



Group Award Specification for:

Full title of qualification: HNC Soft Tissue Therapy

Group Award Code: GH18 15

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1 Introduction

This document was previously known as the Arrangements Document. The purpose of this document is to:

- ◆ assist centres to implement, deliver and manage the qualification
- ◆ provide a guide for new staff involved in offering the qualification
- ◆ inform course managers teaching staff, assessors, learners, employers and HEIs of the aims and purpose of the qualification
- ◆ provide details of the range of learners the qualification is suitable for and progression opportunities

Participation in sport and physical activity has been growing nationally for many years supported by initiatives, such as Scotland's 'Reaching Higher' sport strategy, the London 2012 Olympic Games legacy, and the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games legacy. Sport England reported in December 2012, that the number of people participating in sport at least once per week had increased by 750,000 on the previous year, and 1.57 million more people were regularly participating than when London won the Olympic and Paralympic bid in 2005. Scotland's Peoples Annual Report 2011 indicated that more than 50% of adults (16–75+) participated in sport or physical activity between three to five times per week, and that figure has increased each year for the past five years. It is anticipated that figures in Scotland will increase more dramatically in the final year's lead-up to the 2014 Commonwealth Games, and will continue substantially thereafter.

Whilst increasing participation may not automatically generate an increase in employment for those professions that support optimal performance and treatment of injuries for participants of sport and physical activity, there is evidence to show positive correlations in the number of job opportunities now available within the sector. Definitive statistics of numbers working within Sports or Soft Tissue Therapy are difficult to produce as many of the opportunities are for work on specific contract and a self-employed basis. Collection of data is hindered by the variety of different Governing Bodies and Professional Associations within the sector. However, one of the main Professional Associations supporting workers, the SMA (the Association for Soft Tissue Therapists) has reported a four-fold increase in membership since 2009. Demand for places on the HND Sports Therapy courses has also seen a significant increase, with approximately six applicants for every place, and a two-and-a-half fold increase in places offered over the past six years.

The development of a specific award in Soft Tissue Therapy grew from consultation and market research being undertaken into the revision of HND Sports Therapy. The revised National Occupational Standards for Sports Therapy were published in 2010 and this indicated the need for a significant revision of the Units covering massage and sports massage, and the skills and underpinning knowledge required of these Units. Sports Massage, or soft tissue treatments, is one of the main modalities used by a Sports Therapist in the course of their work. The level of skill and underpinning knowledge required to treat soft tissues was supported by employers within the sector who were clearly requiring specific sports massage qualifications and Professional Association membership. This was indicated by specific requirements in two-thirds of the job applications randomly accessed during the market research period, and the statements of the majority of owners/managers of multi-disciplinary clinics contacted during the telephone survey.

The current HND award was validated in June 2006 and is a two-year award with no HNC exit point. This had primarily been justified due to the fact that an HNC Sports Therapy could not exist as the content of the first year of the award was not reflective of the knowledge, skill and competence level required for the title 'sports therapy'. However, it has become increasingly clear that FE Colleges owe an ethical duty to provide appropriate vocationally recognized end-points to study which allow for adequate employment opportunities or progression to further study. It was therefore appropriate for the Qualifications Design Team (QDT) to consider appropriate, valid and reliable potential HNC pathways.

The new HNC Soft Tissue Therapy provides learners with an industry recognised qualification, and the knowledge and skills necessary to work as a soft tissue therapist.

The title reflects that graduates would be using various modalities to treat the soft tissues of a variety of sports people, including those participating at recreational through to elite level performance. The level reflects the necessary knowledge and skills required to work without direct supervision in this sector. It is designed to build on National Units and/or Highers in relevant subjects such as Human Anatomy and Physiology and Physical Health, as well as other vocationally accredited qualifications in Body/Sports Massage at SVQ/NVQ Level 3.

The award is suitable for school leavers or adult returners who wish to work with sports people in the maintenance and/or improvement of, their sporting performance, by using credible hands-on soft tissue techniques.

Learners may gain contracts with Sports Clubs, either working independently or with a team of other professionals (eg sports therapist, physiotherapist, coach, strength and conditioning specialist, nutritionalist). Additionally, learners may work within single or multi-disciplinary clinics providing clinical sports massage treatments. Some learners may choose to apply their skills to treat overuse injuries in an occupational setting.

The award will articulate directly into the soon to be revised HND Sports Therapy. Additionally, an articulation agreement has been reached between Edinburgh College and Napier University to allow entry into Year 2 BSc Sport and Exercise Science for those who wish to develop their knowledge and skills in performance physiology or sports psychology. Informal discussions with Teesside University indicate a favourable response to entry into BSc Sports Therapy (first year).

The Sports Massage Association: association for soft tissue therapists (SMA) has endorsed the award. (Appendix 3).

2 Qualification structure

This Group Award comprises 12 mandatory SQA Unit credits. It comprises 96 SCQF credit points of which 60 are at SCQF level 7 including a Graded Unit of 8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7. A mapping of Core Skills development opportunities is available in Section 5.3.

2.1 Structure

4 code	2 code	Unit title	SQA credit	SCQF credit points	SCQF level
J7VX	34*	Sports Therapy: Anatomy and Physiology	2	16	7
H4XV	34	Functional Anatomy	1.5	12	7
H4XW	34	Basic Subjective and Objective Assessment	0.5	4	7
H4XX	35	Clinical Sports Massage	3	24	8
H4XY	35	Sports Massage for Events and Special Populations	0.5	4	8
H4Y0	34	Pathology and Aetiology of Sports Injury	1.0	8	7
H4Y1	34	Prevention and Management of Sports Injury	1.0	8	7
H4Y2	34	Sports Therapy: Professional Standards	0.5	4	7
H4Y3	35	Clinical and Team Experience 1	1	8	8
H4XP	34	Sports Therapy Graded Unit 1	1	7	7
Additional Units (0 credits required)					
FW5Y	34	First Aid for Sport and Fitness	0.5	4	7
H4Y4	34	Sports Therapy: Exercise Principles and Testing	1	8	7
J420*	34*	Flexibility Training	1	4	7
H4TF	34	Nutrition for Fitness, Health and Exercise	1	8	7
DD2P	35	Research Investigation in Sport	1	8	8

*Refer to History of Changes for revision changes.

Anatomy and Physiology provides underpinning knowledge for all Units except Professional Standards.

Functional Anatomy, Basic Subjective and Objective Assessment, Pathology and Aetiology of Sports Injury and Professional Standards provide underpinning knowledge for Clinical Sports Massage and Massage for Events and Special Populations,

All Units provide underpinning knowledge for Clinical and Team Experience and Graded Unit 1.

3 Aims of the qualification

The HNC Soft Tissue Therapy provides learners with an industry recognised qualification, and the knowledge and skills necessary to work as a soft tissue therapist. It also prepares learners who wish to progress onto the SQA HND Sports Therapy award, a degree in Sports Therapy or another higher education award in a related field.

3.1 General aims of the qualification

All HNC/HNDs have a range of broad aims that are generally applicable to all equivalent HE qualifications:

- 1 Developing critical and evaluative thinking and ability to manage and absorb large amounts of information.
- 2 Developing problem-solving.
- 3 Developing self-directed and self-reflective learners.
- 4 Developing the ability to be flexible and to work co-operatively within a team structure.

- 5 Developing transferable skills such as study and research skills, presentation techniques, personal effectiveness.
- 6 Enabling progression within the SCQF including progression to HE.
- 7 Providing opportunities for career planning and enhancing learners employment prospect.
- 8 Developing an individual's Core Skills profiles.

3.2 Specific aims of the qualification

- 9 Gain knowledge and understanding of Anatomy, Physiology, Assessment Techniques, and Management of Sports Injuries in order to analyse, plan and evaluate appropriate soft tissue treatment.
- 10 Develop knowledge and skill in administering accurate and appropriate soft tissue treatment and provide appropriate after and home care.
- 11 Develop an evidence-based approach to treatment planning.
- 12 Develop working practices to the current accepted professional standards.
- 13 Gain a sufficient number of logged practice hours to be eligible for SMA membership.

The table in Section 5.1 identifies how the aims are met in the structure and content of the qualification.

3.3 Graded Unit

The Graded Unit will take the form of a project which will allow the learner to focus on one of the many areas of interest developed from the study of either of the Massage Units, the *Pathology and Aetiology of Sports Injury* or *Prevention and Management of Sports Injury* Units. Projects will include both primary and secondary research, and draw on elements from most mandatory Units.

4 Recommended entry to the qualification

Entry to this qualification is at the discretion of the centre. The following information on prior knowledge, skills, experience or qualifications that provide suitable preparation for this qualification has been provided by the Qualification Design Team as guidance only.

Learners would benefit from having attained the skills, knowledge and understanding required by one or more of the following or equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

- ◆ Highers: a minimum of two in academic subjects, preferably subject relevance
- ◆ NQ Units/SGA's: at SCQF level 6 in appropriate subject area (eg fitness/health)
- ◆ GCE 'A' Levels in appropriate subjects
- ◆ S/NVQ/S/NVRQs at Level 3 in appropriate subjects
- ◆ Occupationally relevant skills and experience
- ◆ Learners progressing the HND Sports Therapy/BSc Sport and Exercise Science will be expected to take three extra SQA Units from those identified under the HND Sports Therapy award.

4.1 Core Skills entry profile

The Core Skill entry profile provides a summary of the associated assessment activities that exemplify why a particular level has been recommended for this qualification. The information should be used to identify if additional learning support needs to be put in place for learners whose Core Skills profile is below the recommended entry level or whether learners should be encouraged to do an alternative level or learning programme.

Whilst entry to the award is ultimately at the discretion of individual centres, it is anticipated that learners should have attained Core Skills at the following SCQF level prior to undertaking the award.

Core Skill	Recommended SCQF entry profile	Associated assessment activities
Communication	6	Learners will require good communication skills to deal with a range of situations and be effective in the workplace.
Numeracy	5	Learners will require good numeracy skills to complete the qualification.
Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	5	Learners will require a range of IT skills to undertake assignments.
Problem Solving	5	Learners will require good problem solving skills to successfully adapt to changing circumstances and requirements.
Working with Others	5	Learners will require to work with others particularly with client based Units.

5 Additional benefits of the qualification in meeting employer needs

This qualification was designed to meet a specific purpose and what follows are details on how that purpose has been met through mapping of the Units to the aims of the qualification. Through meeting the aims, additional value has been achieved by linking the Unit standards with those defined in National Occupational Standards and/or trade/professional body requirements. In addition, significant opportunities exist for learners to develop the more generic skill, known as Core Skills through doing this qualification.

5.1 Mapping of qualification aims to Units

Code	Unit title	Aims												
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
J7VX 34*	Sports Therapy: Anatomy and Physiology	X		X		X	X		X	X				
H4XV 34	Functional Anatomy	X	X	X		X	X		X	X				
H4XW 34	Basic Subjective and Objective Assessment	X	X	X		X	X		X	X		X	X	
H4XX 35	Clinical Sports Massage	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
H4XY 35	Sports Massage for Events and Special Populations		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
H4Y0 34	Pathology and Aetiology of Sports Injury	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
H4Y1 34	Prevention and Management of Sports Injury	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
H4Y2 34	Sports Therapy: Professional Standards			X	X	X	X	X	X				X	
H4Y3 35	Clinical and Team Experience 1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
H4XP 34	Sports Therapy: Graded Unit 1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		

5.2 Mapping of National Occupational Standards (NOS) and/or trade body standards

Code	Unit title	NOS	
		CNH22	SFHD528
J7VX 34*	Sports Therapy: Anatomy and Physiology	X	
H4XV 34	Functional Anatomy	X	
H4XW 34	Basic Subjective and Objective Assessment	X	X
H4XX 35	Clinical Sports Massage	X	
H4XY 35	Sports Massage for Events and Special Populations	X	
H4Y0 34	Sports Therapy: Professional Standards	X	X
H4Y1 34	Pathology and Aetiology of Sports Injury,	X	X
H4Y2 34	Prevention and Management of Sports Injury	X	X
H4Y3 35	Clinical and Team Experience 1	X	X

See attached detailed list of knowledge elements of the individual NOS and mapping to SQA Units.

All elements of CNH22 are mapped to and integrated within assessment of the following SQA Units **(see Appendix 1)**:

- ◆ *Clinical Sports Massage* (assessed case studies provide a vehicle for verified, practical logged hours)
- ◆ *Sports Massage for Events and Special Populations* (also provides a vehicle for verified, practical logged hours)
- ◆ *Sports Therapy: Professional Standards*
- ◆ *Basic Subjective and Objective Assessment*
- ◆ *Clinical and Team Experience 1* (also provides a vehicle for verified, practical logged hours)

Sports Therapy: Anatomy and Physiology, Functional Anatomy, Pathology and Aetiology of Sports Injury and Prevention and Management of Sports Injury provide underpinning knowledge.

For HNC Soft Tissue Therapy graduates to gain membership to the SMA or STO professional associations, they require 100 hours of logged hands-on practice

All elements of SFHD528 are mapped to and integrated within assessment of the following SQA Units **(See Appendix 2)**:

- ◆ *Clinical and Team Experience 1*
- ◆ *Sports Therapy: Professional Standards*

The Units: *Pathology and Aetiology of Sports Injury and Prevention and Management of Sports Injury* provide underpinning knowledge for elements of SFHD528.

5.3 Mapping of Core Skills development opportunities across the qualification

The following Core Skills are signposted, which means learners will be developing aspects of Core Skills through teaching and learning approaches but not enough to attract automatic certification

Unit code	Unit title	Communication		Numeracy		ICT		Problem Solving			Working with Others	
		Written	Oral	Using Number	Using Graphical Information	Accessing Information	Providing/Creating Information	Critical Thinking	Planning and Organising	Reviewing and Evaluating	Working Co-operatively with Others	Reviewing Co-operative Contribution
J7VX 34*	Sports Therapy: Anatomy and Physiology	X	X	X		X				X	X	
H4XV 34	Functional Anatomy	X	X			X				X	X	
H4XW 34	Basic Subjective and Objective Assessment	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
H4XX 35	Clinical Sports Massage	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
H4XY 35	Sports Massage for Events and Special Populations	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
H4Y0 34	Pathology and Aetiology of Sports Injury	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
H4Y1 34	Prevention and Management of Sports Injuries	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
H4Y2 34	Sports Therapy: Professional Standards	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	
H4Y3 35	Clinical and Team Experience 1	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
H4XP 34	Sports Therapy Graded Unit 1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

5.4 Assessment Strategy for the qualification

- ♦ the recommended assessment method(s) for each Unit, bearing in mind that there may be more than one assessment in a Unit.
- ♦ the conditions in which the evidence must be produced, eg open/closed-book, length of time for assessment (if appropriate)

Unit	Assessment				
	Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3	Outcome 4	Outcome 5
Sports Therapy: Anatomy and Physiology	Closed-book	Closed-book	Closed-book	Closed-book	Closed-book
Functional Anatomy	Closed-book	Practical	Closed-book	Practical	–
Basic Subjective and Objective Assessment	Closed-book	Practical	Practical	–	–
Clinical Sports Massage	Portfolio	Practical	Practical	Practical	–
Sports Massage for Events and Special Populations	Closed-book	Practical	Closed-book	Log book/practical	–
Pathology and Aetiology of Sports Injury	Closed-book	Closed-book	Closed-book and Assignment	Assignment and Presentation	–
Prevention and Management of Sports Injury	Closed-book, Practical and Assignment	Open-book, supervised	Practical	–	–
Sports Therapy: Professional Standards	Portfolio	Portfolio	–	–	–
Clinical and Team Experience 1	Closed-book	Practical	Log book/practical	–	–
Sports Therapy Graded Unit 1	Project	Project	Project	–	–

6 Guidance on approaches to delivery and assessment

6.1 Sequencing/integration of Units

Possible delivery based on a 4–block system (two blocks per semester), although a 3–block system could also be appropriate. Both allow for some essential underpinning knowledge and introduction of practical skill to be front-loaded so that development of the skill and collection of the logged practical hours can occur once initial competence has been gained. There is also evidence to suggest that one-hour Units of learning for theory-based Units are successful in allowing learners to concentrate and assimilate information more effectively.

Below is an indication of a 4–block delivery schedule:

Unit and credit value	2 Semester/4 blocks			
	Hours per week			
	1	2	3	4
Sports Therapy: Anatomy and Physiology — 2 credits	2	2	2	2
Functional Anatomy — 1.5 credits	3	3		
Basic Subjective and Objective Assessment — 0.5 credit		2		
Clinical Sports Massage — 3 credits	6	3	3	
Sports Massage for Events and Special Populations — 0.5 credits			1	1
Pathology and Aetiology of Sports Injury — 1 credit		2	2	
Prevention and Management of Sports Injury — 1 credit (classroom and gym)			2	2
Sports Therapy: Professional Standards — 0.5 credit	1	1		
Clinical and Team Experience 1 — 1 credit				4
Graded Unit 1 — 1 credit			2	2
12 credits	12 hours	13 hours	12 hours	11 hours

An alternative 3-block delivery schedule:

Unit and credit value	3 Blocks		
	Hours per week		
	1	2	3
Sports Therapy: Anatomy and Physiology — 2 credits	2	2	2
Functional Anatomy — 1.5 credits	3	1.5	
Basic Subjective and Objective Assessment — 0.5 credit		1.5	
Clinical Sports Massage — 3 credits	4.5	4.5	
Sports Massage for Events and Special Populations — 0.5 credits			1.5
Pathology and Aetiology of Sports Injury — 1 credit		1.5	1.5
Prevention and Management of Sports Injury — 1 credit (classroom and gym)		1.5	1.5
Sports Therapy: Professional Standards — 0.5 credit	1.5		
Clinical and Team Experience 1 — 1 credit			3
Graded Unit 1 — 1 credit			3
12 credits	11	12.5	12.5

6.1.1 Delivery and assessment of P.R.I.C.E

The P.R.I.C.E (Protection, Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation) principle is no longer recognised as best industry practice to manage soft tissue injuries. Whilst the use of ice is still considered an influencer of afferent pain relief, evidence has now shown working with the inflammatory process gains better outcomes for the athlete. Therefore, the updated acronym discussed by Dubois and Esculier (2019) should be used; P.E.A.C.E & L.O.V.E. (Protect, Elevate, Avoid anti-inflammatory medication, Compression, Educate, Load, Optimism, Vascularisation, Exercise). However, to facilitate meeting the evidence criteria P.R.I.C.E can be assessed within Pathology and Aetiology of Sports Injury (H4Y0 34) and mapped across Prevention and Management of Sports Injury (H4Y1 34) and First Aid for Sport and Fitness (FW5Y 34).

6.2 Recognition of Prior Learning

SQA recognises that learners gain knowledge and skills acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts.

In some instances, a full Group Award may be achieved through the recognition of prior learning. However, it is unlikely that a learner would have the appropriate prior learning and experience to meet all the requirements of a full Group Award.

The recognition of prior learning may **not** be used as a method of assessing in the following types of Units and assessments:

- ◆ HN Graded Units
- ◆ Course and/or external assessments
- ◆ Other integrative assessment Units (which may or not be graded)
- ◆ Certain types of assessment instruments where the standard may be compromised by not using the same assessment method outlined in the Unit
- ◆ Where there is an existing requirement for a licence to practice
- ◆ Where there are specific health and safety requirements
- ◆ Where there are regulatory, professional or other statutory requirements
- ◆ Where otherwise specified in an Assessment Strategy

More information and guidance on the *Recognition of Prior Learning* (RPL) may be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk.

The following sub-sections outline how existing SQA Unit(s) may contribute to this Group Award. Additionally, they also outline how this Group Award may be recognised for professional and articulation purposes.

6.2.1 Articulation and/or progression

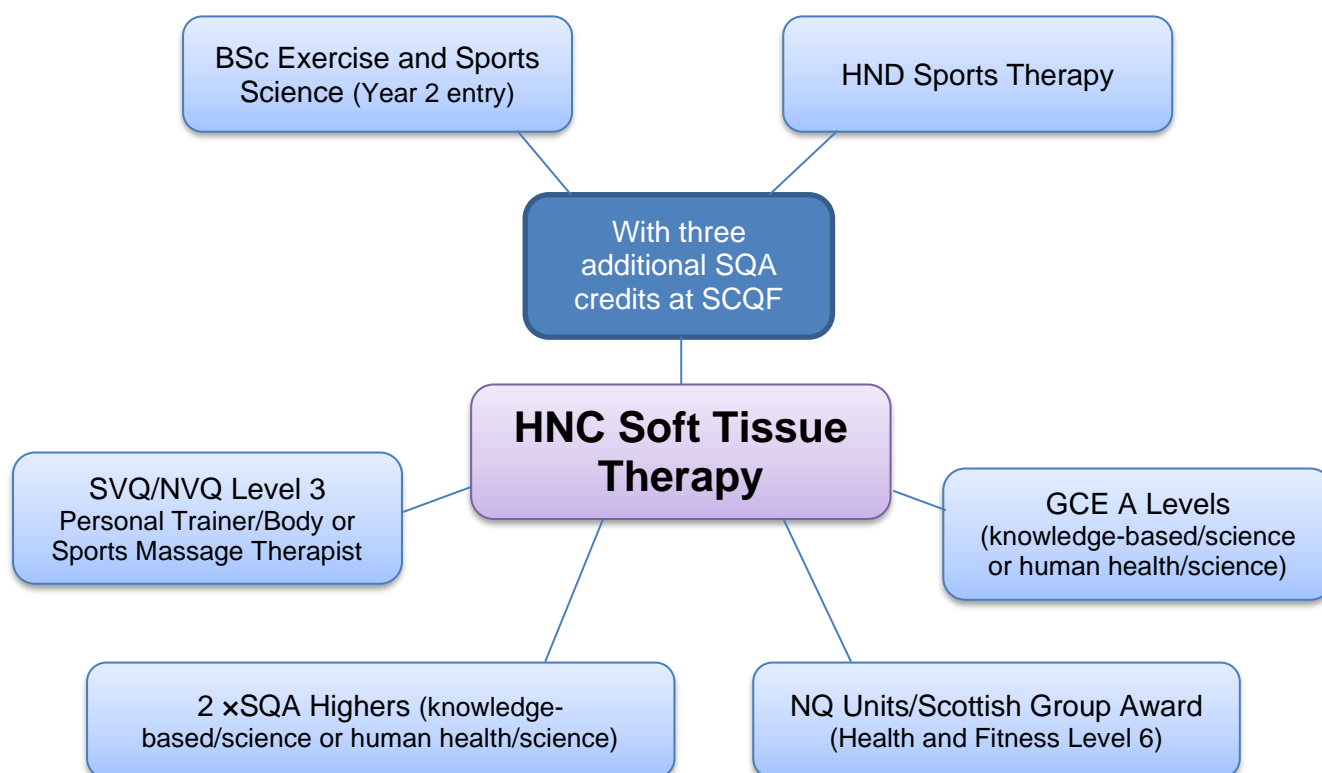
To progress onto HND Sports Therapy or BSc Sport and Exercise Science (Year 2), the learner will be required to undertake three additional credits drawn from the revised HND Sports Therapy award. This must include:

- ◆ *First Aid for Sport and Fitness* (0.5 credit/SCQF level 7)
- ◆ *Sports Therapy: Exercise Principles and Testing* (1 credit/SCQF level 7)
- ◆ *Stretch Training* (0.5 credit/SCQF level 7) (from FHE framework)

and one additional credit such as:

- ◆ *Nutrition for Fitness, Health and Exercise* (1 credit/SCQF level 7) (from *FHE framework*)
- ◆ *Getting Started in Business* (DK2K 34)

Progression Chart



6.2.2 Professional recognition

The HNC award will be endorsed by the SMA as long as all criteria are adhered to and the learner produces verified documentation to indicate 100 logged hours of competent treatment across the range of clients identified in the massage Units. Logged hours can be drawn from:

- ◆ *Assessment of Case Studies from Clinical Sports Massage* (approximately 16 hours)
- ◆ *Sports Massage for Events and Special Populations* (minimum 10 hours)
- ◆ *Clinical and Team Experience 1* (approximately 74 hours)

6.3 Opportunities for e-assessment

Although there are not currently specific materials available, some of the Units may lend themselves to the use of e-portfolios.

6.4 Support materials

It is anticipated that ASPs will be available for all Units in HNC award.

6.5 Resource requirements

Centres should be able to provide a 'clinic' style environment in which learners can perform soft tissue therapy under simulated and real work environments. Learners should have access to a wide variety of current texts, on-line resources and relevant journals to support the level of independent research and underpinning knowledge required. As a minimum, journals should include SportEx Dynamics and SportEx Medicine.

7 General information for centres

Equality and inclusion

The Unit specifications making up this Group Award have been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners will be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence. Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

Internal and external verification

All instruments of assessment used within this/these qualification(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* (www.sqa.org.uk/GuideToAssessment).

8 Glossary of terms

Embedded Core Skills: is where the assessment evidence for the Unit also includes full evidence for complete Core Skill or Core Skill components. A learner successfully completing the Unit will be automatically certificated for the Core Skill. (This depends on the Unit having been successfully audited and validated for Core Skills certification.)

Finish date: The end of a Group Award's lapsing period is known as the finish date. After the finish date, the Group Award will no longer be live and the following applies:

- ◆ learners may not be entered for the Group Award
- ◆ the Group Award will continue to exist only as an archive record on the Awards Processing System (APS)

Graded Unit: Graded Units assess learners' ability to integrate what they have learned while working towards the Units of the Group Award. Their purpose is to add value to the Group Award, making it more than the sum of its parts, and to encourage learners to retain and adapt their skills and knowledge.

Lapsing date: When a Group Award is entered into its lapsing period, the following will apply:

- ◆ the Group Award will be deleted from the relevant catalogue
- ◆ the Group Award specification will remain until the qualification reaches its finish date at which point it will be removed from SQA's website and archived
- ◆ no new centres may be approved to offer the Group Award
- ◆ centres should only enter learners whom they expect to complete the Group Award during the defined lapsing period

SQA credit value: The credit value allocated to a Unit gives an indication of the contribution the Unit makes to an SQA Group Award. An SQA credit value of 1 given to an SQA Unit represents approximately 40 hours of programmed learning, teaching and assessment.

SCQF: The Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) provides the national common framework for describing all relevant programmes of learning and qualifications in Scotland. SCQF terminology is used 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: SCQF credit points provide a means of describing and comparing the amount of learning that is required to complete a qualification at a given level of the Framework. One National Unit credit is equivalent to 6 SCQF credit points. One National Unit credit at Advanced Higher and one Higher National Unit credit (irrespective of level) is equivalent to 8 SCQF credit points.

SCQF levels: The level a qualification is assigned within the framework is an indication of how hard it is to achieve. The SCQF covers 12 levels of learning. HNCs and HNDs are available at SCQF levels 7 and 8 respectively. Higher National Units will normally be at levels 6–9 and Graded Units will be at level 7 and 8. National Qualification Group Awards are available at SCQF levels 2–6 and will normally be made up of National Units which are available from SCQF levels 2–7.

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

Signposted Core Skills: refers to opportunities to develop Core Skills arise in learning and teaching but are not automatically certificated.

History of changes

It is anticipated that changes will take place during the life of the qualification and this section will record these changes. This document is the latest version and incorporates the changes summarised below. Centres are advised to check SQA's APS Navigator to confirm they are using the up to date qualification structure.

NOTE: Where a Unit is revised by another Unit:

- ◆ No new centres may be approved to offer the Unit which has been revised.
- ◆ Centres should only enter learners for the Unit which has been revised where they are expected to complete the Unit before its finish date.

Version Number		
06	Guidance: Additional guidance added to section 6.1.1 with specific relation to the delivery and assessment of P.R.I.C.E	27/06/24
05	Revision of Unit: J7VX 34 Sports Therapy: Anatomy and Physiology has replaced H7VD 34 Sports Therapy: Anatomy and Physiology which finishes on 31/07/2025	27/09/23
04	Revision of Unit: H4TD 34 Flexibility Training has been replaced by J420 34 and will finish on 31/07/2024.	06/03/2020
03	Revision of Unit: DP2F 34 Stretch Training <i>has been revised by</i> H4TD 34 Flexibility training and <i>finishes on</i> 31/07/2015.	05/01/2015
02	Revision of Unit: H4XT 34 Sports Therapy: Anatomy and Physiology <i>has been revised by</i> H7VD 34 Sports Therapy: Anatomy and Physiology. H4XT 34 <i>finished on</i> 31/07/2014.	01/12/2014

Acknowledgement

SQA acknowledges the valuable contribution that Scotland's colleges have made to the development of this qualification.

9 General information for learners

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

The Group Award HNC Soft Tissue Therapy has been designed for those people who want to perform hands-on treatments with people who participate in sport. The treatment could be designed to help an athlete optimise his/her performance, or help aid the recovery from injury that has been diagnosed by an appropriate medical professional. Achievement of the award would allow you to work with any athlete from recreational through to elite level performers. It would allow you to work within a 'sports medicine team', working beside other professionals who look after athletes, such as sports medicine doctors, physiotherapists, general and strength and conditioning coaches and nutritionalists. It would also allow you to work independently in a clinic-type environment.

To be accepted onto the course, you will be expected to hold the following qualifications

- ◆ a minimum of two 'Highers' in academic subjects, preferably in subjects related to human anatomy, health and/or fitness
- OR:**
- ◆ NQ Units/SGA's: at SCQF level 6 in appropriate subject area (eg fitness/health)
- ◆ GCE 'A' Levels in appropriate subjects
- ◆ S/NVQ/S/NVRQs at Level 3 in appropriate subjects
- ◆ Occupationally relevant skills and experience

The Group Award has 10 mandatory Units at SCQF levels 7 and 8. Although each Unit can be taken on its own without completing the Group Award, some Units do require that you have the knowledge of previous Units in order to complete them. This is clearly outlined in each Unit specification.

Each Unit specification gives detailed information on the purpose of the Unit and details the activities which will enable you to combine the essential knowledge and practical skills to be achieved on completion of the Units. In order to treat sports people appropriately with soft tissue therapy, you will need to achieve the following Units:

- ◆ *Sports Therapy: Anatomy and Physiology*
- ◆ *Functional Anatomy*
- ◆ *Basic Objective and Subjective Assessment*
- ◆ *Clinical Sports Massage*
- ◆ *Sports Massage for Events and Special Populations*
- ◆ *Pathology and Aetiology of Sports Injury*
- ◆ *Prevention and Management of Sports Injury*
- ◆ *Sports Therapy: Professional Standards*
- ◆ *Clinical and Team Experience 1*
- ◆ *Sports Therapy: Graded Unit 1*

During your practical soft tissue work you will log 100 hours of practice that demonstrates your competence at using a variety of different techniques. This log, together with the Group Award, is the basic requirement for you to achieve membership of a professional association such as the SMA or STO. Membership of such an association assures the public that you are not only appropriately qualified, but will work within strict ethical guidelines laid down by the industry.

You may elect to continue your studies to gain greater knowledge and skill in assessing and treating athletes. By completing the equivalent of three extra SQA credits in your first year of study, you will have the following choices:

- ◆ HND Sports Therapy
- ◆ BSc Sport and Exercise Therapy (Napier University, Year 2)
- ◆ BSc Sports Therapy (Teesside University, Year 1)

The 3 extra credits are drawn from mandatory Units that comprise the HND Sports Therapy Group Award. The exact Units chosen are at the discretion of the delivering centre and would be discussed at interview and confirmed at the start of the course.

Appendix 1: Mapping of NOS cnh22 Plan, apply and evaluate complex massage/soft tissue methods

Cnh22 Knowledge Criteria		SQA Units								
		Anatomy and Physiology	Functional Anatomy	Pathology Aetiology	Prevention and M' ment	Basic OandS Assess	Clinical Sp. Massage	Sp. Mass @ events	Clinical and Team Ex 1	Prof Standards
K1	Anatomy, physiology and pathology appropriate to the massage methods and contexts covered by the Unit	W	W, P	W	W					
K2	The importance of applying the underpinning knowledge of anatomy, physiology and pathology to the practice of massage						W, P			
K3	The accepted standards of practice and recognition of client's presenting with pre-existing conditions and problems						W, P	W, P	P	
K4	The importance of accurate client assessment and record keeping					W, P	P	P	P	W
K5	The physiological and neurological effects of the massage/soft tissue methods covered by this Unit						W			
K6	The content of massage mediums in relation to allergic reaction and contraindication						W			
K7	The psychology of injury as it applies to massage/soft tissue methods						W			
K8	The relevance of nutrition — hydration, food fuels, chemical fuels	W*								
K9	The importance of physiology in understanding the client's needs						W			
K10	How to conform to protocols for all forms of communication					P	P	P	P	W
K11	The importance of cleanliness and hygiene and the standards that should be applied when applying massage in a variety of situations and environments						P	P	P	W
K12	The importance of maintaining the dignity and comfort of the client throughout the massage process						P	P	P	W
K13	The importance of ensuring the client is correctly positioned						P	P	P	
K14	The importance of having a suitable chaperone present when working with clients and the principles to observe in relation to protection of children and vulnerable adults and child protection legislation						P	P	P	W
K15	The importance of obtaining informed consent prior to any assessment and application or course of massage — practitioners are required to tell the client anything that would substantially affect the client's decision; such information typically includes the nature and purpose of the massage, its risks and consequences and any alternative courses of treatment						P	P	P	W
K16	The importance of working within the limits of informed consent						P	P	P	W

Cnh22 Knowledge Criteria		SQA Units								
		Anatomy and Physiology	Functional Anatomy	Pathology Aetiology	Prevention and M' ment	Basic OandS Assess	Clinical Sp. Massage	Sp. Mass @ events	Clinical and Team Ex 1	Prof Standards
K17	The importance of obtaining information on the possible cautions and contraindications to massage before commencing any treatment and how to obtain this information						P	P	P	W
K18	The indications for massage						W, P	P	P	
K19	What the cautions and contraindications to massage are, for example: acute trauma, tumour, open wounds, frostbite, acute soft tissue injury, circulatory disorders, fractures, thrombosis, bursitis, periostitis, myositis ossificans, infections, skin disorders, allergic conditions, risk of haemorrhage, areas of altered skin sensation, mental incapacity						W, P	W, P	P	
K20	The agreed standards of personal hygiene, dress and appearance and why they are important					P	P	P	P	W
K21	Current safety legislation for the types of equipment used in massage						P	P	P	W
K22	The importance of making sure the equipment and the area provide for the comfort and dignity of the client					P	P	P	P	W
K23	The correct materials to use for the range of massage methods covered by the Unit						W, P	P	P	
K24	The importance of explaining the aims and objectives of massage to the client						W, P	W, P	P	
K25	How to obtain relevant information					P	P	P	P	W
K26	How to observe, palpate, assess and move the area to be massaged in advance and why					W, P	W, P	P	P	
K27	The importance of referral to relevant professionals when necessary and of working within your scope of practice					W, P	P	P	P	
K28	How to prepare the body area for the range of methods listed and why						W, P	P	P	
K29	Why the client should understand the nature and purpose of the massage and the equipment being used						W		P	W
K30	How to apply the range of methods listed in the Unit with particular reference to: contour of hands, position (stance/posture), depth of pressure, direction of movement, the medium used, speed and rhythm of movement						P	P	P	
K31	The application of the range of methods to the range of conditions/situations listed						P	P	P	
K32	Situations in which you should and should not remove the massage medium						W, P	W, P		
K33	The importance of evaluating the effectiveness of massage						W	W	W	W

Cnh22 Knowledge Criteria		SQA Units								
		Anatomy and Physiology	Functional Anatomy	Pathology Aetiology	Prevention and M' ment	Basic OandS Assess	Clinical Sp. Massage	Sp. Mass @ events	Clinical and Team Ex 1	Prof Standards
K34	How to obtain feedback from the client on the effects of massage						W, P	P	P	
K35	The possible adverse reactions to massage and how to identify these						W, P		W, P	
K36	Why it is important to provide reassurance and opportunities for further feedback and how to do so						P		P	W
K37	How and when to report/refer to relevant health care professionals, why it is important to follow their directions and recognising working within scope of practice					W				W
K38	The details of the massage and its effects that should be recorded						P	P	P	
K39	The importance of accurate and confidential record keeping and safely storing records									W
K40	Legal requirements for the storage of information on clients and the methods you have applied									W

Key: W = written evidence; P= practical evidence.

K8 — knowledge criteria also covered in the Nutrition Unit, additional questions may be required if this Unit is not taken.

Appendix 2: Mapping to NOS SFHD528: Apply hot and cold techniques to clients in a sport and activity context

SFHD528 Knowledge Criteria		SQA Units					
		Pathology Aetiology	Prevention and M' ment	Basic OandS Assess	Clinical Sp. Massage	Clinical and Team Ex 1	Prof Standards
K1	The importance of applying the underpinning knowledge of anatomy, physiology and pathology to hot and cold technique	W	W				
K2	The accepted standards of practice and recognition of client's presenting condition with injuries					W, P	
K3	Indications for the application of hot and cold techniques and the advantages and disadvantages of different types	W	W			W	
K4	The importance of accurate assessment and record keeping			W			W
K5	The physical and physiological effects of hot and cold techniques	W	W			W, P	
K6	The importance of cleanliness and hygiene and the standards that should be applied when applying hot and cold techniques in a variety of situations and environments					W, P	
K7	The importance of maintaining dignity and comfort of the participant throughout the hot and cold technique process					P	
K8	The importance of understanding and obeying the rules of sport		W				
K9	The importance of ensuring the participant is correctly positioned					P	
K10	The importance of having a suitable chaperone present when working with participants and the principles to observe in relation to child protection and child protection legislation						W
K11	The importance of obtaining informed consent prior to any application of basic hot and cold technique – practitioners are required to tell the client anything that would substantially affect the client's decision; such information typically includes the nature and purpose of the hot and cold technique, its risks and consequences and any alternative courses of treatment					W, P	W
K12	The importance of obtaining information on the possible dangers of and contra-indications/precautions to hot and cold technique before commencing any treatment and how to obtain this information					P	
K13	What the dangers and contraindications to hot and cold technique are, for example: acute trauma, tumour, open wounds, frostbite, acute soft tissue injury, circulatory disorders, fractures, thrombosis, bursitis, periostitis, myositis ossificans, infections, skin disorders, allergic conditions, risk of haemorrhage, areas of altered skin sensation, mental incapacity.	W	W			W, P	
K14	The accepted standards of personal hygiene, dress and appearance and why they are important					P	W
K15	Current safety legislation for the types of equipment used in hot and cold technique					P	W
K16	The importance of making sure the equipment and the area provide for the comfort and dignity of the participant					P	

SFHD528 Knowledge Criteria		SQA Units					
		Pathology Aetiology	Prevention and M' ment	Basic OandS Assess	Clinical Sp. Massage	Clinical and Team Ex 1	Prof Standards
K17	The correct materials to use for the range of hot and cold techniques covered by the Unit					P	
K18	The importance of explaining the aims and objectives of hot and cold technique to the client		W			P	
K19	How to obtain relevant information			P	P	P	W
K20	How to observe and palpate the area in advance and why			W, P	W, P	P	W
K21	How to prepare the body area for the range of techniques listed and why					P	
K22	Why the participant should understand the nature and purpose of the hot and cold technique and the equipment being used					W, P	
K23	How to apply the range of techniques listed in the Unit					P	
K24	The application of the range of techniques to the range of conditions/situations listed					P	
K25	Why it is important to cleanse the area prior to and following hot and cold technique and how to do so					W, P	
K26	The importance of evaluating the effectiveness of hot and cold technique					W	
K27	How to obtain feedback from the participant on the effects of hot and cold technique					W, P	
K28	The possible adverse reactions to hot and cold technique and how to identify these	W	W			W, P	
K29	Why it is important to provide reassurance and opportunities for further feedback and how to do so				W, P	W, P	
K30	How to report/refer on progress to relevant and appropriately qualified health care professionals, why it is important to follow their directions and recognise working within scope of practice						W
K31	The details of the hot and cold technique and its effects that should be recorded					W, P	
K32	The importance of accurate and confidential record keeping and safely storing records					P	W
K33	Legal requirements for the storage of information on participants and the treatment they have received						W