



Delivering the Standard for Childhood Practice

**Guidelines for providers, their partners and
learners enrolled on programmes**

1. Learning workload

Introduction

In October 2007 the Minister for Children and Early Years launched the subject benchmark standard for Childhood Practice. The standard is an important step in ensuring managers in the early education and child care sector have the necessary leadership skills to take forward excellent practice in centres that children and their families use. It will also inform the programmes of study and qualifications required by the SSSC from 2011 for those who will be registering as managers of a day care of children service. Initially only those managers in early years services will require the award however in due course it will be rolled out to all managers on this part of the SSSC register.

This booklet provides guidelines to further support the benchmark standard guidance published in October 2007.

Learning workload for learners enrolled in programmes

The award in Childhood Practice will be accredited by the Scottish Social Service Council. It is based on learners gaining 360 Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) credits at levels 7, 8 and 9. There will be provision for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) but learners will be required to undertake further work based tasks to add to the credit they already have.

Within the SCQF the central principle is that 10 hours of learning time can gain one credit point when assessed. In practice, units or modules of learning will require significantly bigger blocks of time, usually 100 hours (10 credits), 200 hours (20 credits) or 300 hours (30 credits). Individual organisations will each have

2. Partnership with employers



their own rules for deciding on the amount of time required to achieve particular outcomes.

An important point is that 'learning time' is not just the amount of time gaining experience in the workplace nor is it the amount of time spent in study. It is an appropriate balance of the two and also takes account of other necessary activities such as reading, research and the preparation of work to be submitted for assessment.

For example a 10 credit work based unit or module might therefore consist of 50 hours of on-going normal work that is also relevant to a particular unit or module, 10 hours of group discussion, 15 hours of directed reading, 15 hours of collecting and preparing material for assessment and 10 hours of report writing.

2.1 Minimum conditions for the enrolment of learners on programmes

The qualification in Childhood Practice is designed to develop and enhance the knowledge, skills and values of learners in the sector. It is centrally concerned with practice and learners on programmes will therefore be required to use their day to day work activities as a basis for their learning. This cannot be done without the agreement of and support from their employers.

Before learners can embark on a programme their employers must agree to:

- provide opportunities for appropriate learning experiences in the workplace

- make provision for learners to carry out prescribed tasks
- support the negotiation where required of experience in other work contexts
- authenticate work and reports required by the programme provider
- support the learner and the provider in the assessment process
- nominate a specific named person in the workplace who will fulfil these functions for the learner (this may be a peripatetic post).

Consideration should be given to the role of the Care Commission, Childcare Partnerships, Learning Networks, umbrella and other existing organisations providing support for employers. The role of these bodies may be critical and they may need support to fulfil designated roles in partnership arrangements.

2.2 Future programme and organisational development

As Childhood Practice programmes are developed and delivered individuals and organisations will invest more in qualifications based learning. Due to the innovative nature of the programmes there will be a challenge to the sector to develop creative partnerships that build on the existing strengths of the partners and create benefit for the learners, the employers and the providers.

3. Work-based learning

As part of the process, programmes for employers could offer guidance on, for instance:

- sharing responsibility with the programme provider for assessment
- undertaking mentoring of the learner
- offering placement opportunities for learners from other establishments
- providing verification of evidence
- serving on panels and committees with providers and other employers
- contributing to review and development processes.

The Practice Learning Qualification (Social Services) at levels 9, 10 and 11 is available to managers within social services. This includes early education and child care. It provides comprehensive support for the development of appropriate knowledge and skills which managers in early education and child care may benefit from.

3.1 What is work-based learning?

Work-based learning is learning closely bound to the work role and often, but not always located in the workplace itself.

An important aspect of work-based learning is that through the experience of performing the work role learners can achieve planned learning outcomes that can be evidenced and assessed.

Activities such as directed reading, researching and group work also contribute to achieving the planned learning outcomes.

3.2 How are the responsibilities for work-based learning met?

The standard of a work-based learning award and the quality of provision leading to it are the responsibility of the awarding organisation. It will have policies and procedures in place to make sure that its responsibilities, and those of its partners, are clearly identified and met.

The awarding organisation will be responsible for making sure that its partners are aware of their related and specific responsibilities, and that the learning opportunities provided by partners are appropriate.

Awarding organisations will have policies and procedures for securing, monitoring, and administering their work-based learning partnerships and for reviewing them at regular points and when significant changes are made.

Learners will also be informed by awarding organisations of their responsibilities and entitlements.

3.3 What will work-based learning programmes look like?

All programmes will do the following.

- Recognise prior learning. This could be learning that has already been assessed and credit rated (as in SVQs, HNQs, and PDA) and/or learning that has been gained from experience either from work or from life in general.



- Include partnership arrangements with, for instance, colleges, private training providers, and public, voluntary and private sector employers and workplace providers. Delivery of programmes could be devolved to partners.
- Recognise that Childhood Practice encompasses work in early years, out of school care, playwork, integrated teams and the work of childminders. Building on the transferability of skills across and between these different parts of the sector is important.
- Define a framework of support that learners can use.

Sharing good practice in a 'community of learning' will be important in all programmes.

3.4 Information, support and guidance

Awarding organisations will provide:

- learners with appropriate and timely information, support and guidance before and throughout their work-based learning qualification and
- employer/workplace partners with appropriate and timely information before and throughout a learner's involvement with a work-based learning qualification.

Employer/workplace partners will have effective measures in place to monitor and assure the proficiency of the staff involved in supporting learners in the workplace.

It must not be the sole responsibility of the learner to negotiate their own support.

3.5 The assessment of work-based learning

All assessment will be related to learning outcomes defined by the Standard for Childhood Practice.

Forms of assessment will vary, depending on the methods of delivery.

The workplace will have a role in authenticating the assessment work of the learner.

The role of employers and umbrella organisations in supporting assessment processes is central in contributing to the provision of an appropriate environment for the demonstration of the learning outcomes defined by the Standard for Childhood Practice and will be an important element in partnership arrangements.

3.6 Choosing a model of work-based learning and assessment

Managing the quality of the learning in the workplace and managing the quality of the assessment are key issues. The particular model of work-based learning and assessment adopted by any partnership must do the following.

- Establish the roles and responsibilities of the provider, their workplace partners, and the learners themselves.
- Make provision of appropriate learning opportunities in the workplace that suit the needs of both the workplace and the learner. Any work done as part of the programme should be potentially of value to the work place.

4. Recognition of Prior Learning

- Provide appropriate and timely information, support and guidance for learners throughout the programme of learning.
- Provide appropriate and timely information for partner workplaces throughout the programme.
- Provide support, training and potentially qualification routes for workplace supervisors/mentors so that they are competent to fulfil their role.
- Decide who assesses the learning outcomes and how the evidence provided to meet the learning outcomes is verified.
- Consider and decide on the resource implications of the particular model chosen.

4.1 What is prior learning?

There are two kinds of prior learning that can count towards the Childhood Practice programme.

- Learning that has been assessed and credit rated and has achieved relevant qualifications such as HNQs, PDAs, and SVQs. Credit for these qualifications will normally be automatic and can be used for entry to a programme or for exemption within a programme.
- Learning that has been gained from experience either from work or from life in general. It is often not planned and the learner may in fact not have recognised at the time of the experience that it contributed to the development of their

skills and knowledge. Credit for this kind of learning can be claimed and assessed on an individual basis. The credit can then be used for entry to a programme or for exemption within a programme.

4.2 What credit is given for existing awards?

Previously assessed and credit rated learning, such as that in relevant HNQs, PDAs and SVQs, which has occurred prior to undertaking a Childhood Practice programme can be recognised for entry to a programme or for exemption from part of it. There are some special requirements that will apply.

Prior formal learning can be recognised for exemption from part of a programme if it:

- maps onto the learning offered in the programme
- is equal in volume and level to the equivalent learning offered in the programme and
- meets organisational regulations for recognising prior learning such as currency and limit of allowed exemption. Regulations may vary among providers.

Requests for prior formal learning to be recognised for entry or exemption will require a learner to submit evidence of appropriate relevant qualifications achieved outwith the Childhood Practice programme.

Providers of Childhood Practice programmes will provide information for potential learners about the recognition of prior formal learning.



4.3 How can credit for learning based on experience be recognised?

Any learning that has occurred prior to undertaking a Childhood Practice programme can be recognised for entry to a programme or for exemption from part of it.

Again, there will be some special requirements that will apply.

Learning based on experience can be recognised for exemption from part of a programme if it:

- maps onto the learning offered in the programme
- is equal in volume and level to the equivalent learning offered in the programme and
- has been assessed, credit rated and meets organisational regulations for recognising prior learning such as currency and limit of allowed exemption. Regulations may vary among providers.

The recognition of prior learning based on experience requires a learner to submit evidence of relevant learning achieved. This normally involves formal assessment of a personal statement of learning matched to elements of the Standard and supported by evidence, detailing how particular experiences have contributed to the learner's learning.

Providers will supply information for potential learners on the process and possible outcomes of a claim for credit for the recognition of prior learning based on experience. They may also provide support for developing a credit claim through the programme design.

4.4 How do existing awards relate to the Standard?

The mandatory units in a number of awards have been examined to identify where they map onto the elements of the Standard for Childhood Practice. The outcomes of this process will support providers of Childhood Practice awards as they determine the relevance of the qualifications for prior learning credit in their Childhood Practice programmes.

The awards that have been examined are:

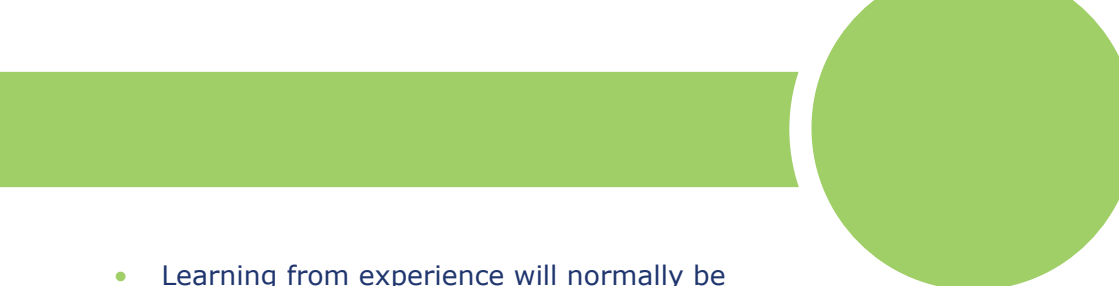
- SVQ 3 and SVQ 4 in Children's Care Learning and Development
- SVQ 3 and SVQ 4 in Playwork
- HNC Early Education and Childcare
- PDA Certificate in Early Education and Childcare.

Older versions of these awards have not been mapped onto the Standard but providers may choose to offer prior learning credit for older awards on a discretionary basis.

4.5 How will existing awards integrate into Childhood Practice programmes?

There are some principles that will apply.

- A Childhood Practice programme requires 360 SCQF credit points at levels 7, 8 and 9.
- Existing awards can be integrated into programmes on the basis of their credit and level rating and the extent to which their content maps onto the Standard.

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- Learning from experience will normally be integrated on a case by case basis.
 - There will be a limit on the amount of credit transfer allowed.
 - Some of the prior learning may overlap in different awards at the same level.
 - Prior learning cannot be counted more than once.

4.6 What is the level and credit rating of relevant qualifications?

The individual units of relevant qualifications have been credit rated and levelled. In addition whole qualifications have been given a level and credit rating in the case of HNQs and the PDA.

The amount of credit given for qualifications within the new programmes will vary a little depending on the extent to which they map to the Standard for Childhood Practice, fit with the design of individual programmes, and meet regulatory requirements of the awarding organisation.

The information that follows shows the credit rating and level of some awards.

Credit refers to SCQF credit points.

- HNC in Early Education and Childcare has a credit rating of 96 credits at level 7.

- The mandatory units of SVQ 3 CCLD have a total credit rating of 35 credits at level 6 and 18 credits at level 7. The credit and level of the optional units will vary depending on the options chosen.
- The PDA Certificate in Early Education and Childcare has a credit rating of 64 credits at level 8.
- The mandatory units of SVQ 4 CCLD, and the mandatory options specified for SSSC registration, together have a credit rating of 38 credits at level 8 and 58 credits at level 9. The credit and level of the optional units will vary depending on the options chosen.
- A new HND is currently in development.

Individual institutions may also consider other qualifications as relevant.

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