Group Award Specification for:

Professional Development Award (PDA) in Developing Professional Practice in Therapeutic Horticulture at SCQF level 7

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1. Introduction

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 higher education institutes (HEIs) of the aims and purpose of the qualification.
- Provide details of the range of learners the qualification is suitable for and progression opportunities.

This group award specification outlines the Professional Development Award (PDA) in Developing Professional Practice in Therapeutic Horticulture (in association with Trellis) at SCQF level 7, which was validated September 2026. It provides background on the development of the qualification, its overall aims, and guidance for educators on learner access, award structure, and approaches to delivery.

This group award is designed for learners with a strong interest in therapeutic horticulture who wish to deepen their understanding of the health and social care horticultural theory and practices that underpin effective therapeutic horticulture services. It is suitable for those already working in the sector and seeking a recognised qualification, as well as for individuals in health and social care or horticultural roles or those who are volunteering or not yet employed in these sectors but seek a career in the therapeutic horticulture field or wish to broaden their skills as part of their continuing professional development.

On completion of the award, learners will have developed a comprehensive understanding of the health and social care principles involved in supporting individuals with a wide range of needs. They will also acquire practical horticultural and therapeutic horticulture knowledge and skills and learn how to integrate these effectively to deliver safe, engaging and meaningful therapeutic horticulture activities across a variety of settings.

The qualification will be suitable for a range of different learners, including:

- Learners progressing from National certificate qualifications in Health and social care and Horticulture
- Those already in employment in the Therapeutic Horticulture, Health and social care and horticulture industries wishing to gain a formal recognition of their skills
- Adults returning to education and are seeking a career change or pursuing an interest in Therapeutic Horticulture
- Volunteers in community gardens or projects and Therapeutic Horticulture settings who wish to gain a deeper understanding of the industry

This group award has been designed to allow learners to progress from existing well-established qualifications, for example the HNC in Social Services at SCQF level 7, which contains mandatory unit H8KC 34 Leadership Starts with Me; HNC Healthcare Practice which contains mandatory unit J5R8 34 Therapeutic Relationships: Understanding Behaviour or HNC Horticulture which contains mandatory unit F1JA 34 Horticultural Practices.

Upon completion of the qualification, learners may be able to gain employment in a wide range of settings, including:

- As a gardener within a social or community horticulture project or organisation
- As a Therapeutic Horticulture practitioner in settings such as care homes, community health programmes, hospitals, schools, prisons and specialist health services
- Self-employment
- As advisors or trainers at support organisations such as Thrive and Trellis
- Early career entry into health and social care roles

In addition to the above employment opportunities, learners may be able to progress to:

- Relevant subjects at HNC and HND or degree level study
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD) qualifications at Trellis

- Registered TH practitioner status with the newly formed Association of Social and Therapeutic Horticulture (ASTH), the UK professional body) when this is available
- Senior, supervisory practitioner with responsibility for other less experienced or qualified staff, overseeing students on placement or supervising staff

2. Qualification structure

This group award is made up of 6 Qualifications Scotland unit credits. It comprises 48 SCQF credit points all of which are at SCQF level 7. A mapping of Core Skills development opportunities is available in Section 5.3.

The structure consists of five mandatory units; the learner is required to achieve all five to gain the award.

2.1 Structure

4 code	2 code	Unit title	Unit credits	SCQF credit points	SCQF level
F1JA	34	Horticultural Practices	2	16	7
H8KC	34	Leadership Starts with Me	1	8	7
J5R8	34	Therapeutic Relationships: Understanding Behaviour	1	8	7
JDHF	34	Principles of Therapeutic Horticulture	1	8	7
JSA6	34	Therapeutic Horticulture: Design and Implementation	1	8	7

3. Aims of the qualification

The principal aim of the qualification is to enable learners to develop the knowledge and skills required to support individuals with diverse needs, gain competency in core horticultural and therapeutic horticulture practices and integrate these to plan, deliver and evaluate safe and effective therapeutic horticulture programmes and sessions.

3.1 General aims of the qualification

The general aims of the qualification are:

1. To develop an understanding of the key theoretical concepts and terminology in Health and social care and Therapeutic Horticulture.
2. To develop competency in skills necessary for employment in a Therapeutic Horticulture setting.
3. To develop practical horticultural techniques.
4. To develop the skills to assess client needs and devise sessions, activities and programmes to bring agreed health and wellbeing outcomes.
5. To introduce learners to the breadth of career opportunities and develop knowledge and skills required for employment within the sectors.
6. To develop transferrable skills, including core skills, that learners will require in the sector.

3.2 Specific aims of the qualification

The specific aims of the qualification are:

1. To enable learners to demonstrate an understanding of the values which underpin work in health and social care settings.
2. To enable learners to integrate values, skills and knowledge effectively in a variety of health and social care settings.
3. To enable learners to have an individual and person-centred focus in their practice.
4. To assist learners to practice in an anti-discriminatory manner.

5. To enable learners to critically evaluate their practice and to be reflective practitioners.
6. To develop learner's competency in core horticultural practices in plant propagation and Plant production.
7. To develop learners' competency in core horticultural practices in garden and greenspace cultivation.
8. To develop the knowledge and skills required to work safely within the horticulture industry.
9. To introduce skills in plant identification and broaden plant knowledge.
10. To assist learners to evaluate patient or client needs.
11. To enable learners to adapt their communication skills to suit client or patient needs.
12. To develop competence in adapting activities, garden spaces, tools and techniques to suit the needs of different people in different settings.
13. To enable learners to devise programmes and sessions aimed at agreed health and wellbeing outcomes.
14. To enable learners to assess and reflect on the outcomes of programmes and sessions.
15. To enable leaners to develop an enabling approach in their practice.

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 (QDT) 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:

- National Certificate in Horticulture SCQF level 5
- HNC in Horticulture SCQF level 7
- SVQ in Horticulture SCQF level 5
- SVQ Health and Social Care SCQF level 6
- SVQ Social Services and Healthcare level 6
- SVQ Social Services (Children and Young people) SCQF level 6
- NC Childhood practice or equivalent SCQF level 6
- HNC in Social Care SCQF level 7
- Other relevant qualifications including in nursing, occupational therapy and related health and social care qualifications
- A minimum of two Highers
- A minimum of 1 year industry experience in a Horticulture, Health and social care or Therapeutic Horticulture setting

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 would 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.

Core Skill	**Recommended SCQF entry profile**	**Associated assessment activities**
Communication	5 or 6	Written or oral reports, Verbal communication with service users and clients and healthcare practitioners.
Numeracy	5 or 6	Use of calculations, costings and specifications.
Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	5 or 6	Production of reports and use of word processing, presentation and spreadsheet applications.
Problem Solving	5 or 6	Practical assessments in varying context and conditions, assessing risk, assessing specific needs of individuals, and devising activities adapted to those needs, continuously revising according to outcomes.
Working with Others	5 or 6	Team working, working with service users and clients with different needs and communication styles, working with healthcare professionals and referral agencies.

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 or 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

Note: For details of the aims, see section 3.1 General aims of the qualification and section 3.2 Specific aims of the qualification.

Unit code	Unit title	General aims	Specific aims
F1JA 34	Horticultural Practices	2, 3, 5, 6	6, 7, 8, 9
H8KC 34	Leadership Starts with Me	1, 2, 5, 6	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 11
J5R8 34	Therapeutic Relationships: Understanding Behaviour	1, 2, 4, 5, 6	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 15
JDHF 34	Principles of Therapeutic Horticulture	1, 2, 4, 5, 6	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15
JSA6 34	Therapeutic Horticulture: Design and Implementation	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15

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

Unit code	Unit title	National Occupational Standards (NOS) code
F1JA 34	Horticultural Practices	NOS for this subject area not currently available
H8KC 34	Leadership Starts with Me	SCDHSC0031, SCDHSC0033, SCDHSC0035
J5R8 34	Therapeutic Relationships: Understanding Behaviour	NOS for this subject area not currently available
JDHF 34	Principles of Therapeutic Horticulture	NOS for this subject area not currently available
JSA6 34	Therapeutic Horticulture: Design and Implementation	NOS for this subject area not currently available

5.3 Mapping of Core Skills development opportunities across the qualifications

Core Skill Communication components: Written (Reading), Written (Writing), Oral

Unit code	Unit title	Communication components
F1JA 34	Horticultural Practices	Written (Reading) Written (Writing) Oral
H8KC 34	Leadership Starts with Me	Written (Reading) Written (Writing) Oral
J5R8 34	Therapeutic Relationships: Understanding Behaviour	Written (Reading) Written (Writing) Oral
JDHF 34	Principles of Therapeutic Horticulture	Written (Reading) Written (Writing) Oral*
JSA6 34	Therapeutic Horticulture: Design and Implementation	Written (Reading) Written (Writing) Oral

Core Skill Numeracy components: Using Number, Using Graphical Information

Unit code	Unit title	Numeracy components
F1JA 34	Horticultural Practices	Using Number
H8KC 34	Leadership Starts with Me	Using Number Using Graphical Information
J5R8 34	Therapeutic Relationships: Understanding Behaviour	Using Number Using Graphical Information
JDHF 34	Principles of Therapeutic Horticulture	Using Number Using Graphical Information
JSA6 34	Therapeutic Horticulture: Design and Implementation	Using Number Using Graphical Information

Core Skill Information and Communication Technology (ICT) components:

Accessing Information, Providing and Creating Information

Unit code	Unit title	Information and Communication Technology (ICT) components
F1JA 34	Horticultural Practices	Accessing Information
H8KC 34	Leadership Starts with Me	Accessing Information Providing and Creating Information
J5R8 34	Therapeutic Relationships: Understanding Behaviour	Accessing Information Providing and Creating Information
JDHF 34	Principles of Therapeutic Horticulture	Accessing Information Providing and Creating Information
JSA6 34	Therapeutic Horticulture: Design and Implementation	Accessing Information Providing and Creating Information

Core Skill Problem Solving components: Critical Thinking, Planning and Organising, Reviewing and Evaluating

Unit code	Unit title	Problem Solving components
F1JA 34	Horticultural Practices	Planning and Organising Reviewing and Evaluating
H8KC 34	Leadership Starts with Me	Critical Thinking Reviewing and Evaluating
J5R8 34	Therapeutic Relationships: Understanding Behaviour	**Critical Thinking Embedded at SCQF level 5** Reviewing and Evaluating
JDHF 34	Principles of Therapeutic Horticulture	Critical Thinking Reviewing and Evaluating Planning and organising
JSA6 34	Therapeutic Horticulture: Design and Implementation	Critical Thinking Planning and Organising Reviewing and Evaluating

Core Skill Working with Others components: Working Co-operatively with Others, Reviewing Co-operative Contribution

Unit code	Unit title	Working with Others components
F1JA 34	Horticultural Practices	Working Co-operatively with Others
H8KC 34	Leadership Starts with Me	Working Co-operatively with Others Reviewing Co-operative Contribution
J5R8 34	Therapeutic Relationships: Understanding Behaviour	Working Co-operatively with Others Reviewing Co-operative Contribution
JDHF 34	Principles of Therapeutic Horticulture	Working Co-operatively with Others Reviewing Co-operative Contribution
JSA6 34	Therapeutic Horticulture: Design and Implementation	Working Co-operatively with Others Reviewing Co-operative Contribution

5.4 Assessment strategy for the qualifications

Unit title	Assessment: Outcome 1	Assessment: Outcome 2	Assessment: Outcome 3	Assessment: Outcome 4
Horticultural Practices	Written or oral report	Demonstration of knowledge and skills	Demonstration of knowledge and skills	Not applicable
Leadership Starts with Me	Written or oral report or case study	Written or oral report or case study	Written or oral report or case study	Written or oral reflective report
Therapeutic Relationships: Understanding Behaviour	Reflective account	Descriptive or comparative essay	Reflective account or case study	Not applicable
Principles of Therapeutic Horticulture	Closed-book assessment	Written or oral report or presentation or portfolio	Written or oral report and/or presentation or portfolio	Written or oral report and/or presentation or portfolio
Therapeutic Horticulture: Design and Implementation	Written or oral project	Written or oral project	Portfolio and account of work placement	Portfolio and account of work placement

6. Guidance on approaches to delivery and assessment

The units within this PDA will be closely interwoven through an integrated approach to teaching and learning. The sequencing of both the therapeutic horticulture and health and care units is a key feature of the programme design, ensuring that learners progressively develop the knowledge, values, and practical competencies required to deliver safe, effective, and professional therapeutic horticulture programmes and sessions. Health and care units will be introduced at the beginning of the programme to provide learners with a strong foundation in core principles such as professional values, communication, safeguarding, reflective practice, and person-centred approaches. Establishing this underpinning knowledge early enables learners to apply these principles consistently throughout the therapeutic horticulture units and within practical learning experiences.

Teaching and learning within the therapeutic horticulture units will include input from experienced practitioners and sector specialists who are either registered with the Association for Social and Therapeutic Horticulture (ASTH), or who have significant recognised experience in the field in line with the ASTH competences, UK Association for Social and Therapeutic Horticulture (ASTH). This will ensure learners are introduced to current practice, professional standards, and the diverse ways therapeutic horticulture programmes are designed and delivered across health, social care, and community settings. The involvement of practitioners working to standards aligned with the ASTH register criteria will further support learners to understand professional expectations within the sector.

6.1 Sequencing/integration of units

Learners will also be introduced early in the programme to the importance of practice placement experiences. During the initial stages of both the health and care and therapeutic horticulture modules, learners will be encouraged to explore the sector and contact potential placement organisations. The placement itself will take place towards the end of the PDA, once learners have developed a broader understanding of therapeutic horticulture practice, relevant health and care theories and skills, and

reflective practice approaches. Sequencing the placement in this way allows learners to integrate and apply their learning in a professional setting and to demonstrate this through a placement portfolio.

To complement learning across the other units, it is expected that Horticultural Practices will be delivered throughout the entire academic year, running concurrently with the other units within the group award. Delivering Horticultural Practices in this way enables learners to develop an understanding of the seasonal nature of horticultural activities and how these align with the planning of appropriate, time-relevant activities for different client groups.

This approach also provides opportunities for learners to engage with and visit a range of horticultural businesses and enterprises at different points in the year, offering valuable insight into varied practices and seasonal operations within the sector.

Unit title	**Block 1**	**Block 2**	**Block 3**
Horticultural Practices	Yes	Yes	Yes
Leadership Starts with Me	Not applicable	Yes	Yes
Therapeutic Relationships: Understanding Behaviour	Yes	Yes	Not applicable
Principles of Therapeutic Horticulture	Yes	Yes	Not applicable
Therapeutic Horticulture: Design and Implementation	Not applicable	Yes	Yes

Opportunities for integration

Centres are encouraged to seek every opportunity to integrate the delivery and assessment of units within the qualification. This will allow learners to better appreciate the links between units and topics and how these relate to the wider

industry. Centres should endeavour to identify, at an early stage, where integration is possible among the Units being delivered.

Unit title	Opportunities for integration
Horticultural Practices	• Therapeutic Horticulture: Design and Implementation • Principles of Therapeutic Horticulture
Leadership Starts with Me	• Therapeutic Relationships: Understanding Behaviour • Principles of Therapeutic Horticulture • Therapeutic Horticulture: Design and Implementation
Therapeutic Relationships: Understanding Behaviour	• Therapeutic Relationships: Understanding Behaviour • Leadership Starts with Me • Therapeutic Horticulture: Design and Implementation
Principles of Therapeutic Horticulture	• Therapeutic Horticulture: Design and Implementation • Leadership Starts with Me • Therapeutic Horticulture: Design and Implementation • Horticultural Practices
Therapeutic Horticulture: Design and Implementation	• Therapeutic Relationships: Understanding Behaviour • Leadership Starts with Me • Principles of Therapeutic Horticulture • Horticultural Practices

6.2 Recognition of prior learning

We recognise 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: Qualifications Scotland Home Page

The following sub-sections outline how our existing units 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

The qualification is not designed to facilitate articulation from any specific qualification; however, learners may articulate from HNC in Horticulture and HNC in Social Care.

There are currently no direct progression routes to further Therapeutic Horticulture qualifications, however, learners may be able to progress on to the following qualifications:

- HND Horticulture
- HND Social Care

6.2.2 Professional recognition

This qualification will meet the requirements (alongside commitments to practice within the Standards and Code of Ethics, etcetera) for registration as a practitioner of therapeutic horticulture under the newly established UK Association for Social and Therapeutic Horticulture (ASTH). Early pilot registrations are expected to open in 2026/2027.

6.2.3 Credit transfer

Learners articulating from HNC Horticulture (NextGen) may be able to gain recognition of prior learning for the Horticultural Practices unit.

6.3 Opportunities for e-assessment

Most of the qualification could be delivered online in a virtual classroom environment however, a significant proportion of practical horticultural and therapeutic skill development is essential, including developing knowledge and skills in Horticulture to as close to commercial nursery conditions as possible. It is also essential that learners can develop skills in preparing for and delivering horticultural activities with service users and clients, and adapting in real time according to their response, which is not suited to online delivery. E-assessment and e-portfolios are appropriate for evidence gathering for this course for both formative and summative assessments. Online classes could be distributed throughout the course alongside practical delivery or could be arranged into blocks of delivery to allow for prolonged periods of practical work.

6.4 Resource requirements

It is expected that centres delivering the qualification should have the necessary industry experience in all three disciplines, health and social care, horticulture and therapeutic horticulture and relevant qualifications within the delivery team. A background, and recent and valid qualifications, in health and social care will be necessary for delivering units Leadership Starts with Me and Therapeutic Relationships: Understanding Behaviour. Ideally teaching will come from those who have registered with the Association for Social and Therapeutic Horticulture (ASTH) or have significant experience, in a role recognised by the main support organisations in the sector, in developing therapeutic horticulture programmes and supporting practitioners to work to a standard of practice that meets the ASTH register criteria, a solid background of experience working in the field with different client groups and/or qualifications in Therapeutic Horticulture is essential within the delivery team for delivery of Principles of Therapeutic Horticulture and Therapeutic Horticulture: Design and Implementation units. Industry experience and/or qualifications in Horticulture or production Horticulture would be expected to deliver the Horticultural practices unit.

The tables below provide an overview of the key knowledge, skills and experience required for each unit and of the minimum resources required for delivery of each unit.

Unit title	**Qualifications and Skills**	**Resources**	**Facilities**
Horticultural Practices	HND or above in Horticulture. Relevant industry experience in Horticulture. Knowledge of production Horticulture. Knowledge of garden and greenspace maintenance.	Personal protective equipment (PPE). Suitable range of horticultural tools and machinery. Access to propagation material.	Propagation environments such as glasshouses. Garden or greenspace to maintain.

Unit title	Qualifications and Skills	Resources	Facilities
Leadership Starts with Me	HND or above in Health and Social Care related subjects. SVQ in Health, Care or SVQ in Social Services (Children and Young People) at SCQF level 8. Successful PVG scheme membership. Relevant industry experience of integrated services within the health, care or education sectors — critically person and/or child centred working.	Lecturer with practice background in leadership and integrated working and knowledge of Horticultural therapies. Access to current Scottish policy texts: Health and Social Care Standards, the Care Inspectorate framework, Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) Codes of Practice, Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC/SHANARRI where relevant. Resources covering Reflective-practice models (Gibbs, Kolb), integrated services, legislation, policy, frameworks. Library or Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) access to journals on therapeutic horticulture and integrated care. Input on critical reading and writing as the 6th evidence point requires critical evaluation. Access to placement or work opportunity for evidence point 7.	Classroom for the leadership theory delivery — smartboard, printed resources and flip charts, etcetera. Established placement partnerships within integrated services.

Unit title	Qualifications and Skills	Resources	Facilities
Leadership Starts with Me (continued)		(7 — Using an activity from practice reflect on your learning and demonstrate participation in promoting an integrated service).	
Therapeutic Relationships: Understanding Behaviour	HND or above in Health and Social Care or related social science subjects. SVQ in Health, Care or CYP at SCQF level 8. Successful Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme membership. Relevant industry experience of integrated services within the health, care or education sectors — critically person and/or child centred working.	As this is a very theoretical unit it requires a focus on lesson delivery via PowerPoint, group activities, discussion forums and learners carrying out their own research. Resources would include access to digital technology, online learning platforms (mentimeter, etcetera) library services. If this unit needed to be delivered outside the classroom, then development of online learning platforms could underpin learning that is applied in a horticultural environment.	Depends on delivery environment but classroom, interactive smartboard, laptops, pens and paper.

Unit title	Qualifications and Skills	Resources	Facilities
Principles of Therapeutic Horticulture	Qualification and/or significant experience (3 years full-time equivalent minimum) working in a therapeutic horticulture role in line with ASTH practitioner competences. Links and working relationship with Trellis and the ASTH.	PPE, Suitable horticulture resources and tools including adapted tools. Communication aids to enable adaptation of learning materials outdoors.	Accessible garden and glasshouse space and propagation environment. Accessible indoor workspace. Access to health and social care environments or simulated spaces.
Therapeutic Horticulture: Design and Implementation	Qualification and/or significant experience (3 years FTE minimum) working in a therapeutic horticulture role in line with ASTH practitioner competences. Links and working relationship with Trellis and the ASTH.	PPE, Suitable horticulture resources and tools including adapted tools. Communication aids to enable adaptation of learning materials outdoors.	Accessible garden space and propagation environment. Accessible indoor workspace. Access to health and social care environments or simulated spaces. Access to different garden spaces of varying design quality.

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:
Qualifications Scotland Assessment Arrangements

Internal and external verification

All assessments used within these qualifications should be internally verified, using the appropriate policy within the centre and the guidelines set by us.

External verification will be carried out by us to ensure that internal assessment is within the national guidelines for these qualifications.

Further information on internal and external verification can be found in our Guide to Assessment Guide to Assessment

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 and/or candidate 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 and/or candidates 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).

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 our website and archived.
- no new centres may be approved to offer the group award.
- centres should only enter learners and/or candidates whom they expect to complete the group award during the defined lapsing period.

Qualifications Scotland credit value: The credit value allocated to a unit gives an indication of the contribution the unit makes to a group award. A Qualifications Scotland credit value of 1 given to a 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 to 9 and graded units will be at levels 7 and 8. National Qualification Group Awards are available at SCQF levels 2 to 6 and will normally be made up of National Units which are available from SCQF levels 2 to 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 our APS Navigator to confirm they are using the up-to-date qualification structure.

Please 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 and/or candidates for the unit which has been revised where they are expected to complete the unit before its finish date.

Version number	Description	Date

Acknowledgement

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

Template version: March 2026

9. General information for learners

This information 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 PDA in Therapeutic Horticulture is designed for those who are working in Therapeutic Horticulture, horticulture or health and social care industries who wish to deepen their understanding of the health and social care theory and horticultural practices that underpin effective therapeutic horticulture services and those who wish to broaden their skills as part of their continuing professional development. It is also aimed at current Horticulture and Health and Social Care learners, who wish to build their knowledge and skills of the respective industries to enable them to pursue a career in Therapeutic Horticulture settings.

On completion of the award, you will have developed a comprehensive understanding of the health and social care principles involved in supporting individuals with a wide range of needs. You will also have acquired practical horticultural knowledge and skills and learned how to integrate these effectively to deliver safe, engaging and meaningful therapeutic horticulture activities across a variety of settings.