

Introduction

This code relates to social care practice as embodied in the revised “Social Care Theory and Practice” unit. It is essential to employers, students and Colleges that placement settings used are ones which adopt a social care (as opposed to a medical or education) model.

1. Entry Qualifications and Selection Procedure

- ❖ **Experience:** all candidates should have significant related experience which would be equivalent to at least 120 hours and of recent date.
- ❖ **The Application Form:** must contain a statement of 500 words from the candidate reflecting previous experience and what he/she thinks would be gained from undertaking an HNC in Social Care.
- ❖ **References:** must indicate the quality of previous experience in some detail e.g. strengths, development needs, ability to handle criticism and make use of supervision. At least two references should be sought, one being a care reference and the other, where possible, a recent academic reference.
- ❖ **The Entrance Test:** must reflect the fact that those who pass have the notional conceptual ability of 2 Highers, one of which is English.
- ❖ **Selection:** all interviews must be arranged with employer representation. Interviewing panels should have an interview schedule to follow. The interview should evaluate the candidate’s ability to reflect on previous experience and to indicate his/her own value base.
- ❖ Information sessions and/or Group Interviews: could also be considered as part of the process.

2. Criminal Convictions and Selection Procedure

- ❖ **Criminal Convictions:** candidates should complete the approved criminal convictions declaration form prior to being interviewed. The interviewers should discuss candidates’ previous convictions with them. Candidates should be advised that SCRO checks may be carried out and failure to declare a conviction may lead to withdrawal of offer of a place (see also Section 3 below).

Offences declared require careful evaluation to determine candidate suitability for training, and offences of particular concern would include: any one convicted of an offence requiring them to register under the Sex Offenders Act 1997; offences involving serious violence.

When considering previous convictions the following should be taken into account:

- (i) the nature of the offence and when it was committed;
- (ii) the number of offences and/or similar offences committed and any harm to persons;
- (iii) candidates attitude towards the offence;
- (iv) whether placement within a social care setting would increase the likelihood of re-offending.

3. Criminal Convictions and Existing Students

Where it comes to light that an existing student has either failed to declare a previous conviction or has been convicted of an offence whilst undergoing their studies, they may be suspended pending further investigation and subsequently have their training terminated.

4. Placements

During placement the candidate must meet all outcomes for the units Workplace Practice and Skills in a Care Setting” (3 credits) and “Health and Safety: Workplace Experience in a Care Setting” (0.5 credits) which are two of the seven mandatory units and 3.5 of the total 12 credits that make up the HNC in Social Care. The length of the placement has therefore to be at least 60 days and experience indicates that 80 days is the optimum length. For staff in Social Care employment sufficient time will be required to carry out the requirements of the award.

5. Pattern of Placement

Block or concurrent placements are acceptable, or a mixture of both. If a block placement is used, college teaching or tutorial time should continue in some form to reduce the isolation and maintain integration of theory and practice.

6. Supervisors

Supervisors must be experienced and/or qualified social care workers – a minimum of 2 years is suggested. Supervisors must be in a position to:

- ❖ provide an appropriate range of learning opportunities, and
- ❖ explain to the rest of the staff the role and duties of the student at different stages of the placement.

Supervision should normally be provided at the rate of at least 1 hour for every 5 day period of placement. Student and supervisor should normally work a similar shift pattern to allow for direct observation of

practice. Full-time students should normally be regarded as an addition to the normal staff complement.

7. College Support to Placement

All supervisors must be offered at least a half day of training in placement expectations. A contract between the College, placement agency and student should specify that regular and planned contact will take place between tutor and placement supervisor. It is recommended that three visits take place during the course of the placement with the minimum requirement being two visits. For new supervisors, more visits may be required. A half-day mid-way through a placement to allow them to meet with other supervisors to discuss issues and problems is encouraged, and could also provide an opportunity for standardisation.

8. The Workbased Unit “Workplace Practice in a Care Setting: Social Care”

SQA’s intention in validating the WPSSCS unit is that it should provide the possibility of generating evidence towards the SVQ in Care at Level III. Colleges should therefore undertake a matching exercise which will facilitate claims for competence on an APEL basis for students who may undertake the SVQ when in employment. This should be built into the student’s portfolio of evidence for the WPSSCS unit.

9. Staff Qualifications

The “Quality and Efficiency” Policy Document (SOED 1992) stresses the significance of appropriately qualified staff. It is essential that at least one member of staff teaching the HNC is qualified in Social Work. Qualifications should be the Diploma in Social Work, CQSW, CSS or equivalent.

10. Merit Awards

Where merit awards are granted for academic units SQA Merit Criteria should be met, and where possible as part of these SQA criteria, merit should be recognised for linking academic knowledge and evaluation to relevant practice examples.

11. Assessment Standardisation

Colleges will have developed appropriate internal verification systems. These may include:

- ❖ Checklists and marking guidelines for each assessment.
- ❖ Proof of cross marking.

12. Placement Providers

Placement providers must offer opportunities for social care practice which are consistent with items 4, 5 & 6 above.

Social care practice is concerned with individuals as social beings and should therefore focus on all five of Maslow's elements in his hierarchy of need. Placements should provide students with opportunities for assessment, care planning and carrying out social care tasks or interventions.