



National
Qualifications
2026

2026 Care Higher Question Paper Finalised Marking Instructions

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General marking principles for Higher Care

Always apply these general principles. Use them in conjunction with the specific marking instructions, which identify the key features required in candidates' responses.

- (a) Always use positive marking. This means candidates accumulate marks for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding; marks are not deducted for errors or omissions.
- (b) If a candidate response does not seem to be covered by either the principles or detailed marking instructions, and you are uncertain how to assess it, you must seek guidance from your team leader.
- (c) We use the term 'or any other valid response' to allow for the possible variation in candidate responses. Award marks according to the accuracy and relevance of candidates' responses. The skill of using appropriate terminology is reflected in exemplar responses. However, at this level candidates may be awarded marks where the answer is accurate but expressed in their own words.
- (d) For **describe** questions, candidates must apply their knowledge and understanding to make a point and then develop this point by giving further information. For example, if **two marks** are available then award a mark for making the main point and a further mark for developing the point by giving additional or related information.
- (e) For **explain/use** questions, the candidate must apply their care knowledge and understanding to give further information about the meaning of something, to give reasons or show connections. This may include explaining features of a theory, or explaining behaviour using approaches, concepts or theories, or relating these to a care context. For example, if **three marks** are available for an 'explain' question, award one mark for making a key point of explanation and a further mark for each additional correct key point of explanation.

Marking instructions for each question

Section 1 – Human development and behaviour

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
1.			Award 2 marks for general explanation of Nature/Nurture. Award further 2 marks for developed points of explanation relating to the importance of understanding Nature and Nurture that clearly relates to care practice.	4	Responses could include: • nature/nurture is the context in which genetic/biological, personal, social, economic and cultural factors can influence an individual's development and behaviour • development and behaviour are interconnected, and nature/nurture can impact and influence behaviour and development patterns throughout the life span • nature is the biological inheritance and personal attributes which influence development and behaviour. For example, certain aspects of personal appearance, personality traits and genetically inherited illness can determine and influence growth, development and behaviour • nurture is all environmental factors that influence personality and development such as childhood experiences, upbringing, education, relationships, life experiences and culture • both nature/nurture are important areas of growth and development, this allows care workers to offer a holistic approach to care, by understanding that both nature/nurture shapes each individual's development and behaviour • the relationship between nature/nurture can identify whether certain behaviours are inherited or caused by external influences. Care workers can provide various approaches and treatments by understanding the impact of nature and nurture. For example, the ability to identify and understand certain stressors which are either genetic or environmental causing mental health issues Or any other valid response.

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
2.			Award up to 2 marks for general description of key feature of Rogers' Theory. Award 1 mark for each developed point that relates to Rogers' Theory and changes in Matilda's behaviour.	4	Responses could include: • self-image and self-worth relate to how an individual describes themselves, in terms of their social roles, personality traits, body image (how a person looks) • an important feature of Rogers' theory is self-image and self-identity. The relationship between ideal self and self-image reflects on individual's self-esteem, dependant on how they think and value themselves • changes in appearance and body image can be based on judgements and opinions of others; individual may struggle with their identity and confidence. If an individual believes the judgement and opinion of others, an individual can believe this is true • external factors can lead to an unrealistic or negative belief and self-worth. For example, can lead to an eating disorder • a distorted or persistent negative self-image and ideal self can lead to incongruence, which can lead to feelings of unworthy and not able to 'fit in' Facial disfigurement can significantly impact Matilda's self-image, resulting in reduced self-confidence. Matilda may struggle to accept altered image, leading to negative feeling about herself and low self-esteem. She may experience feelings of embarrassment or shame which may lead to Matilda avoiding social situations. Matilda may express incongruence by saying she is happy while displaying signs of anger, embarrassment and sadness. Due to facial disfigurement Matilda will be lacking in genuineness and acceptance and may struggle to develop a positive view of herself. Matilda could be struggling to come to terms with a different ideal self, she was looking forward to independence and a new job, which she is unable to follow now. This could have left her feeling this ideal self is now unobtainable, impacting on self-esteem and self-worth. Or any other valid response.

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
3.			Award 1 mark for general explanation of Worden's Model of Loss. Award up to 3 marks for an accurate explanation of the ways the care worker can use the model to support a service user experiencing loss.	4	Responses could include: • worden looks at the process of grief with a focus on what a person must do to cope with the loss • worden Model is an 'active' model of loss, it can be helpful for the care worker as this model suggests the things an individual can do to enable them to work through the process of grief • worden's model of loss can be beneficial for the care worker to understand and respond to services users' experience of loss. This model can support service users as it enables the care worker to demonstrate empathy, allowing the service user to express feelings and come to terms with the reality of the loss. The care worker can actively listen and encourage positive coping strategies to support the service user to process emotional pain associated with loss • the care worker can support service users by responding to the unique needs of service users at their own pace. An awareness and understanding of Worden's tasks can help the care worker to provide compassion, acceptance and effective care and support during the process of grief Or any other valid response.

Section 2 – Social influences

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
4.			Award 1 mark for a brief description of roles. Award 1 mark for brief description of norms. Award up to 2 marks for explaining how norms and roles are related to the process of socialisation.	4	Responses could include: Roles: • roles are patterns of behaviour that we are expected to follow in relation to our status or position in a group or society • roles have expectations attached to them along with responsibilities and expected behaviour which may lead to role conflict Norms: • norms are unwritten rules and expectations which define acceptable or non-acceptable behaviour within society or what is considered normal The process of socialisation is where an individual learns then adopts roles and norms in society and becomes part of that society. It begins in infancy with the primary source of socialisation, the family and then, with other external agents such as education, peers and so on. Or any other explanation where the candidates can describe norms and roles and in so doing, relate these to socialisation.

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
5.			Award up to 3 marks for an analysis of the impact of gender role socialisation, which could include a discussion of key features of feminist theory.	3	Award a maximum of 1 mark for an accurate description of key features, if no analysis of the impact of gender role socialisation is given. Feminist key features: • gender-role socialisation • equal rights for women • questioning of ‘malestream’ thinking • oppression and subordination through patriarchy Candidates can select a specific key feature to analyse or could discuss in general. Feminist theory highlights how from a young age, individuals are taught to conform to gender norms through family, education, media, and religion. Boys may be encouraged to be assertive, independent, and career-oriented, while girls are expected to be nurturing, passive, and family-oriented. This limits individuals (both men and women) personal development and self-expression, reinforcing inequality by preparing men for positions of power and women for roles of care and support. Feminist theorists argue that traditional academic, laws and policy often reflect men’s experiences as the norm, ignoring women’s perspectives. Gender role socialisation ensures that male experiences continue to dominate. It might be the case that boys’ achievements may be prioritised in education, while things which are considered girls’ issues (like domestic expectations or sexual harassment) are downplayed. Or any other valid response.

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
6.			Award up to 2 marks for an accurate description of any feature of functionalist theory.	2	To gain full marks candidates must describe one key feature, not just identify the key feature. Functionalism key features: • consensus on norms, values, and roles • stability and continuity • interdependence • dysfunctionality Or any other valid response.
7.			Award up to 1 mark for a description of how education can impact on life chances. Award up to 2 marks for a development of this point.	3	Responses could include: • education can lead to more economic opportunities for an individual, as it is linked to economic success. Being able to access and succeed in higher education normally leads to better job opportunities with higher incomes and sometimes better job security • social mobility due to gaining better qualifications with a better salary leading to moving from one socioeconomic class to another • inequalities in health and wellbeing can be reduced through better access to health services, greater level of engagement with health information which leads to better health choices and better understanding of preventative measures • lack of education can lead to barriers in finding employment, leading to a lack of economic stability and increasing the risk of poverty • disadvantaged backgrounds/care experienced may face limited access to education, this can lead to barriers in finding stable employment, which can have negative impact on lives/life chance's • class and status within society may mean that disadvantaged children are less likely to achieve higher level of qualifications and limit future employment/career opportunities Or any other valid response.

Section 3 – Values and principles

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
8.			Award up to 3 marks for an accurate explanation of the principle ‘be included’ and how it supports positive care practice.	3	Candidates could discuss positive care practice in general or relate to one specific example of positive care practice. Responses could include: • be included – individuals are provided with timely, accurate and understandable information to make informed choices, inclusion in decision making about own care, feedback is sought, and concerns are considered. The individual is supported to take an active part in their wider community • to be included means that all individuals have the right to participate fully in decisions regarding their care. It ensures individuals are not excluded from opportunities, relationships or services due to barriers • person centred care plans – This principle ensures that care plans are tailored to the individual's needs, wishes and preferences. Involving an individual in the care planning process and decision making ensure individuals are empowered and have control over their own lives • training – Good training can improve communication, promote respect for individuals’ differences and support individuals to being included • health and Social Care Standards – Inclusion is a key aspect of the standards. Applying the standards ensures staff and services are accountable and that everyone receives fair treatment and equal access to opportunities for health, wellbeing and participation Or any other valid response.

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
9.			Award up to 4 marks for an explanation related to Scottish Social Services Council 'Codes of Practice'. OR Nursing and Midwifery Council 'The Code'.	4	Candidates should choose one code to discuss. It must be clear from the answers provided which code they are explaining. Points of explanation may include: SSSC: • sets out the standards of practice and behaviour expected of social service workers and employers helping to ensure professionalism • by following the codes, staff help to protect and promote the rights and interests of service users and carers, ensuring everyone is treated fairly and with dignity • creates and maintains the trust and confidence of service users and carers • upholds public trust and confidence in social services • respects rights of service users, but also strives to protect them from harm, ensuring a safe and supportive environment • holds social service workers accountable for quality of work OR NMC: • sets out the professional standards that registered nurses and midwives must uphold, ensuring that healthcare practice is consistent, ethical and professional • the code is mandatory, not optional, so nurses and midwives are legally and professionally obliged to act in line with it • promotes safe and effective practice in the workplace • ensures that the needs, rights and dignity of patients and service users are at the centre of all care decisions • following The Code helps them practice effectively • The Code preserves safety as it ensures care is evidence based and promotes patient safety • The Code promotes professionalism and trust Or any other valid response.

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
10.			Award up to 3 marks for description of the role of legislation promoting equality and diversity. Candidates do not need to link to specific pieces of legislation.	3	Responses could include: • legislation puts measures in place to ensure staff and services treat everyone fairly, regardless of characteristics such as age, disability or gender. This ensures everyone has equal access to care and services • the role of legislation is to ensure services develop policies and procedures which meet the diverse needs of all individuals • legislation can ensure recruitment practices are non-discriminatory and that environments are open access and fully inclusive • ensures a rights-based approach, including individuals being involved in decisions about their care • legislation being in place ensures care plans are developed in-line with individuals needs and acknowledge their cultural and social backgrounds – ensuring respect and diversity • the role of legislation is to ensure humane and ethical care and treatment of all individuals, valuing rights and promoting inclusive practices • the role of legislation is to put in place advocacy, which ensures all individuals are listened to and included in their care, supports individuals' full participation and involvement wherever possible Or any other valid response.
11.			Award up to 3 marks for an accurate description of the benefits of observation.	3	Responses could include: • observations allow care workers to see what an individual can or cannot do in practise • some individuals may be unable to or less confident communicating verbally, therefore a practical demonstration is more effective • by getting to know an individual's daily activities and routines, a more tailor-made care plan can be developed • observations can gain more information about someone's abilities, giving a fuller picture of their needs Or any other valid response.

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
12.			Award 1 mark for description of the importance of goal setting and then develop this point for a further 2 marks. Candidates can explain one reason, with multiple points of explanation. OR multiple reasons explained. Lists of reasons cannot be awarded full 3 marks as candidates are required to provide explanations.	3	Responses could include: • goal-oriented or outcome focused care aims to ensure that care provided to individuals is effective, efficient and aligned with their needs and preferences • goal setting empowers individuals, allowing them to be full partners in their care journey. Individuals setting their own goals show improved levels of motivation and engagement, fostering a sense of ownership and self-management strategies • goal setting will ensure realistic goals are tracked, monitored and adapted as individuals needs change • goal setting and goal-oriented care delivery ensure individuals are central to their health and social care journey. Individual's goals, preferences and values are central to care delivery, so their needs are met • setting goals also ensures professionals are focused on care delivery and ensures tailored interventions are effective and lead to enhanced outcomes for individuals accessing care services • goal setting supports improved consistency of care delivery; it provides clarity and consistency among professionals, ensuring everyone is on the same page and ultimately minimises confusion Or any other valid response.

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]