

NextGen: HN unit specification

Healthcare Careers: Preparation and Progression (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: JSIN 47

SCQF level: 7 (24 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 essential skills and knowledge for entering and practicing in healthcare environments. The unit addresses three key topics:

- effective placement preparation
- awareness and understanding of workplace violence and aggression
- preparing for career progression and employment

Through a combination of theoretical knowledge and practical application, learners are well-prepared to transition into health and social care workplace settings.

The unit is primarily intended for learners who want to take up a career or further study in healthcare, but is also appropriate for those who want to develop their practical skills for employment or placement preparation.

Entry to the unit is at your centre's discretion. Learners should, however, have effective communication and interpersonal skills. They can demonstrate these with relevant qualifications at SCQF level 6 or experience of working in the health or social care sectors.

The unit is a mandatory unit in the Higher National Certificate (HNC) Healthcare Practice nursing pathway. Learners can also complete it as a stand-alone unit for continuous professional development (CPD). Learners who complete the unit as part of HNC Healthcare Practice may progress to further study, including Higher National Diploma (HND) or degree-level courses.

Unit outcomes

Learners who complete this unit can:

1. demonstrate key skills and knowledge required for placement
2. investigate causes and management of conflict in healthcare settings
3. prepare for progression and employment
4. reflect on placement achievement and learning

Evidence requirements

Learners must provide knowledge evidence for the outcomes. This can be oral or written (or a combination of both) and captured in a range of media. Evidence can be produced over a period of time and requires authentication.

Outcome 1

Learners gain key knowledge and skills in readiness for placement or employment. While they work in a care environment, academic and/or practice assessors supervise learners and validate their work. To successfully achieve this outcome, learners must provide evidence of:

- understanding manual handling theory and applying it safely in practical manoeuvres
- having a valid Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) certificate
- having occupational health clearance and/or a completed risk assessment ensuring learners are 'fit for practice'
- promoting professionalism: Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) standards of proficiency for registered nurses: Platform 1 — Being an accountable professional
- explaining principles of courage, transparency and the professional duty of candour, and giving examples of behaviours or errors that could result in poor care outcomes
- understanding of whistleblowing and escalating concerns

Outcome 2

While learners work in the care environment, academic and/or practice assessors supervise them and validate their work. To successfully achieve this outcome, learners must provide evidence to demonstrate that they can:

- investigate causes of conflict in care settings
- describe de-escalation strategies for incidents that arise
- describe strategies for the protection of self and others
- discuss the importance of post-incident support processes for staff and others

Outcome 3

To successfully achieve this outcome, learners must provide evidence to demonstrate that they have:

- a statement of support for progression to employment or further study
- completed a curriculum vitae (CV)
- carried out a practice interview
- completed a placement visit or liaison form

Outcome 4

To successfully achieve this outcome, learners must provide evidence to demonstrate:

- verified achievement of agreed placement hours
- achievement of the placement assessment documentation requirements for all relevant platform proficiencies
- an evaluation of their practice placement service user, supervisor and assessor feedback

Knowledge and skills

Knowledge	Skills
Outcome 1 Learners should understand: • professional behaviour and appearance • professional honesty and integrity, good timekeeping, adherence to appropriate policies and protocols • principles of courage, transparency and the professional duty of candour, recognising and reporting any situations, behaviours or errors that could result in poor care outcomes • moving and assisting theory and safe practical manoeuvres • the role of practice educator, practice supervisor, practice assessors and academic assessor • the documentation required to be completed pre-placement (PVG, Occupational Health, and Code of Conduct) • accurate placement assessment documentation and record keeping	Outcome 1 Learners can: • apply professional behaviour and adhere to uniform policy in clinical settings • submit orientation and preliminary meeting documentation • explain the duty of candour and what it means for practice • describe behaviours and errors that could result in poor care outcomes and discuss own role and responsibility • identify the principles of safe manual handling • demonstrate safe manual handling practical manoeuvres • discuss the role of the practice educator, supervisors, assessor and academic assessor • submit pre-placement documentation • demonstrate accurate record keeping

Knowledge	Skills
Outcome 2 Learners should understand: • causes of conflict in care settings • terminology related to violence and aggression • legal and ethical frameworks relating to violence and aggression • de-escalation strategies, to minimise violence and aggression • strategies to protect self and others • incident reporting • post-incident support	Outcome 2 Learners can: • identify causes of conflict in healthcare environments • differentiate between terms relating to violence and aggression • identify the features of the legal frameworks relating to violence and aggression • de-escalation strategies to minimise the risk of violence and aggression • identify how to respond to an emergency in a clinical area • identify the location of relevant policies, information and documentation
Outcome 3 Learners should understand: • how to create a CV • carry out (where appropriate) the application process for employment and Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) • interview preparation and techniques	Outcome 3 Learners can: • submit a CV • submit a statement of support • carry out a practice interview and demonstrate satisfactory interview technique

Knowledge	Skills
Outcome 4 Learners should understand: • the importance of evidencing achievement of placement hours and proficiencies • the importance of reflecting on feedback from the practice placement • how to reflect on the learning and practice improvements gained from the practice placement • the importance of action plans in planning for improvements in knowledge and skills	Outcome 4 Learners can: • evidence skills developed through supervision • evidence placement assessment documentation, including clinical hours • reflect on placement learning and areas for practice improvement • complete an action plan for identified gaps in knowledge and 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:
 - researching
 - evaluating understanding on an ongoing basis through practice placement activities and formative assessment
- integrity:
 - exploring personal values, ethics, and professional responsibilities
 - evaluating understanding through practice placement activities and portfolio evidence
- adapting:
 - teamworking
 - working on practical tasks in practice
 - adapting thinking and practice in response to new ideas, research, and practical experience
- initiative:
 - independently researching
 - collaborating with other professionals to share enthusiasm and knowledge
 - taking part in practice placement activities

Social intelligence

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

- communicating:
 - teamworking
 - completing practical tasks in practice
 - engaging in both verbal and non-verbal interactions in learning and care environments
- feeling:
 - building empathy and emotional awareness through personal reflection, relationship-building, and the delivery of inclusive, respectful care
- collaborating:
 - teamworking to achieve shared goals

Innovation

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

- curiosity:
 - exploring the relationship between theory and practice through observation, questioning, and research
- sense-making:
 - researching
 - evaluating understanding through practice placement activities, portfolio and project evidence

- critical thinking:
 - analysing research
 - making informed decisions
 - carrying out practice placement activities and research

Literacies

This unit provides opportunities to develop the following literacies.

- academic writing and referencing
- using domain specific language
- understanding evidence-based literature

Numeracy

Learners develop numeracy skills by:

- analysing statistics with the relevant data through practice placement activities

Communication

Learners develop communication skills by:

- discussing understanding of theory and own personal reflections with other learners in group activities and through practice placement activities and collaboration with colleagues and others
- collaborating with individuals and colleagues when integrating aspects of a service in a practice environment
- crediting sources of information and the impact this has on practice

Digital

Learners develop digital skills by:

- using digital platforms to access information to support learning and understanding
- using a PC or digital devices to develop coherent portfolio and project work

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

The SDGs that are most relevant for this unit are:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing. Ensuring healthy lives and promoting wellbeing for all at all ages includes:
 - reducing maternal mortality rates
 - ending preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age
 - reducing premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment
 - promoting mental health and wellbeing
 - strengthening the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol
 - ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services, including for family planning, information and education
 - integrating reproductive health into national strategies and programmes
 - universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, ensuring access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all
 - strengthening the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks

- SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities. This includes:
 - empowering and promoting the social, economic and political inclusion of all
 - equal opportunity and reducing inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices
 - providing wage and social protection policies to achieve equality
 - safe migration and mobility of people

Delivery of unit

The stipulated placement hours for learners progressing to employment or year 1 of a nursing or related degree is 288 hours. For those who are articulating to year 2 of a nursing degree, the requirement is that they complete a maximum of 600 hours of practice placement. The pathway and placement hours are agreed in partnership with local placement providers and associated higher education institutions.

This is a mandatory unit in the HNC Healthcare Practice nursing pathway. You can deliver it as a stand-alone unit or partially integrate it with elements of the Practical Placement Proficiencies and Skills unit.

The notional time for delivery and assessment is 120 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 — Demonstrate key skills and knowledge required for placement
(40 hours)

Outcome 2 — Investigate causes and management of conflict in healthcare settings
(20 hours)

Outcome 3 — Prepare for progression and employment (30 hours)

Outcome 4 — Reflect on placement achievement and learning (30 hours)

Additional guidance

The guidance in this section is not mandatory.

Content and context for this unit

Professionalism

Learners develop the skills and strategies necessary for securing, progressing and excelling in workplace placements. This includes understanding the expectations of professional environments, effectively presenting oneself, and adhering to organisational standards. Learners should understand the purpose of professionalism and how to maintain, uphold and enable it.

Learners should recognise the importance of applying the values and principles from other parts of the qualification, for example they should discuss issues relating to:

- informed consent
- confidentiality
- privacy
- dignity
- the therapeutic relationship
- person-centred care
- health and safety

You should direct learners to national health and social care standards and codes of conduct. You should discuss the need to have organisational policies and encourage learners to locate and read policies that exist in their placement workplace. Learners should understand that the ability to recognise a need for professional and clinical supervision and the limitations of one's competence is central to good practice. You should also discuss uniform policy, attendance, time keeping and the correct use of social media in relation to professionalism.

Practical exercises simulate real-world scenarios to ensure learners are ready for the challenges and opportunities of health and social care environments.

Manual handling

Learners should be aware of relevant legislation and employer and employee duties. They must also learn how to use environment load individual task equipment (ELITE) as a tool for a risk assessment, and have an understanding of the basic functions of the spine and effective moving principles. You should cover hazards associated with manual handling, common back injuries and appropriate back care. You should highlight controversial manual handling techniques and the outcomes of poor practice.

Learners must learn and demonstrate safe people handling techniques and identify the different types of manual handling equipment and its correct usage for chair manoeuvres, bed manoeuvres, and hoisting. You can also discuss lateral transfers, and encourage learners to obtain a Scottish Manual Handling Passport, which may be offered at your centre.

Protecting vulnerable groups scheme

You should discuss the application process for obtaining a protecting vulnerable groups (PVG) certificate. This could include types of PVGs and their purpose.

Occupational health documentation

You should discuss the role and process of obtaining occupational health clearance.

Duty of candour

Learners must recognise that the duty of candour is both an ethical and legal obligation for health and care professionals as well as organisations. There is an obligation to be truthful with patients and their families when an error occurs in their care. This includes incidents that have resulted in, or could have resulted in, moderate or serious harm, and ensuring those affected receive appropriate support. Additionally, the duty requires transparency within the organisation itself. Learners must be familiar with the four-stage process for raising concerns within acute care

settings. Furthermore, they should be familiar with the [national guidance for nurses and midwives regarding raising concerns](#).

Placement assessment documentation

Learners should understand the importance of record keeping and how to complete a timesheet and the placement assessment documentation.

Conflict in healthcare settings

Learners should be adequately prepared to deal with potential conflict in the care setting. Introduce learners to the triggers that produce conflict and/or aggressive behaviour, such as:

- substance abuse or withdrawal from substances
- anxiety
- fear
- distress
- misunderstanding
- discrimination
- poor communication

Learners should define and describe aggressive behaviour and recognise deteriorating situations, as well as understanding the difference between anger and aggression. They can assess the risk associated with such a situation and recognise the limitations of their own abilities to cope with and diffuse the situation. Learners should understand the role communication plays in exacerbating or calming an aggressive situation and be aware of both verbal and non-verbal interventions. They should know when to call for help or withdraw from the situation. Learners should be aware of effective de-escalation techniques and should be able to select and apply these techniques appropriately. Learners should understand their role in managing situations according to current legislation, ethical considerations and their professional code of conduct. As aggression can affect other service users, learners should be able to adopt strategies that will help and support them. They should know when to refer to other care professionals. Learners understand the impact that such

an incident can have on the health professional and others, and the importance of post-incident support and documentation.

Creating a CV

You should inform learners that the purpose of a CV is to present relevant facts in a professional way to a prospective employer. You should describe what to include in the CV and standard structure and format.

Learners may wish to keep a reflective diary during their work placement as a record of their activities and progress. This helps them to focus on their skills and achievements.

Statement of support-

Explain the purpose of a statement of support and its role in applications. Include the typical structure of statements, and what should be included for both UCAS and job applications. Discuss the importance of maintaining a professional and positive tone throughout the statement and language used. Learners should know how to research the employer or university and review job descriptions.

Interview technique-

Learners should understand that the aim of an interview is to gather information to assess if they have the right skills, experience, knowledge, values, motivation, and personality for the job or university place. You could discuss effective interview techniques, including the situation, task, action, result (STAR) method for answering behavioural questions. Learners could research common interview questions and carry out mock interviews, acting as interviewers and interviewees. They should provide constructive feedback, focusing on performance, communication skills, confidence, body language, and content of answers.

Placement supervision and academic advisor visit

Through placement supervision, learners develop the skills required to practice in the workplace. Mentorship ensures that learners not only gain the necessary skills and knowledge, but also develop the confidence and professional behaviours needed for a successful nursing career. This is evidenced through the placement assessment document covering knowledge and competencies.

Reflection on learning and practice improvement

Learners must be able to reflect on their learning and any improvements in their practice. They evaluate feedback from patients, assessors, supervisors or colleagues, and identify any gaps in their learning. They should understand the purpose of an action plan as a means of identifying ways to address those gaps in knowledge or practice.

Resources

There is a variety of media resources that you can use to support delivery of the unit. You can use Turas for manual handling theory and prevention and management of violence and aggression. In addition, learners' experiences in their practice placements can enhance their learning and application in the unit.

There are numerous helpful resources on Turas, including:

- Module A Scottish Manual Handling Passport
- Prevention and management of violence and aggression: essential learning for AHP students
- Learning at Work Week — De-escalation Skills
- Prevention and management of violence and aggression: for all staff

Other resources include:

- clinicalskills.net. (2025) Available at: <https://www.clinicalskills.net/> [accessed February 2026]
- Esterhuizen, P. (2022) *Reflective Practice in Nursing*, 5th ed, London: Sage.

- NHS Education for Scotland (2024) Available at: Turas (nhs.scot) <https://turasdashboard.nes.nhs.scot/> [accessed February 2026]
- Royal College of Nursing, (2023) *Placements: A Student Survival Guide* (podcast). Available at: <https://www.rcn.org.uk/magazines/Advice/2023/Jan/Placements-A-Students-Survival-Guide> [accessed February 2026]
- Royal College of Nursing, (2024) *Interview Skills*. Available at: <https://www.rcn.org.uk/Professional-Development/Your-career/Interviews> [accessed February 2026]
- Skills Development Scotland, (2024) *CV Builder*. Available at: <https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/tools-and-quizzes/cv-builder/> [accessed February 2026]
- UCAS, (2026) *How to write your personal statement*. Available at: <https://www.ucas.com/applying/applying-to-university/writing-your-personal-statement/the-new-personal-statement-for-2026-entry> [accessed February 2026]

Approaches to delivery

We recommend that you deliver the unit through:

- lectures
- group work
- practical classroom activities
- visiting speakers
- visits to appropriate practice settings

Approaches to assessment

To successfully achieve the unit, learners must provide knowledge evidence. This can be oral or written (or a combination of both) and captured in a range of media.

Learners gain key knowledge and skills in readiness for and when working in placement or employment. While they work in a care environment, academic or practice assessors supervise them and validate their work.

You provide learners with assessments. These can include:

- checklists
- short-response questions
- practical demonstrations
- role play
- individual or group presentations
- video diaries
- reflective accounts
- action plans
- any other appropriate methods

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

Healthcare Careers: Preparation and Progression (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 is a mandatory unit in Higher National Certificate (HNC) Healthcare Practice. You learn how to prepare for a placement and work environments or university. You must carry out practical training, such as moving and assisting, and complete a checklist to ensure all pre-placement procedures are completed before you start work in a clinical environment.

You will examine aggression and violence that may occur in workplace settings, preparing you to deal with potentially aggressive situations and recognise triggers. You can assess the risk associated with such a situation and recognise the limits of your own abilities to cope with and diffuse the situation. You learn about the role communication plays in exacerbating or calming an aggressive situation, and how to call for help if required.

You prepare for progressing to either university or the workplace. This includes preparing for interview, producing placement assessment documentation, and writing a curriculum vitae (CV) and statement of support.

Entry to the unit is at your centre's discretion. You should, however, have effective communication and interpersonal skills. Experience in care is not essential for entry to this unit, but it may be beneficial.

You must complete assessments and documentation, submit them by the required dates, and retain evidence in a portfolio with a checklist of evidence and statements from you that confirm that it is all your own work. Your centre may also use an anti-plagiarism software package to confirm authenticity.

Your centre provides you with assessments. These can include:

- checklists
- short-response questions
- practical demonstrations
- role play
- individual or group presentations
- video diaries
- reflective accounts
- action plans
- any other appropriate methods

On completion of the unit as part of HNC Healthcare Practice, you may progress to further study, including Higher National Diploma (HND) or degree-level courses.

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:
 - researching
 - evaluating understanding on an ongoing basis through practice placement activities and formative assessment
- integrity:
 - exploring personal values, ethics, and professional responsibilities
 - evaluating understanding through practice placement activities and portfolio evidence
- adapting:
 - teamworking
 - working on practical tasks in practice
 - adapting thinking and practice in response to new ideas, research, and practical experience
- initiative:
 - independently researching
 - collaborating with other professionals to share enthusiasm and knowledge
 - taking part in practice placement activities

Social intelligence

This meta-skill includes:

- communicating:
 - teamworking
 - completing practical tasks in practice

- engaging in both verbal and non-verbal interactions in learning and care environments
- feeling:
 - building empathy and emotional awareness through personal reflection, relationship-building, and the delivery of inclusive, respectful care
- collaborating:
 - teamworking to achieve shared goals

Innovation

This meta-skill includes:

- curiosity:
 - exploring the relationship between theory and practice through observation, questioning, and research
- sense-making:
 - researching
 - evaluating understanding through practice placement activities, portfolio and project evidence
- critical thinking:
 - analysing research
 - making informed decisions
 - carrying out practice placement activities and research

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](#) (SDGs).

The SDGs that are most relevant for this unit are:

- SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing. Ensuring healthy lives and promoting wellbeing for all at all ages includes:
 - reducing maternal mortality rates
 - ending preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age
 - reducing premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment
 - promoting mental health and wellbeing
 - strengthening the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol
 - ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services, including for family planning, information and education
 - integrating reproductive health into national strategies and programmes
 - universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, ensuring access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all
 - strengthening the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities. This includes:
 - empowering and promoting the social, economic and political inclusion of all
 - equal opportunity and reducing inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices

- providing wage and social protection policies to achieve equality
- safe migration and mobility of people

Administrative information

Published: June 2026 (version 1.0)

Superclass: PA

History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date

Please check [our website](#) to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of this unit.

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