



Higher National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Childhood Practice: Independent Study

Unit code: FD7A 36

Superclass: PN

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Unit purpose

This Unit has been designed to allow candidates to identify a clear considered topic of their own choice for study within childhood practice. The candidate will undertake a literature review of their identified topic. Then with an emphasis on the data collection and interpretation of the data, the candidate will be able to analyse and critically evaluate the information gathered. The candidate will demonstrate an appropriate use of research terminology and methodology during the literature review, and when presenting and writing up their findings.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to identify an area with Childhood Practice to research. They must plan and conduct the literature review then prepare a report reflecting their findings in a robust and evaluative manner.

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

- 1 Plan a research investigation into an aspect of childhood practice.
- 2 Undertake a literature review based on prepared plan.
- 3 Analyse and present findings in light of current and contemporary benchmark standards, legislation and frameworks.

Recommended prior knowledge and skills

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

Candidates should be working at lead practitioner or manager level within a day care 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 Unit 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 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 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.

This Unit may be used as a mandatory optional Unit within this qualification, in which case this Unit should integrate with the Unit: *Leadership and Management Practice (Workplace Practice)*.

Assessment

This Unit is assessed holistically and as such both the content and the process are to be assessed. Centres may find it useful to stagger the assessment process thus ensuring that candidates are supported throughout the research and are making meaningful progress.

Candidates should produce a:

- ◆ research proposal including methodology and rationale for the approach (500 words) and include an investigation timeline
- ◆ literature review of 1000 words

and should then analyse the data collected based on contemporary benchmark standards, legislation and frameworks and then produce a fully referenced report of 3000 words. The research proposal and literature review should be submitted together as a cohesive piece of writing in this holistic report to cover Outcomes 1, 2 and 3.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Childhood Practice: Independent Study

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The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, Knowledge and/or Skills, and Evidence Requirements are mandatory.

Please refer to *Knowledge and/or Skills for the Unit* 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

Plan a research investigation into an aspect of childhood practice.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Purpose of research investigation
- ◆ Generating research ideas and methodologies
- ◆ The research process
- ◆ Research planning
- ◆ Personal and practical research skills
- ◆ Formulating a research proposal

Evidence Requirements

- ◆ Demonstrate a knowledge of research investigation
- ◆ Produce a research idea and reasons for choice
- ◆ Produce an appropriate, realistic and achievable timeline to undertake research process
- ◆ Produce a research proposal including methodology and rationale for the approach
- ◆ Use personal and practical research skills

Please refer to Evidence Requirements for Outcome 3, as the evidence for this Outcome will be seen in the presentation of the independent study undertaken.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Childhood Practice: Independent Study

Outcome 2

Undertake a literature review based on prepared plan.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Undertake literature review
- ◆ Primary and secondary sources of information
- ◆ Qualitative and/or quantitative data
- ◆ Data collection and management
- ◆ Utilise valid and reliable research methods
- ◆ Implement appropriate methodology and data collection techniques

Evidence Requirements

- ◆ Demonstrate the ability to conduct a literature review
- ◆ Demonstrate the use of primary and secondary sources of information to include:
 - Qualitative and quantitative data
 - Data collection and management

Please refer to Evidence Requirements for Outcome 3, as the evidence for this Outcome will be seen in the presentation of the independent study undertaken.

Outcome 3

Analyse and present findings in light of current and contemporary benchmark standards, legislation and frameworks.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Analysis of quantitative and/or qualitative data
- ◆ Evaluate findings from literature review
- ◆ Reliability and validity of research data
- ◆ Understanding of research ethics
- ◆ Recommendations
- ◆ Presentation of data analysis

Evidence Requirements

- ◆ Present literature review findings to include:
 - Analysis of data
 - Evaluation of literature
 - Research ethics
 - Recommendations and conclusions

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Childhood Practice: Independent Study

Assessment Guidelines

This Unit is assessed holistically through the conduct of a research investigation by the candidate, a chosen area of childhood practice and the presentation of a fully referenced report resulting from that study.

Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 can be assessed holistically.

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate that they can meet all the knowledge and skills for all three Outcomes by carrying out research into an area of childhood practice in which they:

- ◆ prepare and justify a proposal for the independent study which is practical and feasible
- ◆ plan a research investigation with agreed time scales and objectives
- ◆ conduct a literature review appropriate to the study
- ◆ justify the choice of research methods by considering the advantages and disadvantages of those chosen and giving reasons to explain why some methods were rejected
- ◆ utilise valid and reliable research methods
- ◆ make use of valid and relevant methods to gather quantitative and qualitative data and primary and secondary data
- ◆ evaluate the validity and reliability of the data collected
- ◆ draw and justify conclusions based on an analysis of all the data collected and the evaluation of it based on contemporary benchmark standards, legislation and frameworks

The evidence should be presented in a suitable referenced report format.

Centres may find it useful to stagger the assessment process thus ensuring that candidates are supported throughout the research and are making meaningful progress. It is suggested that the following stages may be of use:

Outcome 1

- ◆ Produce a research idea and reasons for choice
- ◆ Produce an appropriate, realistic and achievable timeline with milestones
- ◆ Produce a research proposal including methodology and rationale for the approach (500 words)
- ◆ Effectively communicate and negotiate the research proposal with the tutor

Outcome 2

- ◆ Production of a literature review of 1000 words

Outcome 3

- ◆ Analyse data collected based on contemporary benchmark standards, legislation and frameworks
- ◆ Production of a fully referenced report of 3000 words. Candidates should actively be discouraged from exceeding the maximum figure

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Childhood Practice: Independent Study

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 PDA Childhood Practice (SCQF level 9) and reflects the high level of commitment and initiative of candidates undertaking this Course.

The content of the Unit is self-evident and the Unit requires candidates to identify an area with Childhood Practice for research, plan for that research, conduct the research and prepare a report reflecting the research findings.

The majority of the candidates undertaking this Unit will have completed Graded Units within the HNC or PDA Early Education and Childcare/Childhood Practice or research Units within SVQ Playwork or Children's Care, Learning and Development at level 4, will already be familiar with some research techniques and the personal and practical skills associated with the implementation of a research project.

It is not anticipated that the Unit will entail much in the way of class or group based delivery other than at the beginning of the Unit where there may be a need for sessions on idea generation and input on research methodologies and strategies, eg experiment, survey, case study and action research. Input may be required on referencing approaches, eg Harvard. Primarily delivery should consist of tutorials to provide support, discuss work and ensure authenticity.

Support should be provided to ensure that candidates have developed a SMART research proposal and timeline for the independent study. Allowing the candidates to prepare a brief literature review is also a useful way to ensure that the candidate has a reasonable grasp of the subject area and that the research is being conducted in an informed manner. Candidates should also be encouraged to consider the ethics, validity and reliability of the research which they are reviewing.

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.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Childhood Practice: Independent Study

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

This Unit is assessed holistically and as such both the content and the process are to be assessed. Centres may find it useful to stagger the assessment process thus ensuring that candidates are supported throughout the research and are making meaningful progress. It is suggested that the following stages may be of use:

Outcome 1

- ◆ Production of research idea and reasons for choice
- ◆ Production of an investigation timeline
- ◆ Production of research proposal including methodology and rationale for the approach (500 words)

Outcome 2

- ◆ Production of a literature review of 1000 words

Outcome 3

- ◆ Analyse data collected based on contemporary benchmark standards, legislation and frameworks
- ◆ Production of a fully referenced report of 3000 words. Candidates should actively be discouraged from exceeding the maximum figure. The research proposal and literature review must be submitted together as a cohesive piece of writing in this holistic report to cover Outcomes 1, 2 and 3.

Candidates should be provided with an outline of the assessment criteria for their Childhood Practice Independent Study to aid the writing process. It is anticipated that the report will be in a suitably referenced management report format similar to that noted below:

- ◆ title page – report title, author, date
- ◆ acknowledgements
- ◆ declaration of own work (centres may wish to include a signed declaration from the candidate to confirm the authenticity of the work)
- ◆ contents page
- ◆ introduction – to include reasons for choice of area within Childhood Practice for study. Objectives of the study should also be included and choice of research methodology
- ◆ literature review – demonstrating an awareness and understanding of appropriate theories, current literature and practice within the area of Childhood Practice chosen
- ◆ findings – from both or either primary and secondary sources, qualitative and/or quantitative data. Consideration should be given to the ethics, validity and reliability of research.
- ◆ conclusions
- ◆ references – using standard academic conventions, eg Harvard referencing system
- ◆ bibliography
- ◆ appendices

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Childhood Practice: Independent Study

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

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General information for candidates

Unit title: Childhood Practice: Independent Study

This Unit is a one credit Unit at SCQF level 9.

This Unit is designed to develop your research skills by identifying an area of Childhood Practice you wish to study. You will have the opportunity to identify and implement an appropriate research methodology and presenting the findings of your research.

As you progress through your research and literature review, you will be supported through a series of planned milestones and tutor support meetings. However you will be required to be self-organised and self-motivated to ensure that your independent study is achieved within the agreed timescale.

This Unit has three Outcomes.

- 1 Plan a research investigation into an aspect of childhood practice.
- 2 Undertake a literature review based on prepared plan.
- 3 Analyse and present findings in light of current and contemporary benchmark standards, legislation and frameworks.

Outcome 1

You will look at research and research project planning. Here you will identify what makes good research and how you should plan your project. As part of this Outcome you will be asked to identify an area of Childhood Practice to study in order to conduct your research investigation. You will then produce a research proposal including methodology and rationale for the approach (500 words), which must be agreed with your tutor.

Outcome 2

Requires you to undertake a review of literature within your chosen topic. You should consider primary and secondary sources, which include quantitative and qualitative data. As part of this Outcome you will be expected to identify your methodology and to produce a literature review appropriate to your study of 1000 words.

Outcome 3

Requires you to analyse the data you have collected during your independent study and to present it in the form of a fully referenced report of 3000 words. The research proposal and literature review from Outcomes 1 and 2 will form part of this report as a cohesive piece of holistic writing.

Along with this report you will submit references – using standard academic conventions, eg Harvard referencing system, bibliography, and appendices (if required). These are not included in the word count.