Group Award Specification for:

Professional Development Award (PDA) in Setting up a Counselling Practice at SCQF level 8

Group Award Code: GN7H 48

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Contents

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.

This PDA in Setting up a Counselling Practice at SCQF level 8 provides the first nationally quality assured qualification for the counselling sector that is designed to provide learners with the opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding of the factors involved when setting up a counselling practice in the statutory, voluntary or independent sector.

Topics covered within the PDA include legal and ethical considerations, market research and business planning, quality assurance and health and safety requirements.

The inclusion of two Counselling specific units ensure that specific legal and ethical requirements for safe working are covered. The content of these units is underpinned by the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) *Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling*.

Inclusion of the unit *Preparing to Start a Business* covers additional mandatory topics, eg market research and financial and business planning. The PDA framework is detailed in Section 2.

Factors influencing the development were as follows:

♦   the requirement to provide a qualification that meets the needs of professional counsellors who wish to set up their own business
♦   the ongoing need to support the professionalisation of the industry

This PDA will support and promote the quality of counselling services provision as it provides counsellors with the opportunity to apply and embed their own ethical working practices into the operational requirements of running a professional counselling service.

It is aimed at professionally qualified counsellors (or those currently undertaking a professional qualification) who wish to set up in practice.

The PDA in Setting up a Counselling Practice is available for delivery as a stand-alone award for the purposes of continued professional development. The three units which make up the PDA are also included in the framework of the HND in Counselling so can be taken as part of that qualification. Centres must ensure that where separate certification for the PDA is required, that learners are registered with SQA for the PDA Group Award.

Centres should note that where the three units are delivered as part of the HND, they must be delivered and assessed in line with the requirements of the BACP as set out in the group award specification for the HND in Counselling.

2 Qualification structure

This group award is made up of 3 SQA unit credits. It comprises 24 SCQF credit points of which 16 are at SCQF level 8.

2.1 Structure

All three units are mandatory.

Unit code	Unit title	SQA credit	SCQF credit points	SCQF level
HL9M 35	Counselling: Setting up a Practice	1	8	8
HL9J 35	Counselling: Professional Standards	1	8	8
H7V4 34	Preparing to Start a Business	1	8	7

3 Aims of the qualification

The principal aim of this qualification is to provide learners with the opportunity to apply and embed ethical working practices into the operational requirements of running a professional counselling service.

3.1 General aims of the qualification

All Higher National qualifications aim to allow learners to:

1   develop transferable skills, including Core Skills.
2   demonstrate interpersonal skills and the ability to work with others.
3   develop personal effectiveness
4   develop critical thinking skills.
5   progress within the SCQF framework and where possible into further or higher education.
6   provide opportunities for career progression.

3.2 Specific aims of the qualification

This PDA aims to:

7   develop learners knowledge of the regulation, legislation, quality assurance and accountability mechanisms involved in setting up a business.
8   emphasise the importance of embedding ethical counselling practice into business practice.
9   develop learners' awareness of the health, safety and security requirements for safe working including lone working.
10   professionalise the industry by developing counsellors' skills in business planning and operation.

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 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:

♦ HNC in Counselling at SCQF level 7
♦ HND in Counselling at SCQF level 8
♦ BACP Certificate of Proficiency (CoP)

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	6	Written and oral assessments, group work and discussions, presentations.
Numeracy	5	Financial analysis based on market research, forecast profit and loss statement.
Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	5	Business planning research, use of word processing and presentation packages.
Problem Solving	6	Market analysis and planning, legislative, ethical and financial considerations.
Working with Others	6	Simulated counselling experience, group work and peer review.

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
HL9M 35	Counselling: Setting up a Practice	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
HL9J 35	Counselling: Professional Standards	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
H7V4 34	Preparing to Start a Business	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

1   Develop transferable skills, including Core Skills.

2   Demonstrate interpersonal skills and the ability to work with others.

3   Develop personal effectiveness.

4   Develop critical thinking skills.

5   Progress within the SCQF framework and where possible into higher education.

6   Provide opportunities for career progression.

7   Develop learners' knowledge of regulation, legislation, quality assurance and accountability mechanisms.

8   Emphasise the importance of embedding ethical counselling practice into business practice.

9   Develop learners' awareness of the health, safety and security requirements for safe working.

10 Professionalise the industry by developing learners' skills in business planning and operation.

5.2 Mapping of Core Skills development opportunities across the qualification

Unit code	Unit title	Communication			Numeracy		ICT		Problem Solving			Working with Others	
		Written (Reading)	Written (Writing)	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
HL9M 35	Counselling: Setting up a Practice	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
HL9J 35	Counselling: Professional Standards	X	X	X			X	X	X		X	X	X
H7V4 34	Preparing to Start a Business	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

5.3 Assessment strategy for the qualification

Unit		Assessment			
		Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3	Outcome 4
HL9M 35	Counselling: Setting up a Practice	Holistic integrated assessment, extended response questions			N/A
HL9J 35	Counselling: Professional Standards	Holistic integrated assessment, extended response questions			Reflective Account
H7V4 34	Preparing to Start a Business	Portfolio of evidence containing a fully developed business plan, a CV and skills-evaluation assessment			

6 Guidance on approaches to delivery and assessment

The PDA is designed to be learner-centred in approach. It encourages learners to undertake research using whatever methods are available to them. The units are designed to be delivered in a supportive educational environment.

Practical classroom activities, eg brainstorming, use of financial examples, guest speakers from the counselling sector and visits to existing counselling premises will greatly enhance the learner experience.

Group working and classroom discussions should be encouraged but centres should ensure that assessment evidence submitted is the learners own work and can be authenticated.

As *Counselling: Professional Standards* and *Counselling: Setting up a Practice* are underpinned by the BACP Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling, they should where possible be delivered and assessed in line with BACP requirements.

Further information can be found in the Group Award Specification for the HND in Counselling, http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/GroupAwardSpecificationForTheHigherNationalCertificateInCounsellingG8H615andGM4H%2016.pdf

The delivery and assessment of the unit *Preparing to Start a Business* may contribute to meeting parts of the Small Firms Enterprise Development Initiative (SFEDI) National Occupational Standards for Business Enterprise. SFEDI are the UK Sector Skills Organisation for Business Enterprise.

6.1 Sequencing/integration of units

Ideally the unit *Counselling: Professional Standards* should be delivered and assessed first as it provides the underpinning knowledge of the professional standards, laws and ethics necessary for safe, legal practice.

There may be opportunities to integrate aspects of units *Counselling: Setting up a Practice* and *Preparing to Start a Business* but centres should ensure that the evidence requirements from both units are met.

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:

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- ♦ 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**.

6.3 Opportunities for e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment that is supported by Information and Communication Technology, such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres wishing to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all learner evidence and the conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of collecting evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment

6.4 Assessment support materials (ASPs)

An ASP for the unit HL9J 35 *Counselling: Professional Standards* will be made available to download from SQA's Secure website from December 2018.

An ASP for the unit H7V4 34 *Preparing to Start a Business* is available to download from SQA secure site webpage.

https://secure.sqa.org.uk/files/snabs/HN_ASPs/Business_Administration_Accounting_and_Finance/H7V4_34_ASP001.pdf

6.5 Resource requirements

Centres should provide appropriate accommodation and learning and teaching resources including library, learning support and ICT facilities where possible.

Where the units are delivered to contribute to the HND in Counselling then centres should refer to the group award specification for the HND in Counselling for specific resource requirements.

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 assessments 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:

♦ 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 SQA's website and archived
♦ no new centres may be approved to offer the group award
♦ centres should only enter candidates 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.

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

Version Number	Description	Date

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.

This PDA in Setting up a Counselling Practice at SCQF level 8 is aimed at professionally qualified counsellors (or those currently undertaking a professional qualification) who wish to set up in practice. Ideally you will have achieved the HNC in Counselling or the HND in Counselling or the BACPs Certificate of Proficiency (CoP) prior to accessing this course. Entry to the course is at the discretion of the delivering centre so please contact the centre directly for further information.

The content is designed to support and promote the quality of counselling services provision as it provides you with the opportunity to apply and embed your own ethical working practices into the operational requirements of setting up effective professional counselling business.

It is available as a stand-alone award, perhaps for the purposes of continued professional development, however the three units which make up the PDA are also part of the HND in Counselling and can be taken as part of that qualification too.

You must complete these three units to achieve the PDA:

HL9J 35   *Counselling: Professional Standards*
HL9M 35   *Counselling: Setting up a Practice*
H7V4 34   *Preparing to Start a Business*

Topics covered within the PDA include legal and ethical considerations, market research and business planning, quality assurance and health and safety requirements.

The two Counselling specific units ensure that legal and ethical requirements for safe working are covered. The content of these units is underpinned by the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) *Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling*.

Inclusion of the unit *Preparing to Start a Business* covers additional mandatory topics, eg market research and financial and business planning.

Assessments are varied and include extended response questions, a reflective account and a portfolio of evidence containing a fully developed business plan, a CV and a skills-evaluation assessment.

Your core skills in *Communication*, *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)*, *Numeracy*, *Working with Others* and *Problem Solving* will be further developed during this course as well as important transferable skills in Leadership, Motivation, Time management, Prioritisation, Analysis and Research.