust, rights, duties, planning and organising.

Candidates may find the work of Susan Jeffers, Jillian Rodd and P Friere useful for this Outcome.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

As the Unit is designed to be delivered to candidates who are experienced in the industry, it is expected that those delivering will have the required experience and occupational competence at an appropriate level in order to guide the candidate towards the relevant research and appropriate documents. It must be remembered that the candidate is expected at this level, to have a broad knowledge and understanding of the scope, main areas and boundaries of the subject. Candidates will further be required to undertake a critical evaluation of the research they have undertaken. It is again noted that not all theorists agree on some of the issues and that candidates may be given credit for their work as long as any conclusions are supported by research and a well reasoned argument.

It may be possible to integrate some delivery and assessment task with the Unit: *Leadership and Management Practice (Workplace Practice)*.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Childhood Practice: Early Learning

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skill(s) of *Communication, Working with Others* and *Problem Solving* in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

Candidates who use the Internet to conduct research will also have opportunities to develop skills in *Information and Communications Technology* and *Numeracy* depending on the variety of data gathered and the form in which the data is presented.

Open learning

It may be possible to deliver the Unit by this route and if the Unit is delivered by open learning methods, additional resources will be required for candidate support, assessment and quality assurance.

Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website **www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements**.

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Revised due to legislation and regulation changes within Industry. Also clarification of assessment for centres	28/09/17

Additional copies of this Unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Please contact the Business Development and Customer Support team, telephone 0303 333 0330.

General information for candidates

Unit title: Childhood Practice: Early Learning

This Unit is a mandatory option within the SCQF level 9 Award – Childhood Practice. The Unit may also be used as a freestanding Unit if you are in relevant employment and wish to develop and/or enhance your skills as a form of Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

This Unit has been designed to allow you to analyse the leadership and management of contemporary ideas and research on cognition and language development and other factors that influence early learning. This Unit will provide you with the opportunity to analyse and evaluate and the relationship to leadership and management of early learning services within the context of Childhood Practice.

On completion of the Unit you should be able to:

1   Demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of contemporary research and ideas of early learning.
2   Analyse and evaluate other factors that influence early learning.
3   Evaluate leadership and management perspectives of early learning.

For Outcome 1, you will be required to produce a briefing paper (~~1000~~ 500 words) to support a piece of action research. The briefing paper should include ~~four~~ two pieces of contemporary research into your practice. (250 words each)

Outcomes 2 and 3 has an integrated assessment in which you will develop and deliver a presentation. The presentation should last up to 20 minutes and be followed by a further 10 minutes of questions from the audience. You will also be asked to produce written notes on their presentation of ~~1000~~ 500 words.

The presentation will allow you to show your knowledge of differing styles and skills required for managing early learning and how these are applied in your own practice. The presentation should be based upon your leadership and management of early learning, and should include your knowledge and understanding of two factors which may influence the early learning of children, for example, the role of the parent and a new initiative or policy.