



Qualification Specification:

OCN NI Level 4 Certificate in Teaching and Learning Support

- **Qualification No: 610/7338/6**

OCN NI Level 4 Diploma in Teaching and Learning Support

- **Qualification No: 610/7337/4**

Version: 1.0



1. Specification Updates

Key changes have been listed below:

Section	Detail of change	Version and date of Issue
	New qualifications	v1.0 – April 2026

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3. Introduction to Open College Network Northern Ireland (OCN NI)

The Open College Network Northern Ireland (OCN NI) is a UK recognised awarding organisation based in Northern Ireland. We are regulated by CCEA Regulation to develop and award regulated professional and technical (vocational) qualifications from Entry Level up to and including Level 5 across all sector areas. In addition, OCN NI is also regulated by Ofqual to award qualifications in England.

OCN NI is also an educational charity that advances education by developing nationally recognised qualifications and recognising the achievements of learners. We work with centres such as Further Education Colleges, Private Training Organisations, Voluntary & Community Organisations, Schools, SME's and Public Sector bodies to provide learners with opportunities to progress into further learning and/or employment. OCN NI's Strategic Plan can be found on the OCN NI website www.ocnni.org.uk.

For further information on OCN NI qualifications or to contact us, you can visit our website at www.ocnni.org.uk. The website should provide you with details about our qualifications, courses, contact information, and any other relevant information you may need.

OCN NI Contact Details

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4. About this Specification

This specification details OCN NI's specific requirements for the delivery and assessment of the **OCN NI Level 4 Certificate and Diploma in Teaching and Learning Support**.

This specification will provide guidelines for centres to ensure the effective and correct delivery of these qualifications. OCN NI qualification specifications are based on research and engagement with the practitioner community to ensure they provide appropriate skills and knowledge for learners.

The qualification specification will detail the following aspects of the OCN NI Level 4 Certificate and Diploma in Teaching and Learning Support.

- **Qualification Features:** this includes the key characteristics and features of these qualifications, such as their intended audience, purpose, and credit value.
- **Centre Requirements:** this details the prerequisites and obligations that centres must fulfil to be eligible to deliver and assess these qualifications. These include guidelines on staff qualifications, resources, and required procedures.
- **Structure and Content:** this details the structure and content of the qualifications including units, and any specific content that learners will be required to study.
- **Assessment Requirements:** this details assessment criteria and assessment methods for these qualifications, ensuring that summative assessment approaches are clear.
- **Quality Assurance:** the quality and consistency of delivery and assessment of these qualifications are of paramount importance to OCN NI. The mandatory quality assurance arrangements including processes for internal and external quality assurance that all centres offering these qualifications must adhere to are detailed.
- **Administration:** guidance on the administrative aspects of delivering these qualifications, including registration, certification and record-keeping.
- Reference to other handbooks and policies as appropriate to the qualifications.

It is important to note that OCN NI will communicate any significant updates or changes to this specification in writing to our centres. Additionally, we will make these changes available on our official website at www.ocnni.org.uk.

To stay current, please refer to the online version of this specification as it is the most authoritative and up-to-date publication. Be aware that downloaded and printed copies may not reflect the latest revisions.

4.1 Additional Support

OCN NI offers a comprehensive range of support services designed to assist centres in meeting the delivery and quality assurance requirements of OCN NI qualifications. These services include:

- **Specimen Assessment Materials**: These booklets are created to assist learners in demonstrating the fulfilment of assessment criteria and organising the quality assurance prerequisites for each individual unit.
- **Qualification Support Pack**: A support pack has been developed to support centres in the delivery of these qualifications. The pack includes planning and assessment templates, guides to best practice, etc.
- **Professional Development for Educators**: OCN NI provides opportunities for professional development tailored to meet the various needs of practitioners and quality assurance staff. Centres can join our training sessions, available in both face-to-face and online formats, or explore a wealth of training materials by visiting www.ocnni.org.uk
- **OCN NI Subject Advisors**: Our team of subject advisors offers vital information and support to centres. They provide guidance on specification details, non-exam assessment advice, updates on resource developments, and various training opportunities. They actively engage with subject communities through an array of networks to facilitate the exchange of ideas and expertise, to support practitioners to provide quality education programs to learners.

All centres can access information, support and guidance to support the delivery and quality assurance of these qualifications by contacting their designated Business Development Advisor or by contacting us on [Contact Us | OCN NI](#)

5. About these Qualifications

5.1 Qualification Regulation Information

OCN NI Level 4 Certificate in Teaching and Learning Support

Qualification Number: 610/7338/6

OCN NI Level 4 Diploma in Teaching and Learning Support

Qualification Number: 610/7337/4

Operational start date: 01 April 2026

Review date: 31 March 2031

The qualifications' operational start and end dates define the regulated qualification's lifecycle. The operational end date is the final date for learner registration, while learners have until the certificate end date to complete the qualification and receive their certificates.

It is important to note that all OCN NI regulated qualifications are listed on the Register of Regulated Qualifications (RQF), which can be found at [Ofqual Register](#). This register is maintained by Ofqual in England and CCEA Regulation in Northern Ireland. It contains information about qualifications that are regulated and accredited. It is a key resource for learners, employers, and educational institutions to verify the status and recognition of qualifications.

Centres must adhere to administrative guidelines diligently, with special attention to the fact that fees, registration, and certification end dates for the qualification may be subject to changes. It is a centre's responsibility to make itself aware of updates on any modifications to ensure compliance with the latest requirements. OCN NI provides centres with timely updates through various channels including website, newsletters and through this specification. Information on qualification fees can be found on the Centre Login section of the OCN NI website www.ocni.org.uk.

5.2 Sector Subject Area

A subject sector area is a specific category used to classify academic and vocational qualifications. Subject sector areas are part of the educational and qualifications framework to organise and categorise qualifications. The sector subject for these qualifications is:

Subject Area: 13.2 Direct Learning Support

5.3 Grading

Grading for these qualifications is pass/fail.

5.4 Qualification's Aim and Objectives

Qualification's Aim

The aim of the OCN NI Level 4 Certificate and Diploma in Teaching and Learning Support is to provide individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills to support teaching and learning in educational settings.

Qualification's Objectives

The objectives of the OCN NI Level 4 Certificate and Diploma in Teaching and Learning Support are to enable learners to:

Apply Nurture Principles to Practice

Demonstrate understanding of the six Nurture Principles and implement strategies that promote emotional security, routine, relationships and regulation in classroom and small-group contexts.

Promote Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

Support children and young people to develop emotional literacy, resilience, executive functioning and self-regulation skills through evidence-informed SEL approaches.

Develop Foundational Autism Specialist Skills

Understand key characteristics of autism and sensory profiles, and apply appropriate communication, environmental and curriculum adaptations aligned to current NI autism guidance and best practice.

Understand the SEN Code of Practice and SEN Framework in NI

Demonstrate knowledge of the SEN Code of Practice (NI), the stages of the identification and support process, and how Teaching and Learning support staff contribute to personalised planning and statutory requirements.

Recognise a Range of Additional Needs and Interventions

Identify common SEN, learning needs and barriers (e.g., ADHD, dyslexia, DLD, SEMH, sensory needs, global delay) and use tiered, evidence-based interventions to support progress.

Use Child- and Young-Person-Centred Approaches

Embed voice, choice and agency in support plans; uphold dignity and safeguarding; and promote participation in learning, social play, regulation and independence.

Observe, Assess and Plan Effectively

Apply structured observation methods, monitor progress, and contribute to planning cycles using UDL and inclusive pedagogical principles in collaboration with teachers and SENCO/LSA teams.

Work in Effective Partnership with Teachers, LSAs and Parents

Build constructive working relationships, contribute professional insights, and communicate appropriately to support continuity, consistency and positive engagement.

Demonstrate High Standards of Professional Relationships in Schools/Colleges

Model professionalism, confidentiality, teamwork, empathy, and respect; follow safeguarding and behaviour support procedures; and contribute to a positive school ethos.

Meet Employability Standards for Specialist Provision and Learning Support

Evidence competence in specialist support settings (e.g., ASD classes, learning support centres, nurture rooms, alternative pathways) including record-keeping, reflection, adaptability and collaboration.

Use Reflective Practice to Enhance Professional Growth

Critically reflect on practice using models such as STAR, Gibbs or What–So What–Now What, and use evidence-informed strategies to improve support for learners with diverse needs.

5.5 Target Learners

These qualifications are targeted at individuals who are working or wish to work within teaching and learning support roles.

5.6 Entry Requirements

- Must be at least 18 years of age and eligible to work in a school, college and/or educational setting.
- Hold GCSE English at minimum grade C or equivalent
- Qualified in learning support or childcare at Level 2 and/or 3 with suitable experience of learning support or child developmental needs or qualified within an NI Curriculum area at level 3.
- Candidates who do not hold a Level 2 and/or 3 qualification must demonstrate at least 3 years of relevant experience

***Please note:** For the Diploma **only** learners must have access to a relevant work placement in order to complete the qualification.

5.7 Progression

The OCN NI Level 4 Certificate and Diploma in Teaching and Learning Support allows for progression within the suite and to further learning in this area and/or into employment.

5.8 Delivery Language

These qualifications are exclusively available in English. If there is a desire to offer these qualifications in Welsh or Irish (Gaeilge), we encourage you to get in touch with OCN NI. They will assess the demand for such provisions and, if feasible, provide the qualifications in the requested language as appropriate.

6. Centre Requirements for Delivering these Qualifications

6.1 Centre Recognition

New and existing OCN NI recognised centres must apply for and be granted approval to deliver these qualifications prior to the commencement of delivery.

6.2 Qualification Approval

Once a centre has successfully undergone the Centre Recognition process, it becomes eligible to apply for qualification approval. The centre's capability to meet and sustain the qualification criteria will be assessed. Throughout the qualification approval process, OCN NI will aim to ensure that:

- centres possess suitable physical resources (e.g., equipment, IT, learning materials, teaching rooms) to support qualification delivery and assessment
- centre staff involved in the assessment process have relevant expertise and/or occupational experience
- robust systems are in place for ensuring ongoing professional development for staff delivering the qualification
- centres have appropriate health and safety policies concerning learner equipment use
- qualification delivery by centres complies with current equality and diversity legislation and regulations
- as a part of the assessment process for these qualifications it may be useful for learners to have access to a practical work setting

6.3 Centre Staffing

To offer these qualifications centres are mandated to establish the following roles as a minimum, although a single staff member may serve in more than one capacity*:

- Centre contact
- Programme Co-ordinator
- Assessor
- Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)

*Note: An individual cannot serve as an IQA for their own assessments.

6.4 Tutor Requirements

Tutors responsible for delivering these qualifications are expected to possess a high degree of occupational competency. They should meet the following criteria:

- **Occupational Competency:** Staff delivering the course should have sufficient University teaching experience as teacher educators in schools in NI and be active academic researchers in this field.
- **Qualifications:** Tutors should be qualified teachers recognised by the General Teaching Council of NI for teaching in schools and have current practitioner experience in schools in Northern Ireland or hold a Master's or higher level qualification relevant to teaching sector needs e.g. MEd, MTeach, Master's in Special Educational Needs or equivalent. This ensures that they have the necessary academic foundation to provide in-depth guidance and support to learners.

These requirements collectively ensure that learners receive instruction from highly qualified and experienced instructors, thereby enhancing the quality and effectiveness of their educational experience.

6.5 Assessor Requirements

The assessment of these qualifications takes place within the centre and is subjected to OCN NI's rigorous quality assurance procedures. The achievement of individual units is based on the criteria defined in each unit.

Assessors play a pivotal role in ensuring the validity and fairness of assessments. They are required to meet the following criteria:

- **Occupational Competency:** Assessors should possess a high degree of occupational and teacher education competence in support of learners in this sector.
- **Assessment Expertise:** Assessors should have direct or related experience in the field of assessment. This includes knowledge of best practices in designing, conducting, and grading assessments. Their expertise ensures that assessments are both fair and valid.
- **Assessors Qualification:** Assessors should hold or be currently undertaking a recognised assessor's qualification; or must have attended the OCN NI Assessment Training.
- **Comprehensive Assessment Oversight:** Assessors are responsible for evaluating all assessment tasks and activities comprehensively. They must thoroughly review and assess each element to ensure a fair and accurate representation of a learner's skills and knowledge.

These rigorous requirements uphold the quality and integrity of the qualification's assessment process, ensuring that learners receive a fair and reliable evaluation of their competencies.

6.6 Internal Quality Assurer Requirements

The Internal Quality Assurer plays a crucial role in the centre's internal quality assurance processes. The centre must designate a skilled and trained IQA who assumes the role of an internal quality monitor responsible for verifying the delivery and assessment of the qualification.

The Internal Quality Assurer for these qualifications must meet the following criteria:

- **IQA Expertise:** IQA should have direct or related experience in the field of internal assurance and have at least one year's university and occupational experience in the areas they are internally quality assuring. This includes knowledge of best practices in designing, conducting, and grading assessments. Their expertise ensures that assessments are both fair and valid.
- **IQA Qualification:** IQA should hold or be currently undertaking a recognised IQA qualification or must have attended the OCN NI IQA Training.
- **Thorough Evaluation of Assessment Tasks and Activities:** IQAs are tasked with conducting in-depth reviews and assessments of all assessment tasks and activities. Their responsibility is to ensure a comprehensive and meticulous oversight of each element to guarantee a just and precise reflection of a learner's abilities and knowledge and to ensure that all assessment and quality assurance requirements are fulfilled.

7. Qualification Structure

7.1 Qualification Purpose

The OCN NI Level 4 Certificate and Diploma in Teaching and Learning Support are designed to develop advanced knowledge, skills, and professional behaviours required to support teaching and learning within different educational settings. The qualifications provide learners with the opportunity to enhance their practice in a practical setting.

7.2 Qualification Level

In the context of the OCN NI Level 4 Certificate and Diploma in Teaching and Learning Support it is essential to understand the significance of qualification levels, as they play a pivotal role in assessing the depth and complexity of knowledge and skills required for successful attainment. These qualifications align with Level 4, which signifies a complex level of difficulty and intricacy. It's important to note that qualification levels in the educational framework range from Level 1 to Level 8, complemented by three 'entry' levels, namely Entry 1 to Entry 3.

7.3 Qualification Size

Total Qualification Time (TQT)

This represents the total amount of time a learner is expected to spend to complete the qualification successfully. It includes both guided learning hours (GLH) and independent study or additional learning time.

Guided Learning Hours (GLH)

These are the hours of guided instruction and teaching provided to learners. This may include classroom instruction, tutorials, or other forms of structured learning.

OCN NI Level 4 Certificate in Teaching and Learning Support	
Total Qualification Time (TQT):	300 hours
Total Credits Required:	30 credits
Guided Learning Hours (GLH):	180 hours
OCN NI Level 4 Diploma in Teaching and Learning Support	
Total Qualification Time (TQT):	600 hours
Total Credits Required:	60 credits
Guided Learning Hours (GLH):	360 hours

7.4 How to Achieve the Qualification

To achieve the **OCN NI Level 4 Certificate in Teaching and Learning Support**, learners must complete three units achieving a total of 30 credits. Please note the unit **Employability and Professional Practice in Education** may only be selected by learners who are currently working within a Teaching and Learning Support role.

To achieve the **OCN NI Level 4 Diploma in Teaching and Learning Support**, learners must complete all six units for a total of 60 credits. Please note learners must have access to a relevant work placement in order to complete the qualification.

8. Assessment Structure

These qualifications are assessed through internal assessment and each unit is accompanied by specific assessment criteria that define the requirements for achievement.

8.1 Assessment Guidance: Portfolio

The portfolio for these qualifications is designed to provide a comprehensive view of a learner's skills and knowledge. It is a holistic collection of evidence that may include a single piece of evidence that satisfies multiple assessment criteria. There is no requirement for learners to maintain separate evidence for each assessment criterion.

When learners are creating their portfolio, they should refer to the assessment criteria to understand the evidence required.

It is essential that the evidence in the portfolio reflects the application of skills in real-world situations. Learners should ensure that they provide multiple examples or references whenever the assessment criteria require it.

8.2 Understanding the Units

The units outlined in this specification establish clear assessment expectations. They serve as a valuable guide for conducting assessments and ensuring quality assurance efficiently. Each unit within this specification follows a consistent structure. This section explains the operational framework of these units. It is imperative that all educators, assessors, Internal Quality Assurers, and other personnel overseeing the qualification review and familiarise themselves with this section to ensure a comprehensive understanding of how these units function.

- **Title:** The title will reflect the content of the unit and should be clear and concise.
- **Level:** A unit can have one of six RQF levels: Entry, One, Two, Three, Four or Five. All units within these qualifications are Level 4.
- **Credit Value:** This describes the number of credits ascribed to a unit. It identifies the number of credits a learner is awarded upon successful achievement of the unit. One credit is awarded for the learning outcomes which a learner, on average, might reasonably be expected to achieve in a notional 10 hours of learning.
- **Learning Outcome:** A coherent set of measurable achievements.
- **Assessment Criteria:** These enable a judgement to be made about whether or not, and how well, the students have achieved the learning outcomes.
- **Assessment Guidance and Methods:** These detail the different assessment methods within the unit that may be used.
- **Possible Content:** This provides indicative content to assist in teaching and learning.
- **Scope:** This provides possible teaching content.

8.3 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process for recognising any learning undertaken and/or attained by a learner. The learner must prove they have met some or all the learning outcomes and/or assessment criteria for this qualification before RPL can be considered. Any evidence submitted as RPL must be valid, authentic, reliable, current, sufficient and specific. In some cases, centres may need to produce mappings against learning outcomes and assessment criteria to confirm comparability of qualification certificates and/or evidence being submitted. Please see the OCN NI Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy for further details.

9. Qualification Summary by Unit

OCN NI Level 4 Certificate in Teaching and Learning Support

Total Qualification Time (TQT) for this qualification: 300 hours
 Guided Learning Hours (GLH) for this qualification: 180 hours

To achieve the **OCN NI Level 4 Certificate in Teaching and Learning Support** learners must complete three units achieving a total of 30 credits. Please note the unit **Employability and Professional Practice in Education** may only be selected by learners who are currently working within a teaching and learning support role.

OCN NI Level 4 Diploma in Teaching and Learning Support

Total Qualification Time (TQT) for this qualification: 600 hours
 Guided Learning Hours (GLH) for this qualification: 360 hours

To achieve the **OCN NI Level 4 Diploma in Teaching and Learning Support** learners must complete all six units for a total of 60 credits. Please note learners must have access to a relevant work placement in order to complete the qualification.

Unit Reference Number	OCN NI Unit Code	Unit Title	Credit Value	GLH	Level
T/652/0309	CBG978	Social and Emotional Learning Strategies for Children and Learners with Diverse Needs	10	60	Four
D/652/0310	CBG979	Enhancing the Skills of Teaching and Learning Support Staff in Pastoral Care	10	60	Four
F/652/0311	CBG980	Inclusivity, Equality and the Law for Teaching and Learning Support	10	60	Four
H/652/0312	CBG981	Understand How to Support Children and Young People with Autism Spectrum Disorder	10	60	Four
J/652/0313	CBG982	Special Educational Needs and Codes of Practice	10	60	Four
K/652/0314	CBG983	Employability and Professional Practice in Education	10	60	Four

10. Unit Content

10.1 Social and Emotional Learning Strategies for Children and Learners with Diverse Needs

Title	Social and Emotional Learning Strategies for Children and Learners with Diverse Needs
Level	Four
Credit Value	10
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	60
OCN NI Unit Code	CBG978
Unit Reference No	T/652/0309
Learn Direct Code	GA1
<i>Unit purpose and aim(s):</i> This unit will enable the learner to gain an understanding of the role of teaching and learning support staff in promoting social and emotional learning (SEL) and resilience among children and young people with diverse needs. Learners will develop knowledge of evidence-based SEL approaches and explore strategies to promote wellbeing.	
Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
1. Know how to review a learner's profile to identify social and emotional learning needs.	1.1. Summarise the purpose and content of a learner profile including indicators of social and emotional needs. 1.2. Explain how external factors impact SEL development. 1.3. Analyse the role of learning support staff in interpreting learner profiles. 1.4. Reflect on ethical considerations and confidentiality when using learner information.
2. Know how to plan support strategies for social and emotional learning and resilience.	2.1. Explain what is meant by resilience and its importance in learning. 2.2. Explain the following key SEL competencies: a) self-awareness b) self-management c) social awareness d) relationship skills e) decision-making 2.3. Research evidence-based SEL and resilience strategies. 2.4. Develop an individualised SEL support plan for a given learner justifying strategies chosen based on learner's profile and needs.
3. Know how to collaborate as a co-professional to support SEL and wellbeing.	3.1. Explain the importance of partnership working and collaboration in supporting SEL. 3.2. Explain the roles of key stakeholders including teachers, parents, Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCO) and external agencies. 3.3. Demonstrate effective communication strategies in a given scenario when working with others.

	<p>3.4. Evaluate barriers to collaboration and how they may be overcome.</p> <p>3.5. Reflect on the role of trust, respect and professional boundaries in collaborative practice.</p>
<p>4. Know how to develop a positive learning culture for SEL and wellbeing.</p>	<p>4.1. Explain what is meant by learning culture in the context of SEL.</p> <p>4.2. Analyse the influence of classroom climate on SEL and wellbeing.</p> <p>4.3. Identify inclusive practices that promote positive behaviour and emotional regulation.</p> <p>4.4. Explain how role-modelling and positive reinforcement support SEL.</p> <p>4.5. Review the impact of informal learning opportunities on SEL.</p>
<p>5. Be able to evaluate the effectiveness of SEL interventions and practice.</p>	<p>5.1. Research methods for measuring the impact of SEL interventions.</p> <p>5.2. Analyse outcomes from a SEL intervention case study and recommend any improvements based on evidence and feedback.</p>

Assessment Guidance

The following assessment method/s may be used to ensure all learning outcomes and assessment criteria are fully covered.

Assessment Method	Definition	Possible Content
Portfolio of evidence	<p>A collection of documents containing work undertaken to be assessed as evidence to meet required skills outcomes</p> <p>OR</p> <p>A collection of documents containing work that shows the learner's progression through the course</p>	<p>Learner notes/written work</p> <p>Learner log/diary</p> <p>Peer notes</p> <p>Record of observation</p> <p>Record of discussion</p>
Practical demonstration/assignment	<p>A practical demonstration of a skill/situation selected by the tutor or by learners, to enable learners to practise and apply skills and knowledge</p>	<p>Record of observation</p> <p>Learner notes/written work</p> <p>Learner log</p>

Learning Outcome	Unit title: Social and Emotional Learning Strategies for Children and Learners with Diverse Needs
1. Know how to review a learner's profile to identify social and emotional learning needs	Scope: Teaching will cover: Purpose and structure of a learner profile <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key elements: attainment, SEN information, attendance, safeguarding • Indicators of social and emotional needs • Impacts of trauma, disadvantage and poor wellbeing on learning • Ethical use of learner information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Confidentiality ○ Data protection ○ Professional conduct ○ Duty of care
2. Know how to plan support strategies for social and emotional learning and resilience	Scope: Teaching will cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitions and models of resilience • CASEL five SEL competencies • Evidence-based SEL strategies • Embedding SEL in daily routines • Designing an individualised SEL plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Goal setting ○ Incorporating learner voice ○ Engaging parents/carers ○ Monitoring progress
3. Know how to collaborate as a co-professional to support SEL and wellbeing	Scope: Teaching will cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles of teaching and learning staff, teachers, SENCOs, parents and agencies • Principles of teamwork and collaboration • Communication strategies and active listening • Overcoming barriers to partnership • Maintaining professional relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Respect ○ Trust ○ Boundaries ○ Confidentiality
4. Know how to develop a positive learning culture for SEL and wellbeing	Scope: Teaching will cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of learning culture • Classroom climate and its impact on SEL • Inclusive practices and emotional literacy • Creating supportive and nurturing environments • Modelling positive behaviour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Praise and rewards ○ Peer mentoring ○ Cooperative learning ○ Circle time
5. Be able to evaluate the effectiveness of SEL interventions and practice.	Scope: Teaching will cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and evaluating SEL interventions • Observation tools and feedback • Reflective practice frameworks • Gathering pupil and parent voice • Using evidence to inform improvement

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- Identifying impact
- Reviewing outcomes
- Sustainability
- Sharing good practice

10.2 Enhancing the Skills of Teaching and Learning Support Staff in Pastoral Care

Title	Enhancing the Skills of Teaching and Learning Support Staff in Pastoral Care
Level	Four
Credit Value	10
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	60
OCN NI Unit Code	CBG979
Unit Reference No	D/652/0310
Learn Direct Code	GA1
<p><i>Unit purpose and aim(s):</i> This unit will enable the learner to gain an understanding of the principles and practice of pastoral care, recording and reporting in education. It will develop the knowledge, understanding and skills of learning support staff in observing, planning and assessing for learning support.</p>	
Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
1. Understand the role of pastoral care in supporting learners.	1.1. Define pastoral care and its importance within education. 1.2. Explain the role of teaching and learning support staff in promoting learner wellbeing. 1.3. Summarise legislative and policy frameworks relevant to pastoral care. 1.4. Evaluate how pastoral care contributes to safeguarding and learner-centred needs. 1.5. Analyse the impact of effective pastoral care on learner engagement and outcomes.
2. Know how to use observation to assess learners' needs and inform planning.	2.1. Explain the purpose of observation in assessing learning and development. 2.2. Critically compare different observation methods and their uses. 2.3. Use a given observation to identify a learner's developmental needs and record observation findings accurately and objectively. 2.4. Use observation information to evaluate and plan support for learning.
3. Know how to plan for learning support and assess learning progress .	3.1. Explain the purpose of planning for learning in teaching and learning support roles. 3.2. Plan a learning support activity to meet a given individual's needs. 3.3. Evaluate how differentiation strategies support inclusion and engagement. 3.4. Plan opportunities for assessment for and of learning with others. 3.5. Explain how to use assessment evidence to adapt and improve learning support.
4. Know how to apply coaching and facilitation skills to support learning.	4.1. Summarise the principles of coaching and facilitation in education. 4.2. Demonstrate the use of key teaching skills in a given scenario including opening, explanation, questioning, stimulus variation, and closing. 4.3. Reflect on how these skills contribute to engagement and progression. 4.4. Evaluate personal strengths and development needs in coaching and facilitation.

		4.5. Create a plan to develop coaching skills further.
5. Know how to maintain accurate pastoral support observation records.		5.1. Explain how to maintain confidential records that support a learners' pastoral needs in line with a school or college requirements. 5.2. Complete sample records in line with the role of teaching and learning support. 5.3. Plan for interventions with teachers in support of observation data.
Assessment Guidance		
The following assessment method/s may be used to ensure all learning outcomes and assessment criteria are fully covered.		
Assessment Method	Definition	Possible Content
Portfolio of evidence	A collection of documents containing work undertaken to be assessed as evidence to meet required skills outcomes OR A collection of documents containing work that shows the learner's progression through the course	Learner notes/written work Learner log/diary Peer notes Record of observation Record of discussion
Practical demonstration/assignment	A practical demonstration of a skill/situation selected by the tutor or by learners, to enable learners to practise and apply skills and knowledge	Record of observation Learner notes/written work Learner log

Learning Outcome	Unit title: Enhancing the Skills of Teaching and Learning Support Staff in Pastoral Care
1. Understand the role of pastoral care in supporting learners.	<p>Scope:</p> <p>Teaching will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitions and principles of pastoral care • The link between pastoral care and safeguarding • Equality, diversity and inclusion considerations • Policy and legal frameworks (Children Order, UNCRC, SEND Code of Practice) • Roles and responsibilities of teaching and learning support staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Duty of care ○ Confidentiality ○ Professional boundaries ○ Working with parents and key workers
2. Know how to use observation to assess learners' needs and inform planning.	<p>Scope:</p> <p>Teaching will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose and value of observation in learning support • Observation methods (narrative, checklist, time/event sampling) • Recording observations objectively • Using observations to assess development • Linking observations to planning and support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identifying learning needs ○ Noticing strengths ○ Identifying barriers ○ Sharing findings
3. Know how to plan for learning support and assess learning progress.	<p>Scope:</p> <p>Teaching will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning cycle: assess–plan–do–review • Differentiation strategies • Inclusive learning design and UDL principles • Assessment for and of learning • Using assessment evidence to adapt practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Monitoring progress ○ Providing feedback ○ Setting targets ○ Adjusting approaches
4. Know how to apply coaching and facilitation skills to support learning.	<p>Scope:</p> <p>Teaching will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principles of coaching and mentoring • Seven learning support skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Opening a session ○ Managing learning/differentiation ○ Explanation and demonstration ○ Stimulus variation/TEL ○ Presence and movement/behaviour ○ Questioning for learning ○ Closing a session • Using these to enhance engagement and motivation • Reflecting on own facilitation skills • Creating a personal development plan

5. Know how to maintain accurate pastoral support records and communicate learning needs effectively.

Scope:

Teaching will cover:

- Types of educational records
- Legal and organisational requirements for record-keeping
- Confidentiality, GDPR and data protection
- Effective reporting to colleagues and parents
- Using records to inform planning and support
 - Accuracy and clarity
 - Timeliness
 - Sharing information appropriately
 - Linking records to outcomes

10.3 Inclusivity, Equality and the Law for Teaching and Learning Support

Title	Inclusivity, Equality and the Law for Teaching and Learning Support
Level	Four
Credit Value	10
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	60
OCN NI Unit Code	CBG980
Unit Reference No	F/652/0311
Learn Direct Code	GA1
<p><i>Unit purpose and aim(s):</i> This unit will enable the learner to gain an understanding of the legal frameworks, policies and professional responsibilities which underpin inclusive and equitable education. It will develop knowledge of duty of care (loco parentis), safeguarding, and codes of practice as they relate to the role of teaching and learning support.</p>	
Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
1. Understand the legal and policy framework for inclusion and equality in education.	1.1. Explain what is meant by duty of care and loco parentis in education. 1.2. Summarise the key principles of inclusive education. 1.3. Summarise key legislation, codes of practice and policies relevant to learning support. 1.4. Explain how these frameworks influence teaching and learning support in practice. 1.5. Reflect on personal responsibilities for upholding inclusion and equality 1.6. Explain the role of teaching and learning support staff in supporting duty of care.
2. Understand the role of teaching and learning support staff in supporting duty of care.	2.1. Describe how the duty of care requirement applies to teaching and learning support roles. 2.2. Explain the relationship between duty of care, safeguarding and pastoral care. 2.3. Explain the responsibilities of teaching and learning support staff when acting in loco parentis. 2.4. Explain how to respond to concerns about learner welfare in line with organisational policy. 2.5. Analyse the importance of professional boundaries and confidentiality.
3. Know how to record and report accurately within the duty of care framework	3.1. Identify types of records maintained in learning support. 3.2. Explain the purpose and importance of accurate record-keeping. 3.3. Complete sample records in line with organisational policy and legal requirements. 3.4. Explain how to report concerns about learners appropriately. 3.5. Reflect on how recording and reporting contribute to safeguarding.
4. Know how to work collaboratively to promote inclusive and equitable practice.	4.1. Identify key stakeholders in promoting inclusion and equality. 4.2. Explain the importance of teamwork in supporting duty of care.

	4.3. Demonstrate effective communication and collaboration skills in a given scenario to promote inclusive and equitable practice. 4.4. Contribute to developing inclusive and equitable strategies within a peer group. 4.5. Reflect on personal contribution to collaborative practice.
5. Be able to use reflective practice to develop inclusive and equitable practice.	5.1. Analyse a given school/college practice and identify strengths and development needs in relation to equity and inclusion. 5.2. Set targets to improve practice in inclusion and equity for the above given scenario.

Assessment Guidance

The following assessment method/s may be used to ensure all learning outcomes and assessment criteria are fully covered.

Assessment Method	Definition	Possible Content
Portfolio of evidence	A collection of documents containing work undertaken to be assessed as evidence to meet required skills outcomes OR A collection of documents containing work that shows the learner's progression through the course	Learner notes/written work Learner log/diary Peer notes Record of observation Record of discussion
Practical demonstration/assignment	A practical demonstration of a skill/situation selected by the tutor or by learners, to enable learners to practise and apply skills and knowledge	Record of observation Learner notes/written work Learner log

Learning Outcome	Unit title: Inclusivity, Equality and the Law for Teaching and Learning Support
1. Understand the legal and policy framework for inclusion and equality in education.	<p>Scope:</p> <p>Teaching will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duty of care and loco parentis • Equality and diversity principles • SEN Code of Practice and SEND legislation • Safeguarding and child protection policies (EA, DfE NI) • Relevant school/college policies and procedures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rights of the child ○ Confidentiality ○ Professional conduct ○ Policy compliance
2. Understand the role of teaching and learning support staff in supporting duty of care.	<p>Scope:</p> <p>Teaching will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibilities under duty of care • Acting in loco parentis • Safeguarding and reporting procedures • Professional boundaries and ethical conduct • Escalation and referral routes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Designated safeguarding lead ○ SENCO ○ Senior leadership team ○ External agencies
3. Know how to record and report accurately within the duty of care framework.	<p>Scope:</p> <p>Teaching will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principles of inclusive education • The 3 Rs model: relationships, routines, regulation • Building positive relationships with learners and parents/carers • Creating predictable and structured environments • Differentiation and reasonable adjustments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supporting SEN ○ Behaviour management ○ Cultural awareness ○ Anti-bias practice
4. Know how to work collaboratively to promote inclusive and equitable practice.	<p>Scope:</p> <p>Teaching will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose and importance of recording and reporting • Types of records (incident logs, learning plans, reports) • Legal and policy requirements (GDPR, safeguarding) • Reporting concerns and following procedures • Using records to support learner progress and safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clarity and accuracy ○ Objectivity ○ Confidentiality ○ Sharing appropriately
5. Be able to use reflective practice to develop inclusive and equitable practice.	<p>Scope:</p> <p>Teaching will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team roles: TA, teacher, SENCO, pastoral staff, parents • Principles of collaborative working

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communication and interpersonal skills• Peer support and professional dialogue• Co-designing inclusive strategies<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Co-planning○ Feedback loops○ Joint target setting○ Monitoring impact
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10.4 Understand How to Support Children and Young People with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Title	Understand How to Support Children and Young People with Autism Spectrum Disorder
Level	Four
Credit Value	10
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	60
OCN NI Unit Code	CBG981
Unit Reference No	H/652/0312
Learn Direct Code	GA1
<p><i>Unit purpose and aim(s):</i> This unit will enable the learner to gain an understanding of Autism and its impact on children and young people aged 4–18 in educational settings. Learners will develop knowledge of identification, diagnosis and the diversity of autistic profiles, as well as the sensory, emotional, communication and behavioural needs often associated with Autism.</p>	
Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
1. Understand the characteristics and diagnosis of Autism.	1.1. Explain Autism and what is meant by the term neurodiversity. 1.2. Explain the triad of impairments and how these present in autistic learners. 1.3. Analyse current diagnostic criteria and processes in Northern Ireland. 1.4. Evaluate gender differences and variability. 1.5. Reflect on given case study findings using diagnostic criteria.
2. Understand the impact of Autism on learning, behaviour and communication.	2.1. Explain how Autism can affect the following: a) communication b) speech and language development c) emotional regulation d) wellbeing 2.2. Explain how sensory processing differences affect learning and behaviour. 2.3. Reflect on how Autism related challenges may affect classroom participation. 2.4. Analyse the strengths and positive attributes of autistic learners.
3. Know how to apply strategies to support autistic children and young people.	3.1. Summarise strategies to support attainment of Personal Learning Plan (PLP) goals. 3.2. Summarise strategies to support social communication and interaction. 3.3. Summarise the use of nurture and Special Education Learning (SEL) approaches to support regulation. 3.4. Demonstrate classroom adaptations to create safe, structured environments. 3.5. Explain how to build positive home-school relationships.
4. Know how to support sensory and emotional regulation.	4.1. Analyse the role of the proprioceptive and vestibular systems in learning. 4.2. Identify signs of sensory overload and distress. 4.3. Summarise strategies to support sensory and emotional regulation and reduce anxiety. 4.4. Explain the role of fine and gross motor supports, imitation and stimming.

<p>5. Know how to respond appropriately to challenging behaviour.</p>	<p>5.1. Explain what is meant by challenging behaviour in the context of autism. 5.2. Explain how behaviour can be a form of communication. 5.3. Summarise de-escalation strategies and intervention techniques. 5.4. Evaluate the role of consistency and structure in managing behaviour. 5.5. Reflect on how to adapt responses to individual needs.</p>
<p>6. Be able to use reflective practice to develop autistic awareness.</p>	<p>6.1. Use a reflective model to evaluate a model of autistic practice. 6.2. Evaluate autistic learning difficulties and their classroom implications. 6.3. Design and present a resource of strategies for one autistic related need. 6.4. Evaluate personal strengths and development needs in autistic support.</p>

Assessment Guidance

The following assessment method/s may be used to ensure all learning outcomes and assessment criteria are fully covered.

Assessment Method	Definition	Possible Content
Portfolio of evidence	<p>A collection of documents containing work undertaken to be assessed as evidence to meet required skills outcomes OR A collection of documents containing work that shows the learner's progression through the course</p>	<p>Learner notes/written work Learner log/diary Peer notes Record of observation Record of discussion</p>
Practical demonstration/assignment	<p>A practical demonstration of a skill/situation selected by the tutor or by learners, to enable learners to practise and apply skills and knowledge</p>	<p>Record of observation Learner notes/written work Learner log</p>

Learning Outcome	Unit title: Understand How to Support Children and Young People with Autism Spectrum Disorder
1. Understand the characteristics and diagnosis of Autism.	<p>Scope:</p> <p>Teaching will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 3Ds of ASD: definition, diagnosis and difficulties • Triad of impairments (social interaction, communication, restricted/repetitive behaviour) • Current diagnostic criteria (ICD-11, DSM-5) • Variability and gender differences • Impact of diagnostic findings on support planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strength-based approaches ○ Individual profiles ○ Myths and misconceptions ○ Stigma reduction
2. Understand the impact of Autism on learning, behaviour and communication.	<p>Scope:</p> <p>Teaching will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech, language and communication needs • Expressive and receptive language difficulties • Emotional regulation and wellbeing • Classroom participation and inclusion challenges • Strengths-based perspectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Focus and honesty ○ Memory and pattern recognition ○ Creativity and special interests ○ Attention to detail
3. Know how to apply strategies to support autistic children and young people.	<p>Scope:</p> <p>Teaching will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating safe and structured environments • Using PLPs effectively • Social communication strategies (visual supports, social stories, peer modelling) • Supporting SEL and nurture approaches • Home-school communication and collaborative planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Working with class teachers ○ Information sharing ○ Monitoring progress ○ Celebrating success
4. Know how to support sensory and emotional regulation.	<p>Scope:</p> <p>Teaching will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensory systems (proprioceptive and vestibular) • Signs of sensory overload • Calming and regulatory strategies • Fine and gross motor skills, imitation, stimming • Building resilience and emotional wellbeing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Emotion coaching ○ Sensory breaks ○ Relaxation techniques ○ Co-regulation strategies

<p>5. Know how to respond appropriately to challenging behaviour.</p>	<p>Scope:</p> <p>Teaching will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding challenging behaviour as communication • Triggers and early warning signs • De-escalation techniques • Positive behaviour support plans • Consistency and structure in behaviour management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Visual timetables ○ Transition supports ○ Clear rules and routines ○ Restorative approaches
<p>6. Be able to use reflective practice to develop autistic awareness.</p>	<p>Scope:</p> <p>Teaching will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of reflection • Reflective models (Gibbs, Kolb, Brookfield) • Critical analysis of specific difficulties • Designing strategies and resources ○ Peer feedback and review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SMART development targets ○ Sharing practice ○ Monitoring progress ○ Linking CPD to SEN priorities

10.5 Special Educational Needs and Codes of Practice

Title	Special Educational Needs and Codes of Practice
Level	Four
Credit Value	10
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	60
OCN NI Unit Code	CBG982
Unit Reference No	J/652/0313
Learn Direct Code	GA1
<p><i>Unit purpose and aim(s):</i> This unit will enable the learner to gain an understanding of the current Supporting Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice and its implications for schools, colleges and teaching and learning support staff. Learners will develop knowledge of SEN processes, roles and responsibilities, and explore the importance of pupil and parental engagement in supporting inclusive education.</p>	
Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
1. Understand the SEN Code of Practice and its relevance to learning support roles.	1.1. Summarise the purpose and key principles of the SEN Code of Practice. 1.2. Describe how the SEN Code relates to the duties of learning support staff. 1.3. Explain the legal and policy framework underpinning SEN provision. 1.4. Reflect on teaching and learning staff responsibilities in supporting SEN provision. 1.5. Describe how the SEN Code supports inclusive practice.
2. Understand the role of student and parental engagement in supporting SEN.	2.1. Evaluate parental engagement and student voice in the context of SEN. 2.2. Explain the benefits of parental engagement for child / young person outcomes. 2.3. Analyse barriers to engagement and strategies to overcome them. 2.4. Research models of effective engagement. 2.5. Reflect on the role of teaching and learning support staff in engaging parents and students.
3. Know how to evaluate school and college practice against SEN code expectations.	3.1. Explain what is meant by a parent-friendly school culture. 3.2. Use an audit tool to assess a given school or college SEN and engagement practice identifying strengths and areas for development and make recommendations for improving practice. 3.3. Reflect on the impact of school culture on SEN provision.
4. Know how to work collaboratively to support SEN provision for learners.	4.1. Identify the roles of key stakeholders in SEN support, including Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), Education Authority, parents and other external agencies. 4.2. Explain the importance of teamwork in SEN provision. 4.3. Demonstrate effective communication and collaboration skills in a given scenario to support SEN provision for learners. 4.4. Recommend ideas to improve a given school or college SEN practice. 4.5. Reflect on the importance of shared responsibility in SEN.

Assessment Guidance

The following assessment method/s may be used to ensure all learning outcomes and assessment criteria are fully covered.

Assessment Method	Definition	Possible Content
Portfolio of evidence	<p>A collection of documents containing work undertaken to be assessed as evidence to meet required skills outcomes</p> <p>OR</p> <p>A collection of documents containing work that shows the learner's progression through the course</p>	<p>Learner notes/written work</p> <p>Learner log/diary</p> <p>Peer notes</p> <p>Record of observation</p> <p>Record of discussion</p>
Practical demonstration/assignment	A practical demonstration of a skill/situation selected by the tutor or by learners, to enable learners to practise and apply skills and knowledge	<p>Record of observation</p> <p>Learner notes/written work</p> <p>Learner log</p>

Learning Outcome	Unit title: Special Educational Needs and Codes of Practice
<p>1. Understand the SEN Code of Practice and its relevance to learning support roles.</p>	<p>Scope:</p> <p>Teaching will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose and principles of the SEN Code of Practice (draft NI) • Legal frameworks (SEND Act NI, Equality Act, UNCRC) • SEN categories and graduated response • Roles and responsibilities of learning support staff • Promoting inclusion through the SEN Code <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Early identification ○ SEN Register ○ Individual Education Plans ○ Reasonable adjustments
<p>2. Understand the role of student and parental engagement in supporting SEN.</p>	<p>Scope:</p> <p>Teaching will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitions: involvement vs engagement • Benefits of engagement on learner progress and wellbeing • Barriers to engagement and how to overcome them • Models of engagement (Parentkind Blueprint, Families and Schools Together, Getting Ready to Learn) • Role of the TA in building relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Listening to parent voice ○ Capturing student voice ○ Engaging hard-to-reach families ○ Building school 'friendliness'
<p>3. Know how to evaluate school and college practice against SEN code expectations.</p>	<p>Scope:</p> <p>Teaching will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent-friendly schools' framework (Parentkind NI) • Carrying out an engagement audit • Identifying strengths and gaps • Developing recommendations for practice • Linking audit to SEN priorities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Communication systems ○ Whole-school culture ○ Multi-agency working ○ Continuous improvement
<p>4. Know how to work collaboratively to support SEN provision for learners.</p>	<p>Scope:</p> <p>Teaching will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles of key stakeholders in SEN (SENCO, teachers, EA, parents, health professionals) • Teamworking principles • Effective communication skills • Contributing to shared plans and actions • Building a collaborative culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Peer review ○ Joint target setting ○ Shared monitoring ○ Celebrating success

10.6 Employability and Professional Practice in Education

Title	Employability and Professional Practice in Education
Level	Four
Credit Value	10
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	60
OCN NI Unit Code	CBG983
Unit Reference No	K/652/0314
Learn Direct Code	GA1
<p><i>Unit purpose and aim(s):</i> This unit will enable the learner to gain an understanding of organisational structures, communication systems and interpersonal skills required for effective teamwork in education settings. Learners will develop knowledge of professional roles, codes of practice and team dynamics, and will demonstrate effective communication, relationship-building, problem-solving skills and collaborative working.</p>	
Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
1. Understand the organisational structures and communication systems in education.	1.1. Describe the organisational structure of a typical school or college and the key roles and responsibilities within educational teams. 1.2. Explain the communication systems used within education settings. 1.3. Evaluate policies and codes of practice that guide communication. 1.4. Reflect on the importance of clear communication for learner support.
2. Understand the role of learning support partnerships in the context of the workplace.	2.1. Evaluate the value of learning partnerships and their importance in educational contexts and how they support learner engagement and outcomes. 2.2. Describe the characteristics of effective partnership in supporting learning. 2.3. Explain the roles and contributions of teaching and learning support staff within education. 2.4. Analyse barriers to effective partnership and how to overcome them.
3. Be able to develop effective communication and interpersonal skills when working with children and young people.	3.1. Identify core interpersonal and communication skills for teaching and learning support staff. 3.2. Demonstrate active listening, questioning and feedback skills when working with children and young people. 3.3. Explain how communication styles impact relationships and teamwork. 3.4. Apply Owen Hargie's micro-skills model to communication practice. 3.5. Reflect on personal communication strengths and areas for development.
4. Be able to build and maintain positive professional relationships.	4.1. Explain the principles of building trust and respect in relationships. 4.2. Describe strategies for positive working relationships with colleagues and parents. 4.3. Explain how to manage conflict in a professional manner. 4.4. Demonstrate how to apply strategies to support inclusion and cultural sensitivity in relationships.

	4.5. Evaluate the impact of positive relationships on learner outcomes.
5. Be able to apply problem-solving skills in learning support contexts.	5.1. Identify common professional challenges requiring learning support interventions. 5.2. Demonstrate collaborative problem-solving in a classroom environment. 5.3. Explain how to contribute constructive ideas and solutions. 5.4. Reflect on own performance within the given scenario carried out in AC5.2. and make recommendations for improvement.
6. Be able to reflect on own role within teaching and learning support.	6.1. Explain the purpose of reflective practice in developing interpersonal skills. 6.2. Use a reflective model to evaluate own practice within the context of learning support. 6.3. Identify personal strengths and development needs in interpersonal practice. 6.4. Set SMART targets for professional improvement with the support of a work-based mentor. 6.5. Explain how reflective practice contributes to continuous professional development.

Assessment Guidance

The following assessment method/s may be used to ensure all learning outcomes and assessment criteria are fully covered.

Assessment Method	Definition	Possible Content
Portfolio of evidence	A collection of documents containing work undertaken to be assessed as evidence to meet required skills outcomes OR A collection of documents containing work that shows the learner's progression through the course	Learner notes/written work Learner log/diary Peer notes Record of observation Record of discussion
Practical demonstration/assignment	A practical demonstration of a skill/situation selected by the tutor or by learners, to enable learners to practise and apply skills and knowledge	Record of observation Learner notes/written work Learner log

Learning Outcome	Unit title: Employability and Professional Practice in Education
<p>1. Understand the organisational structures and communication systems in education.</p>	<p>Scope:</p> <p>Teaching will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational structures of schools/colleges • Roles and responsibilities (SLT, SENCO, TAs, pastoral staff) • Communication systems and channels • Codes of practice for professional communication • Importance of clarity and accuracy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chain of communication ○ Confidentiality ○ GDPR ○ Professional language
<p>2. Understand the role of learning support partnerships in the context of the workplace.</p>	<p>Scope:</p> <p>Teaching will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitions and principles of teamwork • Characteristics of effective teams • Role of TAs in team structures • Benefits of teamwork for learner outcomes • Barriers and enablers to effective teamwork <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Role clarity ○ Trust and respect ○ Shared goals ○ Communication challenges
<p>3. Be able to develop effective communication and interpersonal skills when working with children and young people.</p>	<p>Scope:</p> <p>Teaching will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core communication skills (listening, questioning, feedback) • Verbal and non-verbal communication • Owen Hargie’s micro-skills model • Matching communication style to context • Reflecting on communication practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Emotional intelligence ○ Clarity and tone ○ Assertiveness ○ Responsiveness
<p>4. Be able to build and maintain positive professional relationships.</p>	<p>Scope:</p> <p>Teaching will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building trust and respect • Professional boundaries • Relationship-building with colleagues and parents • Conflict management strategies • Inclusion and cultural sensitivity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Anti-bias approaches ○ Valuing diversity ○ Collaborative ethos ○ Empathy and respect

<p>5. Be able to apply problem-solving skills in learning support contexts.</p>	<p>Scope:</p> <p>Teaching will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying professional challenges • Collaborative problem-solving approaches • Leading and contributing in group tasks • Evaluating solutions and outcomes • Reflecting on teamwork skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Creativity ○ Consensus-building ○ Decision-making ○ Accountability
<p>6. Be able to reflect on own role within teaching and learning support.</p>	<p>Scope:</p> <p>Teaching will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of reflective practice • Reflective models (Gibbs, Kolb, Brookfield) • Using reflective logs • Setting SMART targets • Continuous professional development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Peer feedback ○ Self-assessment ○ CPD planning ○ Ongoing review

11. Quality Assurance of Centre Performance

11.1 Internal Assessment

When delivering and assessing these qualifications, centres must align with stakeholders' expectations and address learners' needs by implementing a practical and applied programme. Centres have the flexibility to customise programmes to meet local requirements and establish connections with local employers and the broader vocational sector.

The Assessor should work with the Internal Quality Assurer to ensure that the assessment is planned in line with OCN NI requirements. Assessment Plans must be developed and approved by the Internal Quality Assurer prior to the delivery of the qualification.

All units within these qualifications must undergo internal assessment. Learners must provide evidence that they have appropriately met all assessment criteria required for that grade.

The assessment format for all units involves a task conducted after the delivery of the unit's content, or part of it, if multiple tasks are used. Tasks may exhibit in various forms, encompassing practical and written types. Please refer to 'OCN NI's Assessment Definitions Guide' for additional details.

A task constitutes a distinct activity completed independently by learners, separated from teaching, practice, exploration, and other activities guided by tutors. Tasks are assigned to learners with a specified start date, completion date, and explicit requirements for the evidence to be produced. Some tasks may include observed practical components and require diverse forms of evidence.

A valid assignment will enable a clear and formal assessment outcome which meets the requirements of the assessment criteria. Assessment decisions are based on the specific assessment criteria given in each unit and set at each grade level. The way in which individual units are written provides a balance of assessment of understanding, practical skills and vocational attributes appropriate to the purpose of qualification.

It is the Assessor's role to ensure that learners are appropriately prepared for assessment, this begins from induction onwards. Assessors should ensure that learners understand how assessment tasks are used to determine the award of credit, the importance of meeting assessment timelines, and that all learners work must be independently created, where source documents are used this should be appropriately referenced, learners should be aware of what would constitute plagiarism and the possible consequences.

When conducting the assessment, Assessors must ensure they do not provide direct input, instructions or specific feedback which may compromise the authenticity of the work submitted.

Once the Assessor has authenticated the learners work, they must transparently demonstrate the rationale behind their assessment decisions. Once a learner completes all assigned tasks for a unit, the Assessor will allocate a grade for the unit. Refer to the 'Unit Grading Matrix' for additional information on the grading process.

Once the Assessor has completed the assessment process for the task, the assessment decision is recorded formally, and feedback is provided to the learner. The feedback should show the learner the outcome of the assessment decision, how it was determined or where the criteria has been met, it may indicate to the learner why achievement of the assessment criteria has not been met. It must be clear to the learner that this Assessment outcome is subject to verification.

For further information on assessment practice, please see the 'OCN NI Centre Handbook'. Assessment Training is also available and can be booked through the OCN NI Website.

11.2 Internal Quality Assurance

The role of the Internal Quality Assurer is to ensure appropriate internal quality assurance processes are carried out. The Internal Quality Assurer must oversee that assessments are conducted in accordance with relevant OCN NI policies, regulations, and this specification.

The Internal Quality Assurer must ensure assessments are fair, reliable, and uniform, thereby providing a consistent standard for all learners.

Internal Quality Assurers are required to provide constructive feedback to Assessors, identifying areas of strength and those that may require improvement. This feedback contributes to the ongoing professional development of Assessors.

Contributing to the standardisation of assessment practices within the centre is an important function of this role. This entails aligning assessment methods, grading criteria, and decision-making processes to maintain fairness and equity.

Internal Quality Assurers will actively engage in the sampling and monitoring of assessments to ensure the consistency and accuracy of assessment decisions. This process helps identify trends, areas for improvement, and ensures the robustness of the overall assessment system.

For further information on Internal Quality Assurance practice, please see the 'OCN NI Centre Handbook'. Internal Quality Assurance Training is also available and can be booked through the OCN NI Website.

11.3 Documentation

For internal quality assurance processes to be effective, the internal assessment and Internal Quality Assurance team needs to keep effective records.

- The programme must have an assessment and Internal Quality Assurance plan. When producing a plan, they should consider:
 - the time required for training and standardisation activities
 - the time available to undertake teaching and carry out assessment,
 - consider when learners may complete assessments and when quality assurance will take place
 - the completion dates for different assessment tasks
 - the date by which the assignment needs to be internally verified
 - sampling strategies
 - how to manage the assessment and verification of learners' work so that they can be given formal decisions promptly
 - how resubmission opportunities can be scheduled.

The following documents are available from OCN NI and document templates can be found in the Centre Login section of the OCN NI website www.ocnni.org.uk:

- A1 – Learner Assessment Record per Learner
- Learner Authentication Declarations
- Records of any reasonable adjustments applied for and the outcome – please see 'OCN NI's Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Policy' for further information
- M1 Internal Quality Assurance Sample Record
- M2 Feedback to Assessor
- Records of any complaints or appeals

11.4 External Quality Assurance

All OCN NI recognised centres are subject to External Quality Assurance. External quality assurance activities will be conducted to confirm continued compliance with the CCEA Regulation General Conditions of Recognition, OCN NI terms and conditions and the requirements outlined within these qualifications' specification.

The External Quality Assurer is assigned by OCN NI. The External Quality Assurer will review the delivery and assessment of these qualifications. This will include, but is not limited to, the review of a sample of assessment evidence and evidence of the internal quality assurance of assessment and assessment decisions. This will form the basis of the External Quality Assurance report and will help OCN NI determine the centre's risk.

The role of the External Quality Assurer serves as an external overseer of assessment quality, working to uphold consistency, compliance, and continuous improvement within the assessment process. Their role is crucial in ensuring that assessments are valid, reliable, fair, and aligned with the required standards and regulations.

For further information on OCN NI Centre Assessments Standards Scrutiny (CASS) Strategy, please see the OCN NI Centre Handbook.

11.5 Standardisation

As a process, standardisation is designed to ensure consistency and promote good practice in understanding and the application of standards. Standardisation events:

- make qualified statements about the level of consistency in assessment across centres delivering a qualification
- make statements on the standard of evidence that is required to meet the assessment criteria for units in a qualification
- make recommendations on assessment practice
- produce advice and guidance for the assessment of units
- identify good practice in assessment and Internal Quality Assurance

Centres offering these qualifications must carry out internal standardisation activities prior to the claim for certification.

Centres offering units of an OCN NI qualification must attend and contribute assessment materials and learner evidence for standardisation events if requested.

OCN NI will notify centres of the nature of sample evidence required for standardisation events (this will include assessment materials, learner evidence and relevant Assessor and Internal Quality Assurer documentation). OCN NI will make standardisation summary reports available and correspond directly with centres regarding event outcomes.

12. Administration

12.1 Registration

A centre must register learners for these qualifications within 20 days of commencement of the delivery of the programme.

For further information on learner registration please see the OCN NI Centre Handbook and the QuartzWeb Manual, available through the Centre Login section of the OCN NI website. Administration training is also available and can be booked through www.ocnni.org.uk.

12.2 Certification

Once all internal quality assurance activities have been successfully completed, the centre can claim certification for the learner(s).

Certificates will be issued to centres within 20 working days from completion of a satisfactory external quality assurance activity, if appropriate, alternatively from the submission of an accurate and complete marksheet.

It is the responsibility of the centre to ensure that certificates received from OCN NI are held securely and distributed to learners promptly and securely.

For further information on the uploading of results please see the QuartzWeb Manual for guidance, administration training is also available and can be booked through [OCN NI](#)

12.3 Charges

OCN NI publishes all up-to-date qualification fees in its Fees and Invoicing Policy document. Further information can be found on the centre login area of the OCN NI website.

12.4 Equality, Fairness and Inclusion

OCN NI's are committed to ensuring all learners have an equal opportunity to access our qualifications and assessment, and that our qualifications are awarded in a way that is fair to every learner.

OCN NI is committed to making sure that:

- learners with a protected characteristic are not, when they are undertaking one of our qualifications, disadvantaged in comparison to learners who do not share that characteristic
- all learners achieve the recognition they deserve for undertaking a qualification and that this achievement can be compared fairly to the achievement of their peers

For information on reasonable adjustments and special considerations please see the OCN NI Centre Handbook and Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy held in the back office of the OCN NI website.

12.5 Retention of Evidence

OCN NI has published guidance for centres on the retention of evidence. Details are provided in the OCN NI Centre Handbook and can be accessed via the OCN NI website.

OCN NI Level 4 Certificate in Teaching and Learning Support

Qualification Number: 610/7338/6

OCN NI Level 4 Diploma in Teaching and Learning Support

Qualification Number: 610/7337/4

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