Next Generation Higher National Unit Specification

Pedagogy in Practice (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: J6E5 47

SCQF level: 7 (24 SCQF credit points)

Valid from: session 2024–25

Prototype unit specification for use in pilot delivery only (version 2.1) August 2024

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.

Unit purpose

This unit enables learners to develop an understanding of pedagogical approaches to support children and young people's play, learning and development.

Learners explore the principles of child development and evaluate the contribution of theoretical approaches to understanding child development. They apply links between practice and theory. You should teach learners to recognise the uniqueness of every child and the importance of attuning to their individual needs and interests. In addition, you should teach them how life experiences and family events can influence children and young people's development, wellbeing and resilience.

Learners examine the use of observation in supporting children and young people's play, learning and development, and develop their skills to critically reflect on practice. They develop their understanding of how curriculum and current guidance help support children and young people in childhood practice settings. An understanding of the value of play in supporting children and young people's development, wellbeing and resilience is central to this.

Learners compare relevant pedagogical theories. They explore the creation of a stimulating and inclusive play environment, both indoors and outdoors, and examine the role of practitioners in supporting this. Learners conclude the unit by reflecting on the pedagogical approaches they have adopted.

Entry to the unit is at your centre's discretion, however, we recommend that learners have relevant qualifications at SCQF level 6 and/or experience of working in the childhood practice sector.

Learners who complete this unit as part of the Higher National Certificate (HNC) Childhood Practice may have the opportunity to progress to further learning, including Higher National Diploma (HND) or degree level courses.

Unit outcomes

Learners who complete this unit can:

1   research the key principles of development relevant to children and young people

2   evaluate the contribution of theoretical approaches towards understanding child development

3   explain how understanding the uniqueness of every child can inform strategies to support their development and wellbeing

4   research the use of observations in supporting children and young people's play, learning and development

5   assess a child or young person's risk, and resilience, to harm and abuse

6   create an effective and sustainable environment to support children's play, learning and development, both indoors and outdoors

7   critically reflect on the pedagogical approaches you have used when planning, implementing and evaluating play, facilitating learning and development opportunities for children and young people, and supporting individual needs

8   review how equality, diversity and inclusion are supported in current practice environments

Evidence requirements

Learners must provide knowledge and product evidence for the unit.

Knowledge evidence

Outcomes 1 and 2

Learners must provide knowledge evidence for all knowledge and skills statements for outcomes 1 and 2. This can be written or oral, or a combination of both, and produced over a period of time under lightly controlled conditions and requires authentication.

The knowledge evidence demonstrates that learners can:

♦   explain the key principles of child development

♦   evaluate the contribution of neuroscience to the current understanding of early child development

♦   evaluate key theoretical approaches that support children and young people's learning and development

Product evidence

The product evidence relates to outcomes 3 to 8 and is split into two parts:

Outcomes 3, 4, 5 and 6

Part 1 relates to evidence from practical activities carried out by learners for outcomes 3, 4, 5 and 6. Learners must create an effective environment to support children's play, learning and development on at least two occasions, one indoors and one outdoors. When creating an

effective environment, learners must be able to recognise the developmental stage of children and young people and respond with developmentally appropriate resources, experiences and spaces to support their development.

Learners' product evidence demonstrates that they can:

♦ provide evidence of planning, facilitation, and evaluation of play, learning and development opportunities for children and young people, including different ways to record children and young people's progress, linking between curriculum frameworks and guidance, and their own practice

♦ explain why it is important to understand the uniqueness of children, including three examples of how their knowledge of a child's individual circumstances informed the ways in which they interacted with and supported them

♦ assess the child or young person's risk, and resilience, to harm and abuse

♦ describe factors that mean that a child or young person may be more at risk, or more resilient, to harm and abuse

♦ apply a range of observation techniques that support children and young people's development

♦ describe the adult's role in creating and adapting inclusive play environments to support children's play, learning and development, both indoors and outdoors, including strategies to ensure play is inclusive and supports individual needs

♦ describe methods to support children to learn about sustainability

♦ explain the practitioner's role in ensuring the learning environment is sustainable

♦ plan adaptations to the environment to improve sustainability

♦ explain how contemporary pedagogical approaches support children's play, learning and development

Outcomes 7 and 8

Part 2 of the product evidence relates to outcomes 7 and 8 and accounts for learners' self-reflection. Learners must be able to recognise and reflect on the contribution developmental theory makes to their own practice. Learners must:

♦ evaluate the impact of consultation with children and young people, and their families, on the quality of play they have facilitated

♦ evaluate the range of spaces and resources provided to support children's play, learning and development, including the benefits of risk and challenge in play

♦ compare at least four pedagogical theories relevant to working with children and young people

♦ reflect on the pedagogical approaches they have used when planning, facilitating and evaluating play, learning and development opportunities for children and young people's individual needs

♦ reflect on how they have promoted equality, diversity, and inclusion, in line with relevant legislation and practice standards

Learners' product evidence can be produced over a period of time under lightly controlled conditions and requires authentication.

Knowledge and skills

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

Knowledge	Skills
Outcome 1 Learners should understand: ♦ stages of development ♦ pre-birth ♦ birth to 18 months ♦ early childhood ♦ adolescence	**Outcome 1** Learners can: ♦ identify developmental milestones ♦ discuss individual development and how this varies
Outcome 2 Learners should understand: ♦ neuroscience approaches ♦ emotional intelligence ♦ cognition, language and learning ♦ personality development and social behaviour	**Outcome 2** Learners can: ♦ discuss the concept of neuroscience ♦ identify how they can use theoretical approaches in practice to support children and young people
Outcome 3 Learners should understand: ♦ attunement ♦ respecting children and young people as autonomous learners ♦ effective interactions to support children and young people's development ♦ life events that can influence children's development, wellbeing and resilience	**Outcome 3** Learners can: ♦ develop positive relationships with children, young people and their families ♦ support children and young people's development ♦ identify when additional support may be necessary ♦ describe a range of support that can be put in place for children, young people and their families

Knowledge	Skills
Outcome 4 Learners should understand: ♦ the role of the practitioner in evaluating play experiences ♦ curricular frameworks and guidance for different age ranges ♦ effective methods of reflecting on practice to develop knowledge ♦ definitions of play ♦ a range of pedagogical theories ♦ the role of play in the development of children and young people ♦ the role of the practitioner in supporting play ♦ the importance of participation and consultation with children and young people	**Outcome 4** Learners can: ♦ use a range of observational methods and techniques ♦ record children's progress ♦ implement guidance to support children and young people ♦ discuss the benefits of play for children and young people's learning and development ♦ discuss strategies to ensure play is inclusive ♦ explain methods to support individual play needs
Outcome 5 Learners should understand: ♦ factors which mean that children or young people may be more at risk, or more resilient, to harm and abuse ♦ the types of harm or abuse most relevant to their work setting	**Outcome 5** Learners can: ♦ assess a child or young person's risk, and resilience, to harm and abuse
Outcome 6 Learners should understand: ♦ use of play resources to support children and young people's play ♦ benefits of risk and challenge in play ♦ use of technology in play ♦ benefits of play-based learning ♦ the role of learning for sustainability in early years settings ♦ their role in promoting learning for sustainability ♦ how to adapt environments to make them more sustainable	**Outcome 6** Learners can: ♦ create play environments suitable for different age ranges, both indoors and outdoors ♦ create opportunities for learning about sustainability ♦ ensure the play environments are flexible and inclusive ♦ adapt the environments to support individual play needs and make them more sustainable

Knowledge	Skills
Outcome 7 Learners should understand: ♦ a toolkit of pedagogical approaches ♦ a selection of appropriate responses to meet individual needs	**Outcome 7** Learners can: ♦ reflect on the range of pedagogical approaches ♦ adapt approaches to individual needs and circumstances
Outcome 8 Learners should understand: ♦ how to promote equality, diversity and inclusion ♦ equality legislation, frameworks and policy	**Outcome 8** Learners can: ♦ demonstrate consistent practice ♦ demonstrate effective communication ♦ promote equality, diversity and inclusion

Knowledge	Skills

Meta-skills

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

Self-management

This meta-skill includes

- focusing: researching topics, identifying useful sources, self-study
- integrity: reflecting on experience in placement, developing an awareness of inclusive practice, awareness of the values and principles of practice
- adapting: analysing own practice and being open to discussions, working with other professionals and families
- initiative: taking responsibility for own learning, working with others, evaluating own contributions in placement and group work

Social intelligence

This meta-skill includes:

- communicating: collaborative working, sharing ideas and information, following instructions and research, reading into topics
- feeling: self-awareness in class and during group work, working with others; awareness of social conscience developed through knowledge of capacities covered in the school curriculum
- collaborating: working with other practitioners and families in a childhood practice setting and in group work
- leading: developing leadership skills through their own learning and children's learning

Innovation

This meta-skill includes:

- curiosity: observations in a childhood practice setting, meeting individual children's needs, questions and discussions in class, researching
- creativity: developing an imaginative response to planning and facilitating play, creating ideas for resources to support play
- sense-making: research and analysis into topics, class and group discussions to examine understanding of topics
- critical thinking: analysis of information, evaluation of practice, identifying best practice and most effective methods of support

Literacies

Learners develop core skills in the following literacies:

Numeracy

Learners develop numeracy skills by:

♦ using relevant data and statistics in research and assessments
♦ managing time sensitive tasks

Communication

Learners develop communication skills by:

♦ participation in group work in class
♦ completing written assignments, including the use of relevant sources of information
♦ working collaboratively with colleagues when on placement
♦ receiving and responding to feedback both in class and in a childhood practice setting

Digital

Learners develop digital skills and computer literacy by:

♦ using digital platforms to access information to support learning
♦ using electronic methods of accessing learning materials, producing and submitting assessments
♦ using digital platforms to communicate with colleagues in a childhood practice setting, and to collaborate with other learners

Delivery of unit

You can deliver this unit as a stand-alone unit or as a mandatory unit in the HNC Childhood Practice. If you deliver it as part of the group award, you can integrate delivery with the optional units and the remaining mandatory units.

The unit provides some of the underpinning knowledge for the Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) units:

♦ Promote Health, Safety and Security in the Work Setting at SCQF level 7

♦ Promote Effective Communication at SCQF level 7

♦ Develop your Practice through Reflection and Learning at SCQF level 7

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 delivery. You should encourage self-directed learning and research to ensure learners recognise its importance to their own self-development.

The unit involves significant project work and, therefore, you should allocate sufficient time to it early in your delivery of the group award. While the exact time allocated to the unit is at your discretion, the notional design length is 120 hours. We suggest the following distribution of time, including assessment:

Outcome 1 — Research the key principles of development relevant to children and young people.
(18 hours)

Outcome 2 — Evaluate the contribution of theoretical approaches towards understanding child development.
(12 hours)

Outcome 3 — Explain how understanding the uniqueness of every child can inform strategies to support their development and wellbeing.
(12 hours)

Outcome 4 — Research the use of observations in supporting children and young people's play, learning and development.
(15 hours)

Outcome 5 — Assess a child or young person's risk, and resilience, to harm and abuse.
(15 hours)

Outcome 6 — Create an effective and sustainable environment to support children's play, learning and development, both indoors and outdoors.
(15 hours)

Outcome 7 — Critically reflect on the pedagogical approaches you have used when planning, implementing and evaluating play, facilitating learning and development opportunities for children and young people, and supporting individual needs.
(18 hours)

Outcome 8 — Review how equality, diversity and inclusion are supported within current
practice environments.
(15 hours)

Professional recognition

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

Additional guidance

The guidance in this section is not mandatory.

This unit helps learners to gain a broad knowledge and understanding of pedagogical approaches to working with children and young people in childhood practice settings. Learners require workplace practice during delivery of this project-based unit, to enable them to link theory to practice. This can be through a placement or in their place of employment. You should deliver the unit over the academic calendar where learners have time to develop knowledge and understanding alongside practice. You should use academic writing to demonstrate understanding of the theory that underpins development and learning, and when comparing pedagogical theories.

Learners must create an effective environment to support children's play, learning and development, both indoors and outdoors. Learners should demonstrate an understanding of the role of early years practitioners in promoting learning for sustainability in their practice setting. Scotland's learning for sustainability action plan (at the time of writing) describes this role:

> *'Every setting should have a whole-setting approach to sustainability that is robust, demonstrable, evaluated and supported by leadership at all levels.*
> *'In line with the General Teaching Council for Scotland Professional Standards, every practitioner, setting and education leader should demonstrate Learning for Sustainability in their practice.'*

An understanding of the principles of child development and the developmental milestones is crucial for adults who support children's play, learning and development. Learners should understand that all aspects of children's development are interrelated and interdependent. They should be able to recognise the developmental stages of children and respond with appropriate resources, experiences and spaces to support the development of children and young people.

Over the past 20 years our understanding of neuroscience has developed and given us an insight into the rapid brain development that occurs in children's early years. Learners should explore how this knowledge can help practitioners to understand how children develop and the influences that impact brain development. This helps learners to understand how important relationships and communication are for children, and their impact on children's physical, emotional, social, cognitive and language development.

Learners should be able to recognise and reflect on the contribution that developmental theory makes to their own practice, and understand that practitioners work from research-based evidence. You should evaluate a range of theoretical approaches on the development of personality and social behaviour, the development of cognition, language and learning, and the concept of emotional intelligence. You should cover a range of ages:

♦ Pre-birth.
♦ Babies and toddlers (0 to 3 years).
♦ Pre-school age children (3 to 5 years).
♦ Early school age children (5 to 8 years).

- Older primary children (8 to 12 years).
- Adolescence and young people (12 years plus).

This knowledge helps learners to understand the thinking behind a range of pedagogical approaches.

Understanding that children are unique helps learners to appreciate that all children come to settings with different experiences and cultures. Therefore, our response and interaction with children varies. Initially, we interact with children and their families to build relationships that help learners to tune into children's individual needs, likes and wants. Learners should recognise the importance of one stable adult relationship, which often acts as a buffer and allows children and young people to develop the skills needed to cope with adverse life experiences.

Tuning in to children and young people supports learners to make their interactions effective. Julie Fisher (2016) has written about how effective practitioners use interactions to model language and thinking process, and scaffold learning. Learners who listen, respond and engage with children's attempts to communicate help them to improve the quality of their language, as well as their interpersonal skills, and give them effective tools for thinking, reasoning, explaining, and persuading.

We expect learners to explore and demonstrate a sound understanding of the adult's role in planning, facilitation and assessment of children and their learning experiences. They should be aware of how to document this information to support children and young people's play, learning and development. While engaged in assessing and evaluating children's learning, learners should make links to current curriculum frameworks and current guidance, observational methods and techniques, such as participative, non-participative and naturalistic. Techniques could include:

- written records
- time and event samples
- learning stories
- Leuven scale

Learners should develop their skills and demonstrate practice in using a variety of observation techniques. They should also develop an understanding of the value of their observational evidence and how this might further impact on play, learning and development. They should consider linking theory and practice, the quality of the interaction they see, the challenge and enjoyment offered, next steps, breadth and relevance, shared focus, and collaborative working, including parental engagement.

Learners consider definitions of play and discuss the intrinsic value of play to children's development and wellbeing. This includes examining strategies to support and enhance play and investigating appropriate intervention styles. Learners investigate opportunities for challenge and managed risk, and consider its benefits and how it supports children to develop confidence and resilience. Learners should take an inclusive approach to supporting children's play and ensure that play spaces and opportunities take account of different needs and abilities. A child-centred approach is key, with the views and ideas of children gathered

and facilitated. Learners should be aware of the adult role when creating and adapting play environments to meet children's interests and needs both indoors and outdoors.

Learners can compare a range of pedagogical approaches, including:

♦ Playwork Principles
♦ Te Whāriki
♦ Reggio Emilia approach
♦ Froebelian approach
♦ Montessori approach
♦ Forest school
♦ Nature kindergartens
♦ Experiential

This is not an exhaustive list.

Natural environments change over time, offering opportunities for imaginative, creative, dynamic, social, and decision-making play. Learners should be confident in providing a range of flexible resources that can be adapted for children to use according to their own interests and abilities.

Learners should consider the risks and resilience of the child or young person to harm and abuse. They should identify what, in the individual's circumstances or environment, makes them more, or less, at risk.

Learners should reflect on how they have promoted equality, diversity, and inclusion, using an example from practice, and referring to relevant legislation and practice standards. They should consider frameworks relevant to their role in the context of equality and inclusion.

We recommend that if you deliver the unit as a stand-alone unit, you should assess the outcomes holistically. If you deliver the unit as part of the group award, you can integrate assessment with outcomes from the remaining mandatory and optional units.

There are opportunities for integrating the theme of learning for sustainability in practice with the learning for sustainability outcome within J6E3 47 Health, Safeguarding, Welfare and Rights. This can be achieved through both teaching and assessment. An assessment could take the form of a wider project including Outcomes 4, 5 and 6 from this unit, and outcomes 5 and 7 from J6E3 47.

This unit provides some of the underpinning knowledge and evidence of practice for the SVQ units:

♦ Promote Health, Safety and Security in the Work Setting at SCQF level 7
♦ Promote Effective Communication at SCQF level 7
♦ Develop your Practice Through Reflection and Learning at SCQF level 7

We recommend that learners create a project in three parts:

♦ an oral and/or written knowledge assignment
♦ evidence of their pedagogical practice

♦ a reflective evaluation on the pedagogical approaches used when planning, facilitating, and evaluating play, learning and development opportunities for children and young people's individual needs

Evidence of pedagogical practice can be written or presented in any appropriate electronic format. This can take the form of reflective journals and various products of recorded observations.

Learners' project evidence is a portfolio including a witness testimony and anonymised products from the assessment process. The word count for the project as a stand-alone unit should be a minimum 4,000 words. If you deliver the unit as part of the group award, and integrate it with other HN units, you can adjust the word count accordingly.

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

Pedagogy in Practice (SCQF level 7)

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

Unit information

This unit is designed to develop your knowledge and understanding of pedagogical approaches to support children's play, learning and development. You explore child development theory and the psychology of human development, and consider how to use this knowledge to support children and young people in a childhood practice setting. You develop an understanding of the importance of building relationships with children and their families, to ensure that you can offer the most appropriate support to individuals. You examine the use of planning and observation techniques to support play, learning and development and critically reflect on how you can use them in practice. You explore how to create and support stimulating and inclusive play spaces, both indoors and outdoors. Reflecting on learning and practice enables you to develop a range of pedagogical approaches to draw on as a childhood practitioner.

On completion of the unit, you can:

1   research the key principles of development relevant to children and young people
2   evaluate the contribution of theoretical approaches towards understanding child development
3   explain how understanding the uniqueness of every child can inform strategies to support their development and wellbeing
4   research the use of observations in supporting children and young people's play, learning and development
5   assess a child or young person's risk, and resilience, to harm and abuse
6   create an effective and sustainable environment to support children's play, learning and development, both indoors and outdoors
7   critically reflect on the pedagogical approaches you have used when planning, implementing and evaluating play, facilitating learning and development opportunities for children and young people, and supporting individual needs
8   review how equality, diversity, and inclusion is supported in current practice environments

Before starting this unit, we recommend that you have good communication skills, both written and oral. You can evidence this, and the other relevant skills and qualities required to carry out this unit, with an employer's reference or through the application and interview process. You should have carried out some work experience, paid or voluntary, in a childhood practice setting. Recommended entry may include achievement of nationally

recognised qualifications, for example Higher English or a qualification equivalent to SCQF level 6.

To achieve the unit, you must carry out a project with a child or young person. You apply a pedagogical approach to planning, facilitation, and evaluation of play, learning and development opportunities for children and young people. You must produce product evidence from your activities and assignments that evidence your knowledge and skills throughout the project.

Meta-skills

Throughout the unit, you develop meta-skills to enhance your employability in the childhood practice sector.

Self-management

This meta-skill includes

♦ focusing: researching topics, identifying useful sources, self-study
♦ integrity: reflecting on experience in placement, developing an awareness of inclusive practice, awareness of the values and principles of practice
♦ adapting: analysing own practice and being open to discussions, working with other professionals and families
♦ initiative: taking responsibility for own learning, working with others, evaluating own contributions in placement and group work

Social intelligence

This meta-skill includes:

♦ communicating: collaborative working, sharing ideas and information, following instructions and research, reading into topics
♦ feeling: self-awareness in class and during group work, working with others; awareness of social conscience developed through knowledge of capacities covered in the school curriculum
♦ collaborating: working with other practitioners and families in a childhood practice setting and in group work
♦ leading: developing leadership skills through their own learning and children's learning

Innovation

This meta-skill includes:

♦ curiosity: observations in a childhood practice setting, meeting individual children's needs, questions and discussions in class, researching

♦ creativity: developing an imaginative response to planning and facilitating play, creating ideas for resources to support play

♦ sense-making: research and analysis into topics, class and group discussions to examine understanding of topics

♦ critical thinking: analysis of information, evaluation of practice, identifying best practice and most effective methods of support

On completion of the unit as part of the Higher National Certificate (HNC) Childhood Practice, you can seek employment as a childhood practitioner and register with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). You may also progress to further learning, including Higher National Diploma (HND) or degree level courses.

Administrative information

Published: August 2024 (version 2.1)

Superclass: PT

History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date
2.0	♦ Learning for Sustainability content added to outcome 6. ♦ 'Evidence requirements' section — outcome 3 moved to sit alongside outcomes 4, 5 and 6.	August 2024
2.1	♦ Changes to wording in guidance section for clarification purposes.	August 2024

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