



# National Unit Specification

## General information

**Unit title:** Sports Coaching: Knowing Coaching (SCQF level 5)

**Unit code:** J8LY 45

**Superclass:** MA

**Publication date:** March 2025

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 01

## Unit purpose

The purpose of this unit is for learners to assist a coach in the planning, delivery and review of a series of coaching sessions. Through this process, learners will start to progress their own coaching skillset whilst developing their ability to assist effectively within a coaching team. Learners will be exposed to each stage of the coaching process and are expected to be involved in all stages albeit in an assistant capacity. It is expected that learners will generate evidence in a practical context and record progress within a personal coaching action plan.

This unit is suitable for learners who are at the start of their sports coaching journey and are looking to develop their knowledge and experience in sports coaching. Working in an assistant capacity will allow the learner to develop their coaching skills gradually with the support of a coach.

Learners must be at least 14 years old on completion of this unit.

## **Outcomes**

On successful completion of the unit the learner will be able to:

1. Assist in the planning of a series of coaching sessions.
2. Assist in the delivery of a series of planned coaching sessions.
3. Assist in the review of the series of planned coaching sessions.

## **Credit points and level.**

2 National Unit credits at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 5: (12 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 5).

## **Recommended entry to the unit**

Entry is at the discretion of the centre, however it would be anticipated that learners have a broad interest in sport and sports coaching and are keen to embark on a career in sports coaching. It is recommended that learners undertaking this unit possess communication skills to a level equivalent to at least SCQF level 4.

## **Core Skills**

Achievement of this unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skills      Problem Solving at SCQF level 5

Working with Others at SCQF level 5

Opportunities to develop further aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the support notes for this unit specification.

## 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 is designed to be delivered as a stand-alone unit or in conjunction with the following unit: J8M0 45 Sports Coaching: Knowing Yourself and Knowing Others (SCQF level 5) as part of the Sports Coaching: National Progression Award (NPA) (SCQF level 5).

The Assessment Support Pack (ASP) for this unit provides assessment and marking guidelines that exemplify the national standard for achievement. It is a valid, reliable and practicable assessment. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the ASP to ensure a comparable standard. A list of existing ASPs is available to download from SQA's website: [Internal Assessment Support Materials](http://www.sqa.org.uk/internal-assessment-support-materials) (www.sqa.org.uk/internal-assessment-support-materials).

## Equality and inclusion

This unit specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Further advice can be found on our website:

[SQA Assessment Arrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements) (www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements).

# National Unit Specification: Statement of standards

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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 SQA.

## Outcome 1

Assist in the planning of a series of coaching sessions.

### Performance criteria

- (a) Identify relevant information required for planning coaching sessions.
- (b) Identify the structure to be used in the coaching sessions, including an activity inclusion model.
- (c) Assist in the production of plans for coaching sessions, including an overview of the full coaching programme.
- (d) Assist in the risk assessment process for the planned sessions, including involvement in participant screening.
- (e) Identify and apply relevant codes of practice / conduct, current legislation / guidelines for the sport and safeguarding issues that would need to be considered when planning coaching sessions.

## **Outcome 2**

Assist in the delivery of a series of planned coaching sessions.

### **Performance criteria**

- (a) Demonstrate the roles and responsibilities of a coaching assistant to meet the needs of the participants.
- (b) Assist in the setting up and tidying of equipment in a safe and appropriate manner.
- (c) Communicate information clearly and concisely and in a manner that is responsive and engaging for participants.
- (d) Use demonstrations to reinforce the intended outcomes of the session.
- (e) Observe and provide feedback to participants.
- (f) Conclude sessions appropriately.

## **Outcome 3**

Assist in the review of the series of planned coaching sessions.

### **Performance criteria**

- (a) Record feedback received about the coaching sessions.
- (b) Describe what went well in the planning and delivery of the coaching sessions.
- (c) Describe what areas could be improved.
- (d) Record the proposed changes to future sessions.
- (e) Describe an area of coaching that will be the focus for your personal development.

## **Evidence requirements for this unit**

Evidence is required to demonstrate that learners have achieved all outcomes and performance criteria.

Whilst the evidence requirements set out what the learner must do in order to meet the criteria of the unit it is recognised that evidence should be commensurate with the Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) at level 5.

To allow for individual coaching development to occur, a series of coaching sessions must be planned, delivered and reviewed. Learners must assist a coach in the planning, delivery and review of a coaching programme with a minimum of four sessions, which must be planned for a minimum of 30 minutes per session. The four sessions must either be in the same sport or activity, or a multi-sport approach with a specific performance focus.

Learner's practical delivery must be assessed on a minimum of two separate sessions — a minimum of 15 minutes must be observed on each occasion.

There are no restrictions on the instruments of assessment that can be used within this unit, centres are encouraged to be creative in the methods of assessment they use to generate evidence.

### **Outcome 1: Assist in the planning of a series of coaching sessions.**

The learner must:

- Identify a minimum of three pieces of relevant information to assist with the planning of sessions.
- Identify a relevant session structure including an activity inclusion model.
- Be involved in planning a minimum of four sessions of a minimum duration of 30 minutes, and from this produce one session plan. If working within a group scenario, each learner must produce a different session plan. An overview of the full coaching programme must include the overall aim of programme, length of programme and session themes.

Evidence for performance criteria (a) and (b) must be demonstrated in the session plan.

Learners must work collaboratively with a coach to produce a risk assessment, covering the time-period of the coaching programme and include evidence of participant screening.

Learners must identify one aspect that would need to be considered from each of the following:

- relevant codes of practice / conduct
- current legislation / guidelines for the sport
- safeguarding guidelines

These must also be applied into relevant session plans and in the delivery of sessions.

## **Outcome 2: Assist in the delivery of a series of planned coaching sessions.**

Through practical evidence, learners must:

- Demonstrate the roles and responsibilities of a coaching assistant to meet the needs of the participants throughout the duration of each session.
- Ensure equipment is set up safely and tidied away appropriately.
- Communicate information clearly and concisely and in a manner that is responsive and engaging for participants.
- Use demonstrations to reinforce the intended outcomes of the sessions.
- Observe and provide feedback on participant's performances.
- Conclude sessions appropriately.

Learners must be assessed on two separate sessions, each for a minimum of 15 minutes.

Learners must apply relevant codes of practice / conduct, current legislation / guidelines and safeguarding protocols throughout the sessions.

An assessor checklist must be used to assess this outcome.

**Outcome 3: Assist in the review of the series of planned coaching sessions.**

The learner must record feedback received from a minimum of two relevant sources, one of these sources must be the participants. This feedback must be used to review both the planning and delivery stages of a minimum of two coaching sessions and must describe:

- a minimum of two areas of the coaching process that went well.
- a minimum of two areas of the coaching process that require improvement.
- a minimum of one change for future sessions.

The above must focus on the learner's personal performance as a coaching assistant.

Learners must describe a minimum of one area of coaching practice that will be the focus for their personal development and record how they hope to achieve this. This must be detailed in a personal coaching action plan.





## National Unit Support Notes

**Unit title:** Sports Coaching: Knowing Coaching (SCQF level 5)

Unit support notes are offered as guidance and are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 80 hours.

### Guidance on the content and context for this unit

The purpose of this unit is for learners to assist a coach in the planning, delivery, and review of a series of coaching sessions. Through this process, learners will start to develop their own coaching skillset whilst progressing their ability to assist effectively within a coaching team. Learners will be exposed to each stage of the coaching process and are expected to be involved in all stages albeit in an assistant capacity. It is expected that learners will generate evidence in a practical context.

Given the nature of the coaching process, it is anticipated that some of the performance criteria of the unit will be inter-dependent and will develop through a cyclical process. For outcome 1 learners will assist in the planning of a series of coaching sessions and the level of responsibility can differ depending on the coaching situation. This will be done prior to the delivery of the sessions and could be on-going throughout the programme as future sessions are planned / adapted. Outcome 2 allows the learner to assist in the delivery of the planned sessions which can be done with either an internal or external group (for example from the learner's own centre or with a group from out with the centre). This outcome is practical in nature where learners will have the opportunity to demonstrate the roles and responsibilities of a coaching assistant. Outcome 3 allows learners to assist in the review process, identifying areas of strength and areas for development throughout the process. Sessions could be reviewed on an on-going basis to then help with the planning and delivery of future sessions.

## **Outcome 1: Assist in the planning of a series of coaching sessions.**

Learners will be expected to assist in the planning of sports coaching sessions. This could be in the identification of appropriate activities, required equipment, facilities and relevant participant information and safety checks through a risk assessment.

Learners will be expected to identify what information is important to help with the planning of a session for example:

- participant details
- facility information
- access to equipment
- aims / objectives of session
- timing of session / activities
- content of session appropriate for the age and stage of participants and to meet session aims and objectives

This list is not exhaustive.

Learners should identify a suitable session structure which incorporates an activity inclusion model. Session structures are flexible and should be relevant to the coaching environment. Learners will start to develop an understanding of linear and non-linear approaches to coaching. A typical linear session structure example could be:

- warm-up
- introductory activity
- progression activity
- conditioned game / activity
- cool-down

Other relevant session structures could be utilised to match the nature of the activity, participants and environment.

Learners could take into account any of the following when considering the needs of the participants:

- overall aim / purpose of the coaching programme
- aim of the individual sessions
- ability and experience of participants
- mixed ability groups
- mixed physical differences
- mixed genders
- impairments
- communication and / or cultural issues

The risk assessment process should take into consideration any hazards identified relating to the facility, equipment, activity and environment, potential injuries and suitable contingency plans to reduce / avoid the risk. A relevant risk rating should be applied. As a coaching assistant, learners should have an appropriate input into the risk assessment process where they should complete a risk assessment alongside the coach as well as being involved in conducting visual inspections and reporting hazards where appropriate. Learners should also gather relevant screening information on participants prior to practical delivery. This could be completed generically as a group of participants using information from a relevant person, for example a teacher or coach or on an individual participant basis making use of relevant participant information forms. The specific coaching scenario may dictate the nature of this, and the most relevant and effective approach should be adopted.

Learners will also be expected to identify and apply relevant codes of practice / conduct, current legislation / guidelines for the sport and safeguarding issues. Typically, these would take into consideration game / competition area sizes, specific equipment requirements, technical content guidance, behaviours of coaches and participants, health and safety considerations, specific sport laws / rules, etcetera. Different sports will have different terminologies in respect of codes of practice or conduct and legislation or guidelines. Learners should select the ones most applicable to their sport. Safeguarding should relate to any areas relevant to a

coaching assistant. Learners should be able to identify how to report any safeguarding issues.

Learners should be aware of relevant policies relating to Health and Safety, Safeguarding and National Governing Body Codes of Conduct:

- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Governing Body Code of Conduct

The policies identified above are current at the time of writing but may be superseded by any future updates. Updated versions should be referred to where appropriate. Other policies may also be considered that are relevant to the environment.

## **Outcome 2: Assist in the delivery of a series of planned coaching sessions.**

Learners will be expected to play an active role in the delivery of planned coaching sessions as a coaching assistant. This could vary between learners where some might be in a supportive role to the coach working in the background assisting with session tasks or deliver an activity within the session under the supervision of the coach. If during the series of sessions, the learner's confidence develops, more responsibility can be devolved whilst still working under supervision, although the coach should still deliver or control the majority of the session. Roles and associated responsibilities will vary but could include things such as:

- collecting keys and opening storage areas
- meeting and welcoming participants and parents
- registration
- setting-up and tidying away equipment
- leading parts of session under supervision
- helping with demonstrations
- encouraging, motivating and providing feedback to participants

- supporting participants during sessions

This list is not exhaustive and it would be anticipated that learners would undertake any role or responsibility attributed to a coaching assistant. Regardless of the level of involvement, learners should meet the evidence requirements. The delivery of these sessions can be with an internal or external participant group. An assessor observation checklist must be used to assess this outcome.

### **Outcome 3: Assist in the review of the series of planned coaching sessions.**

Learners will be expected to use feedback from various sources to help identify areas of strength and areas for improvement from the session. Feedback can be generated from relevant sources — participants, coaches, parents and self-reflection. Personal performance could focus on areas such as effective planning of content, effectiveness of performance at delivery stage (communication, engagement, enthusiasm, delivery of content, helpfulness, etcetera) — this list is not exhaustive and other relevant areas can be considered. Group performance could focus on whether the aims and objectives were met, did the team work collaboratively, how effective was communication, etcetera. Again, any other relevant areas relating to the effective performance of the group can be reviewed. A personal coaching action plan should be generated to provide a focus for personal development within coaching and should be developed further in future coaching sessions.

Successful completion of this unit will allow progression onto SCQF level 6 units in relation to sports coaching.

## **Guidance on approaches to delivery of this unit**

This unit is designed to be delivered as a stand-alone unit or in conjunction with the following unit: J8M0 45 Sports Coaching: Knowing Yourself and Knowing Others (SCQF level 5) as part of the Sports Coaching: National Progressions Award (NPA) (SCQF level 5).

A practical approach is encouraged throughout this unit where possible.

It would be normal for the outcomes to be delivered in a sequential order; however, some outcomes might be developed continually due to the cyclical process involved in coaching — plan, deliver, review.

This unit could be delivered in a variety of situations. Learners can work alongside a coach to assist in the coaching process or work as part of a group where the delivery of the overall process is shared.

Delivery of the series of coaching sessions can take place with an internal or external participant group (for example from the learner's own centre or with a group from out with the centre).

### **Outcome 1: Assist in the planning of a series of coaching sessions.**

This allows learners to assist in the planning stage. They should help identify information required for planning sessions such as assisting in collecting participant's information as well as understanding how a session should be structured. It is anticipated that a session plan will be produced incorporating appropriate activities for delivery. It is anticipated the learner will assist in the production of a risk assessment and be involved in safety checks before, during and after session delivery. Learners should also develop an understanding of relevant codes of practice / conduct, current legislation / guidelines and safeguarding requirements, and be actively involved in planning for these.

## **Outcome 2: Assist in the delivery of a series of planned coaching sessions.**

Learners will be involved in assisting with the delivery of coaching sessions. This outcome helps to develop learner's practical coaching delivery, working on confidence, communication, content knowledge and other coaching skills within the sessions. Learners will have the opportunity to work alongside a coach or group of coaches to achieve the session aims / objectives. This outcome is the practical delivery of the planned coaching sessions.

## **Outcome 3: Assist in the review of the series of planned coaching sessions.**

Learners will be involved in the review process for the coaching sessions. Feedback should be generated continually throughout the coaching process and recorded appropriately. Learners can assist with the review process by gathering relevant feedback from appropriate sources and use this to identify strengths and areas for improvement of their coaching performance. A personal coaching action plan should then be used to identify and target an area of personal development the learner will focus on to enhance their coaching.

## **Guidance on approaches to assessment of this unit**

Evidence can be generated using different types of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education.

There are no restrictions on the instruments of assessment that can be used within this unit, centres are encouraged to be creative in the methods of assessment they use to generate evidence. An assessor observation checklist can be used to assess appropriate performance criteria of different outcomes.

### **Outcome 1: Assist in the planning of a series of coaching sessions.**

The production of a session plan and risk assessment will generate evidence for performance criteria (a)–(e). Performance criterion (c) could also be assessed using written evidence to demonstrate the overview of the series of coaching sessions. Short answer responses could also be used to provide further evidence for performance criterion (e).

### **Outcome 2: Assist in the delivery of a series of planned coaching sessions.**

This outcome can be assessed using an assessor observation checklist with qualitative comments about the learner as a coaching assistant.

### **Outcome 3: Assist in the review of the series of planned coaching sessions.**

This outcome can be assessed using short answer response questions to identify strengths and areas for improvement as well as future changes which would inform a personal coaching action plan.

### **Authentication of evidence**

All work should contain a declaration of validity that the content is the learners own work unless cited otherwise. Submissions should be signed and dated by the learner. Digital submissions should be encouraged through centres' Learning Management System (LMS) platforms using anti plagiarism software.

### **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 [SQA e-Assessment](http://www.sqa.org.uk/Guide%20to%20best%20practice.pdf).  
([www.sqa.org.uk/Guide to best practice.pdf](http://www.sqa.org.uk/Guide to best practice.pdf)).



## **Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills**

The Core Skills of Problem Solving at SCQF level 5 and Working with Others at SCQF level 5 are embedded in this unit.

Problem Solving is developed when assisting with planning and delivering coaching sessions.

Working with Others is developed when working in groups with the support of the coach.

Core and other essential skills can be developed through this unit.

Communication skills can be developed through group work and assisting in the delivery of the planned coaching activities. Delivery of sessions will require learners to use various forms of communication methods — verbal, non-verbal and written where appropriate.

Numeracy skills can be developed when assisting with planning timings of sessions, arranging team numbers or amounts of equipment required for sessions.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can be incorporated through the research of activities when assisting with planning sessions. ICT skills can be developed further if the use of session plan software is utilised in session design or through the submission of evidence.

### **Other essential skills**

Broader skills will also be developed through assisting with the delivery of coaching sessions. Key citizenship skills essential for employment in the coaching industry will be enhanced that will develop knowledge and confidence to explore further coaching opportunities.

## History of changes to unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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Unit template: February 2025

# General information for learners

**Unit title:** Sports Coaching: Knowing Coaching (SCQF level 5)

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

You must be at least 14 years old on completion of this unit.

This unit is designed to be delivered as a stand-alone unit or in conjunction with the following unit: J8M0 45 Sports Coaching: Knowing Yourself and Knowing Others (SCQF level 5) as part of the Sports Coaching: National Progression Award (NPA) (SCQF level 5). The purpose of this unit is to develop an understanding of the coaching process whilst undertaking the role of a coaching assistant where you will assist in the planning, delivery and review of a series of coaching sessions.

As you start out on your coaching journey, this unit will allow you the opportunity to assist a coach in the planning, delivery and review of a series of coaching sessions. You will have the opportunity to assist with the coaching process. This will include assisting in the planning of a series of coaching sessions, assisting in the risk assessment process and assisting the delivery of a series of coaching sessions including setting up and tidying away equipment, providing feedback to participants and concluding sessions effectively. Completion of the coaching process will include being involved in the review process where you will record feedback from participants to assist in the review of sessions delivered, which will inform the next steps for your own personal development as a coaching assistant.

Assessment for this unit is designed to be practical where possible and due to the nature of the coaching process, will be assessed on an on-going basis. Each assessment for the unit will be in a context that allows you to reflect, collaborate and use various sources that support you to generate evidence for assessments.

Due to the different aspects to the role of the coaching assistant there may also be different styles of assessment used, such as question and answer tests and scenario-based questions.

The Core Skills of Problem Solving at SCQF level 5 and Working with Others at SCQF level 5 are embedded in this unit You will develop communication skills when working with others, numeracy skills when assisting with planning timings of sessions, arranging team numbers or amounts of equipment required for sessions.

You will develop problem solving skills when trying to determine who participants are, working with others as part of the coaching team and ICT skills if any software is utilised to present coaching material or assessment work.