Next Generation Higher National Unit Specification

Developing Reflective Practice (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: J6E4 47

SCQF level: 7 (24 SCQF credit points)

Valid from: session 2022–23

Prototype unit specification for use in pilot delivery only (version 1.0) July 2022

This unit specification provides detailed information about the unit to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year.

This unit specification is for teachers and lecturers and contains all the mandatory information required to deliver and assess the unit.

This edition: July 2022 (version 1.0)

Unit purpose

This unit enables learners to reflect on how they are developing their practice, to help them support individuals in social services or childhood practice environments and meet the relevant standards of practice effectively. The unit recognises that professional practice is about what we do and how we engage, communicate and behave with and towards other individuals. It aims to help learners develop an understanding of the importance of shared purpose, and their role in developing a culture of collaborative practice in their chosen sector. This project-based unit helps learners to develop their meta-skills through personal assessment, planning and reflection. It is suitable for learners who are working, or on placement, in a social services or childhood practice setting and wish to develop their practice or achieve the Higher National Certificate (HNC) Social Services or HNC Childhood Practice.

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

This is a mandatory unit in HNC Social Services and HNC Childhood Practice. Learners can also complete it as a stand-alone unit for continuous professional learning (CPL). Learners who complete the unit as part of the HNC Social Services or HNC Childhood Practice group awards may have the opportunity to progress to further study, including Higher National Diploma (HND) or degree level courses.

Unit outcomes

Learners who complete this unit can:

1 demonstrate professional competence as defined by relevant legislation, practice and service standards
2 analyse the importance of reflective practice in career development
3 appraise the concept of continuous professional learning
4 explain personal resilience techniques to ensure fitness for practice
5 enhance a specific area of practice through an innovative approach
6 evaluate teamworking strategies which enhance service delivery
7 develop their own meta-skills in a vocational context

Evidence requirements

Learners must provide knowledge and product evidence for the unit.

Knowledge evidence

Outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 4

Learners must provide knowledge evidence with reference to practice situations for these outcomes. This could be oral or written, or a combination of both, and captured in a range of media. The evidence should be produced in lightly controlled conditions and requires authentication.

To successfully achieve these outcomes, learners must provide the following evidence:

♦ Outline personal qualities used when demonstrating effective leadership in a practice setting, referring to relevant theory.
♦ Explain the relevant legislation, service and practice standards related to professional competence.
♦ Analyse their own values in the context of practice standards.
♦ Analyse personal and professional boundaries, recognising how power can be used and abused when working with individuals.
♦ Describe the term 'reflective practice' and demonstrate the impact of reflection in relation to improving knowledge and skills.
♦ Explain the importance of CPL, giving an example from practice.
♦ Explain the importance of CPL in ensuring the protection of individuals.
♦ Reflect on various methods that can be used to support one's own physical and mental wellbeing.

Product evidence

Outcomes 5 and 6

Learners must provide product evidence for these outcomes. The evidence should be produced over a period of time in lightly controlled conditions and requires authentication. Learners must reflect on their roles and responsibilities within a practice setting through the tasks below:

♦ Reflecting on how innovation can be used to improve outcomes for individuals.
♦ Describing professional use of digital literacy in a practice setting, including how technology is used to enable independence.
♦ Explaining the importance of teamwork and effective communication in a practice setting with reference to relevant theory.

Outcome 7

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

♦ A self-assessment of their own meta-skills baseline.
♦ A plan for their own meta-skills development.
♦ Activities to develop and demonstrate meta-skills.
♦ Reflective practice to monitor and assess the meta-skills they have improved or developed.

The Skills 4.0 model outlines the three categories of self-management, social intelligence, and innovation, each with four meta-skills and a number of sub-skills. They are not mandatory, and we do not expect learners to develop or reference all meta-skills. There are many inter-relationships and dependencies between these skills. At SCQF level 7, the focus should be on holistic development in the vocational context. Learners should be able to reflect in depth on the meta-skills they are developing and the relationships between them, and include references to course projects, outputs and experiences that contribute to that development. It is the depth of reflection that is important, not the number of meta-skills referenced.

Knowledge and skills

The following table shows the knowledge and skills covered by the unit outcomes:

Knowledge	Skills
Outcome 1 Learners should understand: ♦ the values underpinning social services and childhood practice ♦ relevant legislation, practice and service standards relating to professional competence ♦ theories of leadership ♦ effective leadership qualities ♦ how power can be used and abused	**Outcome 1** Learners can: ♦ apply legislation, national practice and service standards to their role ♦ apply leadership theory ♦ analyse their own values and leadership qualities ♦ recognise their own power
Outcome 2 Learners should understand: ♦ what reflection is and why it is important	**Outcome 2** Learners can: ♦ demonstrate the benefits of reflection
Outcome 3 Learners should understand: ♦ the importance of CPL ♦ the importance of CPL in ensuring safe practice and the protection of individuals	**Outcome 3** Learners can: ♦ explain how they have applied their learning to a specific area of practice
Outcome 4 Learners should understand: ♦ the relationship between their own physical health and mental wellbeing ♦ the essential components of good physical health and mental wellbeing ♦ a range of stress management techniques ♦ emotional competence	**Outcome 4** Learners can: ♦ apply stress management techniques ♦ demonstrate self-awareness in relation to physical and mental wellbeing

Knowledge	Skills
Outcome 5 Learners should understand: ♦ how technology is influencing ways of working in care environments ♦ what innovative practice is ♦ digital literacy	**Outcome 5** Learners can: ♦ use technology in a specific area of practice ♦ use and reflect on innovation ♦ analyse use of digital literacy in the sector
Outcome 6 Learners should understand: ♦ the importance of collaboration ♦ teamworking theories	**Outcome 6** Learners can: ♦ demonstrate effective communication ♦ apply teamworking theories to an area of practice
Outcome 7 Learners should understand: ♦ meta-skills as categories of self-management, social intelligence and innovation, and associated meta-skills, as described in the [Skills 4.0 model](#) ♦ the importance of developing meta-skills for employability, adaptability and effectiveness ♦ the specific meta-skills relevant to the social services sector, and the most relevant meta-skills from categories of self-management, social intelligence and innovation Approaches to developing meta-skills include: ♦ self-awareness: analysing preferences, strengths and weaknesses; learners should self-assess their own meta-skills ♦ goal setting and action planning ♦ reflective practice: awareness of the principles of reflective practice and the tools and approaches to do it effectively	**Outcome 7** Learners can: ♦ plan a strategy to develop their meta-skills ♦ implement and review plans to develop their meta-skills ♦ reflect on and assess their meta-skills

Meta-skills

Throughout the unit, learners develop meta-skills to enhance their employability in the social services and childhood practice sector.

Self-management

This meta-skill includes:

♦ focusing: researching, evaluating understanding on an ongoing basis through formative assessment

♦ integrity: discussing and evaluating own values and personal development, evaluation through portfolio evidence

♦ adapting: teamwork, working on practical tasks in practice, evaluation through project evidence

Social intelligence

This meta-skill includes:

♦ feeling: discussing own values and personal development, evaluation through portfolio evidence

♦ communicating: teamwork, practical tasks in practice, evaluation through project evidence

♦ collaborating: teamwork, practical tasks in practice, evaluation through project evidence

Innovation

This meta-skill includes:

♦ curiosity: teamwork, practical tasks in practice, evaluation through project evidence

♦ sense-making: researching, evaluating understanding through portfolio and project evidence

Literacies

Learners develop core skills in the following literacies:

Numeracy

Learners develop numeracy skills by:

♦ analysing statistics with the relevant data

♦ leading a time-sensitive project in placement

Communication

Learners develop communication skills by:

♦ discussing their understanding of theory and their own personal reflections with other learners in group activities
♦ 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 and computer literacy 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

Delivery of unit

This project unit can be carried out as a stand-alone unit for CPL. When you deliver the unit as part of a group award, you can integrate teaching, learning and assessment with the mandatory and optional units. You also have the opportunity for some integration with the core Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) units.

We recommend that you deliver the unit through lectures, group work, practical classroom activities, visiting speakers and visits to appropriate practice settings. There are a variety of media resources that you can use to support your delivery of the unit.

The notional design length of the unit is 120 hours, however, 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 professional competence as defined by relevant legislation, practice and service standards.
(18 hours)
Outcome 2 — Analyse the importance of reflective practice in career development.
(12 hours)
Outcome 3 — Appraise the concept of continuous professional learning.
(9 hours)
Outcome 4 — Explain personal resilience techniques to ensure fitness for practice.
(12 hours)
Outcome 5 — Enhance a specific area of practice through an innovative approach.
(21 hours)
Outcome 6 — Evaluate teamworking strategies which enhance service delivery.
(21 hours)
Outcome 7 — Develop their own meta-skills in a vocational context.
(27 hours)

You should support learners to carry out autonomous learning and independent research, and use tutorials and case studies to consolidate learning.

Professional recognition

This unit forms part of the HNC Social Services and HNC Childhood Practice framework. The HNC Social Services and HNC Childhood Practice meet registration requirements for the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC).

Additional guidance

The guidance in this section is not mandatory.

In the unit, the term 'individuals' encompasses the wide variety of individuals using services in either social services or childhood practice settings. The term 'practitioner' encompasses the learner in a practice setting and other people involved in supporting individuals.

We expect learners to research areas of their own interest. They must also reflect on their work in a practice setting.

Learners must reflect on their own leadership roles and give examples of leadership qualities that are effective in the workplace. They should explain leadership theories and give examples of how they work in practice. An understanding of contemporary theories, such as transformational leadership, and the benefit of empowering the workforce, would be beneficial. There are currently various resources that you can direct learners to for research such as Skills for Care: Leadership Starts With Me and the SSSC's Step into Leadership.

Learners should understand their role and responsibilities for professional competence in legislation and regulatory frameworks. This includes conforming to codes of practice and registration requirements, and understanding the wider regulatory and inspection framework for their practice setting.

An understanding of values in the context of social services or childhood practice is fundamental. Learners reflect on their own values and those they feel are the most important in their role. French and Raven (1959) discuss leadership and sources of power, and this could be a good starting point for learners to reflect on their own power and how it could be used and abused. Learners could also reference codes of practice relevant to their role.

The continuous learning framework (CLF) principles and vision remind us of what is possible for individual's families and communities now and in the future. The CLF has 13 personal capabilities that focus on how social service workers manage themselves and their relationship with others in the workplace.

You can find more guidance on the SSSC's CPL webpage.

An understanding of self-regulation and emotional competence can support the development of resilience for those working in social services and early years environments, as can an understanding of vulnerability to stress. In 2020–21, stress, depression or anxiety accounted for 50 per cent of all work-related ill-health cases (HSE, 2021). The human health and social work sector had the second-highest rate of stress, depression or anxiety. Learners should develop an understanding of techniques that they can use to manage their own physical health and mental wellbeing.

Learners should have a good understanding of innovation and technology and give examples from practice. There are many forms of technology now used in practice settings to promote independence, communication and safety. There is more demand for digital literacies, with common use of digital devices in care-planning activities, daily records, and communication with others. The pandemic has led to an increase in the use of technology and digital approaches.

Learners should apply team working theories to their practice situation and consider their own role in a multi-disciplinary team. They should consider the importance of collaboration and effective communication and apply this in their practice setting.

We recommend that if you deliver the unit as a stand-alone unit, you assess the outcomes holistically. If you deliver it as part of the group award, we recommend integration with other HN units. You can integrate teaching, learning and assessment across units.

You can assess the unit alongside the SVQ unit Develop your own Knowledge and Practice at SCQF level 7.

We recommend that you assess outcomes 1, 2, 3, and 4 holistically as a portfolio of evidence. You can use a range of assessment methods and instruments, such as:

♦ assignments
♦ individual or group presentations
♦ video diaries
♦ critical incident analysis
♦ reflective accounts

Learners collate their evidence in a portfolio of around 1,500 words, with a contents list that identifies where to find each piece of required evidence for verification. Learners' portfolios can include written and oral evidence. We recommend that learners produce a reflective account or an audio or video recording, plus notes of equal substance.

Where you use group presentations as summative assessment, each individual learner's contribution should be clear from submission of their individual notes and research. You can use professional discussion to clarify learners' understanding of the evidence requirements you are assessing. We suggest that you make a checklist showing the evidence requirements each learner met and make it available for verification purposes.

You should assess the evidence for outcomes 5 and 6 through a project in a practice environment. Learners carry out a project that demonstrates innovation, including the use of technology, to enhance the social or wellbeing needs of individuals. This project helps to integrate learners' knowledge and understanding of effective leadership. They should reflect on their role and the impact it has on individuals and services. The project develops learners' confidence and leadership capacity. It should include an evaluation of how to facilitate good teamwork and effective collaboration and be supported by a witness testimony or expert witness statement provided by a mentor or supervisor, to authenticate collaborative practice with the individual and others. For outcomes 5 and 6, we recommend that learners' produce an evaluation of around 1,000 words or an audio or video recording plus notes of equal substance. If you deliver the unit as part of the group award and integrate it with the mandatory and/or optional units, you can adjust the word count accordingly.

In the initial stages of the group award, you should introduce learners to meta-skills, so that they can plan their strategy to develop them. For outcome 7, they must implement and review plans to develop their meta-skills and reflect on and assess them in the end stages of delivery. The product documentation from these activities forms part of learners' portfolios of evidence for the unit.

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 should take into account the needs of individual learners when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled learners and/or those with additional support needs is available on the assessment arrangements web page: www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

Information for learners

Developing Reflective Practice (SCQF level 7)

Unit information

This section 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

This is a mandatory unit in the Higher National Certificate (HNC) Social Services and the HNC Childhood Practice. It also provides underpinning knowledge for the workplace practice-based Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) unit Develop your own Knowledge and Practice at SCQF level 7, which is also a mandatory unit. You can integrate the unit with other mandatory and optional units in the group awards.

The unit helps you to reflect on how you are developing your practice, so that you can effectively support individuals in a social services or childhood practice environment and meet relevant standards of practice. The unit recognises that professional practice is about what we do and how we engage, communicate, and behave with and towards other people. It aims to help you develop understanding of the importance of shared purpose, and your role in developing a culture of collaborative practice within the sector. It also aims to develop the skills and understanding you need to become a leader in inclusive and non-discriminatory services. You need to be on placement or working in a childhood practice or social services setting, to enable you to reflect on current practice.

Entry to the unit is at your centre's discretion. You should, however, have effective communication and interpersonal skills. You can demonstrate these by relevant qualifications at SCQF level 6 or experience of working in the social services or education sector.

The teaching, learning and assessment of the unit takes place in care or early years settings. You should refer to current:

♦ terminology
♦ regulatory bodies
♦ national standards
♦ relevant Scottish and UK legislation
♦ Scottish policy frameworks and recommended practices

On completion of the unit, you can:

1   demonstrate professional competence as defined by relevant legislation, practice and service standards
2   analyse the importance of reflective practice in career development
3   appraise the concept of continuous professional learning
4   explain personal resilience techniques to ensure fitness for practice
5   enhance a specific area of practice through an innovative approach
6   evaluate teamworking strategies which enhance service delivery
7   develop your own meta-skills in a vocational context

Completing the unit in a work setting, such as a work placement or your place of employment, provides you with invaluable opportunities to develop and apply your knowledge, skills and understanding and meet the evidence requirements.

As you progress through the unit, you become increasingly confident at linking your knowledge and understanding to your practice, and we encourage you to make links between the learning completed in this unit and others in the group award.

Your centre provides you with assessments for this unit. These can include:

♦   assignments
♦   essays
♦   individual or group presentations
♦   video diaries
♦   critical incident analysis
♦   reflective accounts
♦   any other appropriate methods

You must complete the assessments, submit them by the required dates and retain evidence in a portfolio with a checklist of evidence and statements from you that confirm that the work is your own.

Meta-skills

Throughout the unit, you develop meta-skills to enhance your employability in the social services and childhood practice sector. You are asked to plan, implement and reflect on your own meta-skills. You can develop meta-skills in the following areas:

Self-management

This meta-skill includes:

♦ focusing: researching, evaluating understanding on an ongoing basis through formative assessment
♦ integrity: discussing and evaluating own values and personal development, evaluation through portfolio evidence
♦ adapting: teamwork, working on practical tasks in practice, evaluation through project evidence

Social intelligence

This meta-skill includes:

♦ feeling: discussing own values and personal development, evaluation through portfolio evidence
♦ communicating: teamwork, practical tasks in practice, evaluation through project evidence
♦ collaborating: teamwork, practical tasks in practice, evaluation through project evidence

Innovation

This meta-skill includes:

♦ curiosity: teamwork, practical tasks in practice, evaluation through project evidence
♦ sense-making: researching, evaluating understanding through portfolio and project evidence

The HNC Social Services and HNC Childhood Practice are recognised qualifications for registration with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and employment in social service and early years sectors.

The HNC provides three of the mandatory units for the SVQ Social Services and Healthcare at SCQF level 7 or the SVQ Social Services (Children and Young People) at SCQF level 7.

Progression to the Higher National Diploma (HND) Childhood Practice may be an option for learners who have completed the HNC Childhood Practice, as well as progression to degree level courses. You should investigate each university's entry criteria.

Administrative information

Published: July 2022 (version 1.0)

Superclass: HB

History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date

Note: please check [SQA's website](#) to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of this document.