

NextGen: HN unit specification

Anatomy and Physiology in Reproductive Health (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: JCHU 47

SCQF level: 7 (16 SCQF credit points)

Valid from: August 2026

This unit specification provides detailed information about the unit to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year. It is for lecturers and assessors, and contains all the mandatory information you need to deliver and assess the unit.

Published: June 2026 (version 1.0)

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Unit purpose

This unit provides learners with an introduction to the anatomy and physiology of the human body and the changes that occur during conception, pregnancy, birth, and the postnatal period. Learners develop knowledge on gestational conditions and the impact that pregnancy has on existing conditions.

Learners can use this knowledge in their everyday life and work. The unit is mandatory in the perinatal pathway of HNC Healthcare Practice, but learners can also study it on a stand-alone basis, and it allows progression to higher education.

The unit is primarily intended for learners who want to take up a career or further study in midwifery practice, but it is also appropriate for those who want to develop their knowledge and understanding of human anatomy, physiology, disease, and the changes that occur during the perinatal period.

Entry to the unit is at your centre's discretion. Learners should have good communication skills, both written and oral. Before they start the unit, we recommend they have one or more of the following:

- Higher English or a qualification equivalent to SCQF level 6
- the completion of a pre-course interview, part of which could take the form of a written assignment

Unit outcomes

Learners who complete this unit can:

1. explain the levels of organisation and body processes essential to maintain health and wellbeing
2. explain the structure and function of selected body systems
3. investigate gestational conditions and explain predisposing factors

Evidence requirements

Learners must provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can:

- understand the levels of organisation from simple levels: chemicals to living cells, tissues, organs and systems
- explain the importance of fluid balance and understand the movement of substances across the cell membrane in passive and active movement
- understand and explain the importance of homeostasis and the homeostatic monitoring feedback mechanisms to the process of wellbeing
- explain the structure and function of two of the named systems
- investigate one medical condition associated with menstrual health
- investigate one gestational condition, including predisposing factors, potential implications and outcomes
- discuss the impact that pregnancy has on one pre-existing health condition

Knowledge and skills

Knowledge	Skills
Outcome 1 Learners should understand: - the levels of organisation, from chemicals to the body as a whole - the importance of fluid balance and homeostasis in health - the movement of substances across the plasma membrane, including: - diffusion - osmosis - filtration - active transport - the chemical changes that occur during the perinatal period	Outcome 1 Learners can: - explain the importance of fluid balance - explain the importance of homeostasis
Outcome 2 Learners should understand the structure and function of the: - cardiovascular system - respiratory system - digestive system - excretory system - endocrine system - nervous system - musculoskeletal system - integumentary system - immune system - male and female reproductive systems	Outcome 2 Learners can: explain the structure and function of the selected body systems

Knowledge	Skills
Outcome 3 Learners should understand: • the structure and function of the menstrual cycle • common medical conditions associated with menstrual health, for example endometriosis and polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) • gestational conditions and their development during pregnancy • the risk factors and complications associated with gestational conditions • how pregnancy can affect pre-existing health conditions • the importance of early identification and appropriate care planning	Outcome 3 Learners can: • investigate and describe one medical condition related to menstrual health • identify signs, symptoms, and implications of menstrual health conditions • investigate one gestational condition, including predisposing factors and potential outcomes • discuss the implications of gestational conditions, for both the pregnant individual and the foetus • discuss the impact of pregnancy on one pre-existing health condition • apply knowledge to suggest appropriate support or referral pathways

Meta-skills

You must give learners opportunities to develop their meta-skills throughout this unit. We have suggested how to incorporate the most relevant ones into the unit content, but you may find other opportunities.

Self-management

This includes focusing, integrity, adapting and initiative. The most relevant are:

- focusing:
 - engaging in ongoing research and self-evaluation through formative assessment activities
- integrity:
 - reflecting on personal values and development, with evidence demonstrated through assessment tasks
- adapting:
 - working effectively in teams
 - responding to practical challenges
 - showing flexibility and resilience
- initiative:
 - conducting independent research
 - collaborating with peers and professionals to share knowledge and enthusiasm

Social intelligence

This includes feeling, communicating and collaborating. The most relevant are:

- feeling:
 - reflecting on personal values and development
 - demonstrating self-awareness and empathy
- communicating:
 - participating in group discussions and practical tasks
 - demonstrating clear and respectful communication
- collaborating:
 - working cooperatively in team-based activities and practical scenarios
 - contributing to shared goals.

Innovation

This includes curiosity, sense-making and critical thinking. The most relevant are:

- curiosity:
 - exploring new ideas
 - engaging in practical tasks that encourage inquiry and exploration
- sense-making:
 - interpreting and evaluating information from various sources to build understanding
- critical thinking:
 - analysing research and applying evidence to make informed decisions and solve problems

Literacies

This unit provides opportunities to develop the following literacies.

Numeracy

Learners develop numeracy skills by:

- analysing statistics with the relevant data

Communication

Learners develop communication skills by:

- discussing understanding of theory and own personal reflections with other learners in group activities
- collaborating with individuals and colleagues when working on group tasks
- crediting sources of information and the impact this has on knowledge and understanding

Digital

Learners develop digital skills by:

- using digital platforms to access information to support learning and understanding
- using a PC or other devices to develop coherent portfolio and project work
- using digital platforms to engage and collaborate with professionals and carers in the sector
- completing risk assessments using digital communication

Learning for Sustainability

Throughout this unit, you should encourage learners to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of sustainability.

This includes:

- a general understanding of social, economic and environmental sustainability
- a general understanding of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- a deeper understanding of subject-specific sustainability
- the confidence to apply the skills, knowledge, understanding and values they develop in the next stage of their life

Learners should explore how social, economic, and environmental factors influence reproductive health. This particularly includes SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing, and SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities. Learners examine how access to reproductive healthcare, maternal health, and health education contribute to sustainable development, and how reducing inequalities, for example by eliminating discriminatory practices and promoting inclusive healthcare, supports better outcomes for individuals and communities. By investigating menstrual and gestational conditions, understanding body systems, and considering the impact of pregnancy on pre-existing conditions, learners gain subject-specific insights into sustainable health practices. This knowledge empowers them to make informed decisions, advocate for equitable care, and apply these values in future learning, work, and life contexts.

Delivery of unit

This unit is a mandatory unit in the HNC Healthcare Practice perinatal pathway. It helps learners who want to work in perinatal care settings by providing the appropriate underpinning anatomical knowledge essential for care support. It also allows learners access to degree-level care-related courses.

You should deliver the unit in 80 hours. You should use a variety of teaching methods to stimulate and promote independent learning in addition to taught hours. The amount of time you allocate to each outcome is at your discretion. We suggest the following distribution of time, including assessment:

Outcome 1 — Explain the levels of organisation and body processes essential to maintain health and wellbeing (20 hours)

Outcome 2 — Explain the structure and function of selected body systems (35 hours)

Outcome 3 — Investigate gestational conditions and explain predisposing factors (25 hours)

Additional guidance

The guidance in this section is not mandatory.

Content and context for this unit

Explain the levels of organisation and body processes essential to maintain health and wellbeing (outcome 1)

Learners should be able to explain how:

- living matter begins with simple chemicals formed into substances that make up cells, the basic units of life
- specialised groups of cells form tissues
- tissues function together as organs
- organs functioning together for the same general purpose make up organ systems
- organ systems work together to maintain the body

Understanding this is essential, particularly for learners who have not studied the human body before. Learners must understand the importance of fluid balance and distribution of fluid in the human body, and that the amount and composition of fluids must be regulated at all times. You should explain the extracellular and intracellular fluids, as this is essential in terms of understanding homeostasis and fluid movement through cellular membranes. The movement of substances across the plasma membrane is essential for learners' understanding of the human body. The description and understanding of a semi-permeable membrane is important: how water molecules are always able to penetrate with ease, however, some particles, for example proteins, are too large to pass through.

Explain the structure and function of selected body systems (outcome 2)

Learners should understand the structure and function of 10 body systems:

- cardiovascular
- respiratory
- digestive
- excretory
- endocrine
- nervous
- musculoskeletal
- integumentary
- immune
- male and female reproductive systems

While you may focus on more prominent systems, such as the cardiovascular or respiratory systems, you must teach all 10, regardless of learners' progression or employment goals.

You assess learners on two systems. Understanding the structure and function of these systems is essential for learners who may not have studied the human body previously. Each system contributes to overall homeostasis and interacts with other systems to support life processes. Learners should explain how each system is made of specific organs and tissues that work together to perform essential functions for maintaining health and wellbeing. For example, the cardiovascular system includes the heart and blood vessels that transport oxygen and nutrients, while the respiratory system enables gas exchange through the lungs.

Investigate gestational conditions and explain predisposing factors (outcome 3)

Learners develop a foundational understanding of how menstrual and gestational health conditions can affect women and individuals during the perinatal period. You should introduce learners to a range of medical and gestational conditions relevant

to menstrual health and pregnancy, and support them to explore causes, symptoms, and implications for care.

Learners should investigate medical conditions associated with menstrual health. This may include conditions such as PCOS, endometriosis, fibroids, or pelvic inflammatory disease. Learners should understand how these conditions may affect fertility, pregnancy, and overall wellbeing. Learners should also explain one gestational condition, such as gestational diabetes, pre-eclampsia, or hyperemesis gravidarum. They should explore the predisposing factors associated with the chosen condition, which may include genetic, lifestyle, or environmental influences. You should encourage learners to consider how early identification and appropriate management can improve outcomes for both the pregnant individual and foetus or neonate.

Learners should also explore pre-existing health conditions, such as asthma, epilepsy, diabetes, or thyroid disorders. They should research how pregnancy may alter the course or management of the condition, and how healthcare professionals can support women and individuals to maintain their health and wellbeing throughout the perinatal period. Learners should use current clinical guidelines and evidence-based resources to support their understanding. They should also consider the importance of multidisciplinary care and the role of effective communication in supporting women and individuals with complex health needs during pregnancy.

Resources

Learners may find the following resources useful:

- National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines
- Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) guidelines
- Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists website
- NHS Education Scotland website
- Health Improvement Scotland (HIS) Right Decisions
- Carpenter, J. and Hunter, L. (2025) *The Anatomy and Physiology Textbook for Midwives*, Routledge eBooks. Available at:
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003227571> [accessed February 2026]

Approaches to delivery

You should enable learners to link their learning to conditions they'll encounter during their practice placement, and to understand them in the wider context of predisposing factors.

You can also link to aspects covered in the Professional Practice in Healthcare Settings unit, such as health inequalities, influences on health and the social context of health.

Approaches to assessment

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.

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.

You can assess this unit by multiple-choice and/or restricted-response questions for outcomes 1 and 2, and an investigative report for outcome 3.

The assessment for outcome 2 should comprise of a maximum of two body systems. Learners should not know which systems will be assessed prior to the assessment.

The assessment for outcome 3 can take various formats, such as:

- a written report
- an informative leaflet
- a presentation
- an academic poster
- an interactive resource

Learners must submit a reference and/or bibliography page. You should guide them to research common conditions that are statistically relevant to health in contemporary Scotland.

We recommend a pass mark of 60% for outcomes 1 and 2 — ensuring that learners have met specified evidence requirements. Remediation should occur for learners achieving 56 to 59% for each assessment. For those learners achieving 55% and under, you must provide an alternative assessment.

We suggest that learners achieving between 56 and 59% need only be assessed on those parts that were not achieved, and learners achieving 55% and under should be reassessed using a different assessment.

Equality and inclusion

This unit is designed to be as fair and as accessible as possible with no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment.

You must consider the needs of individual learners when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled learners and those with additional support needs is available on the [assessment arrangements web page](#).

Information for learners

Anatomy and Physiology in Reproductive Health (SCQF level 7)

This information explains:

- what the unit is about
- what you should know or be able to do before you start
- what you need to do during the unit
- opportunities for further learning and employment

Unit information

This unit enables you to develop and demonstrate a sound knowledge and understanding of the normal functioning of the human body and its systems. Physiology focuses on how the body's systems work together to support life and maintain health. The unit is structured around three outcomes, each requiring independent study alongside taught sessions.

Outcome 1 introduces the organisation of the human body, including how water and other substances move in and between cells. You are introduced to key physiological concepts and terminology, some of which may be new. A solid understanding of this outcome is essential, as it forms the foundation for the rest of the unit.

Outcome 2 explores the structure and function of 10 major body systems. You are assessed on two systems, but all systems are covered in teaching to ensure a comprehensive understanding of human physiology.

Outcome 3 focuses on reproductive health, giving you the opportunity to investigate menstrual and gestational conditions and their impact on women and individuals during the perinatal period. You explore causes, symptoms, and implications for

care, and may find opportunities to link this learning with other units in the qualification.

Assessment for the unit may be split into two parts: a combined assessment for outcomes 1 and 2, and a separate investigation for outcome 3.

This is a challenging but rewarding unit that provides essential underpinning knowledge if you want to progress to degree-level study or apply your learning in health and social care settings. The unit contributes to your overall final grade.

Meta-skills

Throughout this unit, you develop meta-skills that are useful for the healthcare practice sector.

Meta-skills are transferable behaviours and abilities that help you adapt and succeed in life, study and work. There are three categories of meta-skills: self-management, social intelligence and innovation.

Self-management

This meta-skill includes:

- focusing:
 - engaging in ongoing research and self-evaluation through formative assessment activities
- integrity:
 - reflecting on personal values and development, with evidence demonstrated through assessment tasks
- adapting:
 - working effectively in teams
 - responding to practical challenges
 - showing flexibility and resilience

- initiative:
 - conducting independent research
 - collaborating with peers and professionals to share knowledge and enthusiasm

Social intelligence

This meta-skill includes:

- feeling:
 - reflecting on personal values and development
 - demonstrating self-awareness and empathy
- communicating:
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Innovation

This meta-skill includes:

- curiosity:
 - exploring new ideas
 - engaging in practical tasks that encourage inquiry and exploration
- sense-making:
 - interpreting and evaluating information from various sources to build understanding

- critical thinking:
 - analysing research and applying evidence to make informed decisions and solve problems

Learning for Sustainability

Throughout this unit, you develop skills, knowledge and understanding of sustainability.

You learn about social, economic and environmental sustainability principles and how they relate to the healthcare practice sector. You also develop an understanding of the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#).

You develop your understanding of sustainability and how it applies to reproductive health and the wider healthcare sector. You explore the principles of social, economic, and environmental sustainability, and gain insight into how these intersect with healthcare delivery, access, and outcomes. The unit also introduces the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with particular focus on:

- Goal 3 — Good Health and Wellbeing:
 - includes reducing maternal and adult perinatal mortality, ending preventable deaths of newborns and children under age five, promoting mental health, ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare, and strengthening health systems
- Goal 10 — Reduced Inequalities:
 - focuses on promoting social, economic, and political inclusion, ensuring equal opportunities, and eliminating discriminatory practices that affect access to healthcare

You develop a general understanding of sustainability concepts, a deeper understanding of how these relate to reproductive health, and the confidence to apply this knowledge in future learning, employment, and community settings. This includes recognising the importance of equitable access to reproductive healthcare,

understanding the long-term impact of health conditions on women and individuals, and families, and considering how sustainable practices can improve health outcomes and reduce inequalities across populations.

Administrative information

Published: June 2026 (version 1.0)

Superclass: PA

History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date

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