

NextGen: HN unit specification

Esports: Coaching (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: J9JX 47

SCQF level: 7 (8 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.

Contents

Unit purpose	1
Unit outcomes	2
Knowledge and skills	4
Meta-skills	5
Literacies	9
Learning for Sustainability	11
Delivery of unit	13
Additional guidance	15
Equality and inclusion	18
Information for learners	19
Administrative information.....	24

Unit purpose

This unit equips learners with the knowledge and skills to coach individuals and teams in competitive esports environments. Learners develop expertise in analysing coaching frameworks, and evaluating player and team performance. They gain expertise in ethical decision-making, data-driven analysis and communication strategies. They also design ethical, player-centred training programmes that encourage strategic innovation and adaptability. By applying these methodologies, learners enhance performance, foster teamwork, and address evolving game dynamics, ensuring they can contribute effectively to the esports industry.

A core focus is integrating values, such as innovation and community engagement, into coaching practices. Learners explore strategies to support player wellbeing, nurture talent across grassroots and professional settings, and adapt to challenges like shifting meta-games or diverse team dynamics.

The unit is suitable for aspiring coaches, players transitioning to leadership roles, and learners pursuing esports careers. Learners benefit from having foundational familiarity with gaming environments before starting the unit, but they do not need to have any prior experience in coaching.

Successful completion prepares learners for progression to advanced qualifications (for example HND Esports at SCQF level 8) or roles such as performance analysts, academy coaches, or talent development specialists. By blending theory with practical application, the unit fosters transferable skills in leadership, problem-solving, and digital literacy, positioning learners to drive sustainable growth in the esports sector.

Unit outcomes

Learners who complete this unit can:

1. analyse coaching methodologies for esports contexts
2. evaluate individual and team performance using data-driven methods
3. design ethical training programmes for esports athletes
4. apply inclusive leadership principles to foster team cohesion

Evidence requirements

Learners must provide integrated evidence demonstrating competency across all outcomes. Learners must provide knowledge, product and performance evidence to achieve this unit. The standard of evidence should be consistent with the SCQF level of this unit.

Knowledge evidence

The knowledge evidence relates to outcomes 1 and 4. Learners must produce evidence to show they can analyse coaching frameworks and inclusive leadership principles strategies.

As part of their analysis, learners must compare traditional leadership models to esports-specific approaches. They must demonstrate understanding of meta-game dynamics and cultural competence, with clear links to industry examples.

Learners' knowledge evidence must be produced individually. Authentication is required when the evidence is produced in lightly-controlled conditions.

Product evidence

The product evidence relates to outcomes 2 and 3. Learners must:

- create a 2 to 3-week training plan that integrates performance data (for example kill/death (K/D) ratios, communication logs) and ethical safeguards (for example rest periods)
- justify their design decisions

The training plan must be learners' original work and be practical to implement. It must consider real-world factors, such as time limitations and diverse player needs. Learners must present their product evidence in a structured format.

Performance evidence

The performance evidence relates to outcomes 2, 3 and 4. Learners must demonstrate they can:

- apply coaching and/or leadership skills in realistic scenarios (for example feedback sessions, conflict mediation)
- respond effectively to in-game or team-based challenges (for example unexpected tactics, communication issues, performance dips)

Learners must produce performance evidence under controlled, observed conditions. The demonstration should last between 10 to 15 minutes. You must verify authenticity; for instance, scripting is not allowed.

Authentication is required when the evidence is produced in lightly-controlled conditions.

We have provided more advice about the types of assessment methods that are suitable for generating this evidence in the 'Approaches to assessment' section.

Knowledge and skills

Knowledge	Skills
<p>Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • core coaching models: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ goal, reality, options and way forward (GROW) ○ transformational leadership • meta-game dynamics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ patches ○ roster changes • esports ecosystem structures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ leagues ○ scrims • quantitative key performance indicators (KPI)s: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ K/D ratios ○ objective control • qualitative factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ team communications ○ decision-making • training plan components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ skill drills ○ meta-analysis • ethical risks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ burnout ○ unfair practices • adaptive coaching strategies • communication strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ feedback models • cultural competence in team dynamics 	<p>Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compare traditional and esports coaching frameworks • adapt methodologies to meta-game shifts • interpret gameplay data • synthesise performance reports • prioritise improvement areas • develop balanced training plans • integrate wellbeing solutions • tailor programmes to diverse needs • implement anti-toxicity protocols • resolve conflicts in team settings • adapt leadership to cultural contexts • demonstrate proficiency in data and digital skills

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:
 - identifying and prioritising key information in coaching contexts to support effective decision-making
 - maintaining concentration and task focus in high-pressure or distraction-heavy environments
 - selecting and applying relevant data and feedback to enhance individual and team performance
 - sustaining situational awareness and managing attention effectively during dynamic and evolving in-game or team scenarios
- integrity:
 - demonstrating self-awareness by reflecting on personal values, behaviours, and emotional responses, and recognising their impact on coaching practice
 - applying ethical decision-making when supporting players, resolving conflicts, and managing team dynamics
 - maintaining professionalism and consistency in behaviour, communication, and leadership, in line with personal and organisational values
 - exercising self-control in high-pressure situations, managing emotions and responses to maintain a constructive and respectful coaching environment

- adapting:
 - embracing openness to new strategies, technologies, and coaching methods, adapting approaches to meet evolving team and performance needs
 - applying critical reflection to new experiences and feedback, to deepen understanding and continuously improve coaching practice
 - responding constructively to unexpected challenges, showing flexibility in decision-making and problem-solving under changing conditions
 - engaging in independent learning to update knowledge and skills relevant to coaching, gameplay, and team development

- initiative:
 - employing independent thinking and sound judgement when making coaching decisions and proposing new strategies or training methods
 - taking responsibility for planning and delivering coaching activities, showing confidence and self-motivation in leading players and teams
 - applying decision-making skills to evaluate risks and opportunities, particularly when introducing changes or adapting tactics during gameplay
 - showing initiative by seeking out and acting on opportunities for improvement in team performance, individual development, or coaching practice

Social intelligence

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

- communicating:
 - clearly and effectively communicating using verbal, written, and digital methods to support team understanding, cohesion, and performance development
 - practicing active listening and the ability to interpret and respond to feedback, contributing to mutual understanding and constructive dialogue in the team

- feeling:
 - demonstrating empathy by considering the perspectives, motivations, and emotional wellbeing of players when providing feedback, support, or conflict resolution
 - showing awareness of social responsibility by promoting inclusive, respectful team environments that reflect ethical and community-minded values
- collaborating:
 - working effectively as part of a team to achieve shared goals, demonstrating strong communication, mutual respect, and an understanding of individual roles and strengths
 - building and maintaining productive relationships with players, staff, and external stakeholders, showing awareness of different perspectives, communication styles, and cultural norms
- leading:
 - inspiring and motivating team members by setting a clear vision, promoting a positive team culture, and encouraging commitment to shared goals
 - leading by constructively guiding player development, providing feedback, and supporting continuous improvement through coaching practices

Innovation

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

- curiosity:
 - applying observation and questioning techniques to identify performance trends, player behaviours, or team dynamics that may require improvement or innovation
 - sourcing and evaluating relevant information to explore coaching methods, strategies, or technologies that can enhance team development and competitive performance
- creativity:
 - generating and exploring original ideas to solve coaching challenges, enhance team strategies, or improve training methods beyond standard approaches
 - using creative thinking to visualise alternative solutions, adapting gameplay plans or communication styles to suit individual and team needs
- sense-making:
 - analysing performance data, team behaviours, and game outcomes to identify patterns, draw insights, and inform coaching decisions
 - interpreting complex or dynamic in-game and team situations holistically, recognising underlying issues and potential opportunities for strategic improvement
- critical thinking:
 - applying logical thinking and sound judgement to analyse gameplay, coaching scenarios, and team dynamics to develop effective solutions and strategies
 - breaking down complex coaching challenges into manageable components, evaluating information critically to support informed decision-making and problem-solving

- using data and performance analytics to draw meaningful conclusions, identifying root causes of performance issues and informing future coaching interventions
- evaluating conflicting viewpoints or feedback in the team environment, using reasoned judgment to resolve issues and guide decision-making

Literacies

This unit provides opportunities to develop the following literacies.

Numeracy

Learners develop numeracy skills by:

- interpreting and applying statistical data, such as in-game metrics, player performance statistics, and team win and loss ratios, to inform coaching decisions and evaluate progress
- using numerical information to design and analyse training schedules, player improvement targets, and match preparation strategies with measurable outcomes

Communication

Learners develop communication skills by:

- developing effective verbal and written communication skills through giving tactical instructions, providing feedback, and conducting performance reviews with players and teams
- engaging in structured discussions and team meetings, demonstrating the ability to articulate ideas clearly, listen actively, and adapt messaging to suit different audiences

Digital

Learners develop digital skills by:

- using a range of digital tools and platforms to analyse performance data, plan coaching sessions, and deliver strategic insights to individuals and teams
- communicating and collaborating using digital communication platforms (for example Discord, Microsoft Teams, or video analysis software), reflecting common practices in esports environments.

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

Social sustainability

The unit encourages learners to foster inclusive, respectful, and supportive environments in esports teams. By promoting positive communication, emotional wellbeing, and fair play, learners gain an understanding of how social sustainability applies in practice, ensuring that individuals from diverse backgrounds can thrive. Through conflict resolution, ethical leadership, and team cohesion, learners contribute to socially sustainable practices that reflect equality, diversity, and responsible citizenship.

Economic sustainability

Coaching in esports provides insight into how sustainable economic practices can be built through strategic planning, efficient resource use, and long-term team development. You should encourage learners to think critically about cost-effective solutions, such as maximising available tools and technologies, and supporting player growth to reduce turnover and improve performance. The unit also helps learners recognise the role of esports in the digital economy and how sustainable business models can support lasting careers in the sector.

Environmental sustainability

Although esports is a digital industry, environmental sustainability remains relevant. You should encourage learners to reflect on the environmental impact of technology use, such as energy consumption from gaming setups and hardware lifecycle management. The unit promotes discussions around sustainable choices, like using energy-efficient equipment, reducing waste, and engaging with events or organisations that prioritise environmental responsibility. This prepares learners to make informed, eco-conscious decisions in their future roles.

Delivery of unit

This is an optional unit in HNC Esports. You can deliver the unit as a stand-alone unit or partially integrated with elements of other mandatory and optional units of the qualification.

You can effectively deliver the unit alongside Esports: Game Performance, as both focus on player development, strategic insight, and performance optimisation. While Game Performance focuses on improving individual and team gameplay, this unit complements it by developing learners' ability to observe, analyse, and enhance others' performance, making them ideal for parallel delivery in practical, team-based settings.

The notional time for delivery and assessment is 40 hours. The amount of time that is allocated to each outcome is at your centre's discretion. We suggest the following distribution of time, including assessment:

Outcome 1 — Analyse coaching methodologies for esports contexts (12 hours)

Outcome 2 — Evaluate individual and team performance using data-driven methods (10 hours)

Outcome 3 — Design ethical training programmes for esports athletes (10 hours)

Outcome 4 — Apply inclusive leadership principles to foster team cohesion (8 hours)

To ensure engaging and effective learning, you should balance theoretical study with practical coaching application in authentic esports contexts. Delivery should immerse learners in the role of the coach, allowing them to explore and apply leadership principles, performance analysis, and training design in structured sessions. You should give learners regular opportunities to coach individuals or teams in practice environments, review recorded gameplay, and participate in scrims or in-house tournaments to simulate live coaching scenarios.

You should encourage learners to draw on real-world coaching frameworks and adapt them to suit the fast-paced, player-driven dynamics of esports. Practical activities, such as conducting performance reviews, delivering feedback, and

facilitating team development plans, allows learners to build confidence and refine their coaching style. You should allow time for debrief sessions following gameplay or coaching interventions to support reflection and analysis.

You can enrich delivery through guest speakers from the esports industry, such as coaches, analysts, and player development staff, who can offer insights into current trends, coaching pathways, and challenges such as burnout or team conflict.

Learners may also engage in group projects that mirror real coaching roles, such as creating a seasonal training plan, conducting a team culture workshop, or analysing team synergy across game titles.

You should embed digital platforms and tools throughout delivery. These might include match analysis software, digital dashboards for tracking player statistics, communication tools (for example Discord, OBS, Notion), and collaboration platforms. You should model how coaches use digital tools to inform decision-making, support remote coaching, and manage team operations effectively.

You should integrate ethical and sustainability issues across the unit. You should facilitate discussions on topics such as fair play, mental wellbeing, diversity in team selection, and the environmental impact of hardware and events. You should encourage learners to consider how coaching decisions affect not only performance but also the long-term development and wellbeing of players.

Reflection should be a core element of delivery. Learners should maintain coaching journals, produce post-session reflections, or create video diaries linking theory to practice. You should place emphasis on critical evaluation, peer feedback, and the ability to refine coaching strategies based on observed outcomes and player response.

By embedding active learning, digital fluency, and ethical reflection into the unit, delivery supports the development of confident, inclusive, and forward-thinking esports coaches, ready to progress into employment or further study.

Additional guidance

The guidance in this section is not mandatory.

Content and context for this unit

This unit provides learners with the knowledge, skills, and behaviours required to coach individuals and teams in competitive esports settings. As esports continues to grow globally, there is an increasing demand for qualified individuals who can support performance, team development, and player wellbeing. The unit covers contemporary coaching methodologies, performance evaluation through data analysis, ethical leadership, and inclusive coaching strategies. The content is aligned with industry needs and supports progression into further study or employment, such as team management, performance coaching, or player development roles. The unit also integrates current issues such as mental wellbeing, sustainability, and ethical decision-making, reflecting Scotland's priorities for responsible, digitally-skilled citizens.

Resources

To deliver this unit effectively, we recommend that centres have access to:

- suitable esports titles for practical coaching activities (for example League of Legends, Valorant, Rocket League)
- team-based gaming environments with appropriate IT infrastructure, including high-performance PCs or consoles, headsets, and dual-monitor setups
- replay analysis tools or built-in review features in games for performance evaluation
- communication platforms (for example Discord, Microsoft Teams) to simulate remote coaching environments
- coaching frameworks, analytics dashboards, or digital resources to support theoretical content

- academic textbooks and scholarly sources. This includes authors such as:
 - Abramov, S. et al
 - Gavin, Gribben, Lee, S. et al
 - Simpson, Parshakov, P.
 - Zavertiaeva, M., Whitmore
 - Andreasen, M,S.
 - Caspersen, T,B
- industry guest speakers, recorded interviews, or webinars to contextualise coaching practices

You should have knowledge or experience of esports, coaching principles, or team development practices, and be confident in using digital tools to support performance analysis and feedback.

Approaches to delivery

You should deliver the unit using a blended approach that balances theoretical content with practical coaching application. Delivery should include tutor-led sessions on coaching frameworks, peer coaching activities, match analysis, and reflective discussions. Learners should engage in live or recorded coaching scenarios, applying leadership, feedback, and analysis techniques to real or simulated team environments.

Collaborative projects, such as designing training schedules or running internal team scrimms, supports the development of applied coaching skills. You should encourage learners to reflect on their coaching effectiveness and explore diverse leadership styles, player motivations, and team dynamics. Where possible, you should integrate other units, such as Esports: Game Performance, to reinforce skills in both gameplay and player development.

You should embed ethical considerations, digital wellbeing, and sustainability topics across delivery through guided discussion, reflective activities, and case studies.

Approaches to assessment

Assessment should allow learners to demonstrate practical coaching ability alongside theoretical understanding.

We recommend a mix of assessments including (but not limited to):

- observation checklists for live or recorded coaching and feedback sessions, supported by tutor feedback
- written or digital portfolios containing analysis of coaching methodologies, performance evaluations, and the design of a player-centred training programme
- reflective logs or video journals evaluating the learner's leadership style, communication, and use of data in coaching practice
- short reports or presentations on ethical issues and inclusive coaching strategies

Where appropriate, you can integrate assessment with Esports: Game Performance, particularly where learners are coaching their peers as part of gameplay improvement. This offers opportunities for combined assessment based on shared performance goals and reflective evaluation.

We strongly encourage e-assessment opportunities. Learners can submit video reflections, annotated match analysis clips, or collaborative documents online. Platforms such as Google Workspace, Notion, or Microsoft Teams can support the submission and feedback process. Centres should ensure digital assessment tools are accessible and secure, and support learners in using them effectively.

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

Esports: Coaching (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 prepares you to become a skilled and ethical coach in competitive gaming environments. You learn to adapt proven coaching methodologies to the fast-paced, team-based nature of esports, focusing on strategies that prioritise player development, wellbeing, and inclusivity.

Before you begin, you should have a basic understanding of coaching principles (for example communication and team dynamics) and familiarity with common esports terminology. Experience working in teams or with performance data (for example, spreadsheets) is helpful but not required.

During the unit, you explore how you can tailor coaching frameworks to address the unique challenges of competitive gaming, such as adapting to frequent changes in game dynamics or managing diverse team cultures. Key activities include:

- designing training programmes that balance skill development with ethical considerations (for example rest periods, inclusivity)
- leading coaching sessions where you deliver feedback using performance data and resolve team conflicts
- analysing case studies to refine your decision-making in scenarios like player burnout or communication breakdowns

You create player-centric strategies, foster inclusive team environments, and respond adaptively to challenges.

You may be assessed in a variety of ways, including:

- a critical analysis comparing coaching methodologies, demonstrating your ability to evaluate and adapt strategies
- a practical training plan integrating performance data and ethical safeguards, supported by a rationale for your choices
- a live demonstration of coaching skills (for example guiding a team through a simulated challenge)

On completion of the unit, you can:

1. analyse coaching methodologies for esports contexts
2. evaluate individual and team performance using data-driven methods
3. design ethical training programmes for esports athletes
4. apply inclusive leadership principles to foster team cohesion

The unit provides a foundation for roles such as esports coach, team manager, or performance analyst. For further development, consider advanced courses in coaching psychology, team leadership, or certifications from recognised industry bodies. The skills you gain remain relevant across evolving game titles and organisational structures.

Meta-skills

Throughout this unit, you develop meta-skills that are useful for the esports 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:
 - analysing coaching models and evaluating ethical risks in training plans
- adapting:
 - adjusting coaching strategies to respond effectively to in-game or team-based challenges
- integrity:
 - assessing personal biases in feedback delivery

Social intelligence

This meta-skill includes:

- communicating:
 - delivering feedback in coaching demonstrations, and justifying the design
- collaborating:
 - role-playing scenarios requiring mediation of team disagreements.

Innovation

This meta-skill includes:

- curiosity:
 - gathering and evaluating information to enhance team performance
- creativity:
 - creating new ideas to solve coaching problems and improve training, and using creative thinking to adapt plans and communication
- sense-making:
 - analysing data to find patterns and insights for coaching
 - understanding game and team situations to spot issues and opportunities
- critical thinking:
 - using logical thinking to analyse gameplay and team dynamics, evaluate information and use data to find solutions
 - resolving team conflicts using good judgement

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 esports sector. You also develop an understanding of the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#).

You can carry out this unit alongside:

- Esports Broadcasting and Streaming
- Esports Business Management
- Esports Content Creation

- Esports Marketing and Sponsorship
- Esports Tournament Organisation
- Professional Practice in Esports

You gain a broad and meaningful understanding of sustainability across the esports industry. You explore core aspects of social sustainability, such as how to lead ethically, support player wellbeing, and build inclusive teams. Units like Esports Tournament Organisation and Professional Practice in Esports allow you to consider environmental impact, such as energy consumption, digital infrastructure, and sustainable event planning. Esports and Business Management units support awareness of economic sustainability, encouraging you to design viable business models and long-term career pathways. Together, these units give you the knowledge, values, and confidence to make responsible decisions that support the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) and contribute to a more sustainable future in esports and beyond.

Administrative information

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Superclass: CB

History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date

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