



Qualification Specification



Qualification summary

Qualification title	NCFE CACHE Level 2 Award in Helping Skills
Ofqual qualification number (QN)	601/7154/6
Guided learning hours (GLH)	52
Total qualification time (TQT)	70
Credit value	7
Minimum age	16
Qualification purpose	This qualification is designed for anyone who uses, or would like to use, helping skills at work or in a personal capacity. This may include learners who wish to progress towards further qualifications, or learners who wish to study this programme in order to complement other programmes (for example, health and social care, children's care, learning and development, voluntary and community work).
Grading	Achieved/not yet achieved
Assessment method	Internally assessed and externally quality assured portfolio of evidence.
Work/industry placement experience	Work/industry placement experience is not required.
Regulation information	This is a regulated qualification. The regulated number for this qualification is 601/7154/6.
Funding	This qualification may be eligible for funding. For further guidance on funding, please contact your local funding provider.



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Section 1: introduction

Centres must ensure they are using the most recent version of the Qualification Specification on the NCFE website.

Aims and objectives

This qualification aims to:

- introducing learners to the use of helping skills in everyday life and work
- offer breadth and depth of study, incorporating a key core of knowledge
- provide opportunities to acquire a number of practical and technical skills.

The objectives of this qualification are to:

- progress into a role in which helping skills are used
- prepare to progress on to similar qualifications at a higher level.

Support Handbook

This Qualification Specification must be used alongside the mandatory Support Handbook, which can be found on the NCFE website. This contains additional supporting information to help with planning, delivery and assessment.

This Qualification Specification contains all the qualification-specific information you will need that is not covered in the Support Handbook.

Guidance for entry and registration

This qualification is designed for anyone who uses, or would like to use, helping skills at work or in a personal capacity. This may include learners who wish to progress towards further qualifications or learners who wish to study this programme in order to complement other programmes (for example, health and social care, children's care, learning and development, voluntary and community work).

It may also be useful to learners studying qualifications in the following sectors/areas:

- health and social care
- children's care
- learning and development
- voluntary and community work.

Registration is at the discretion of the centre in accordance with equality legislation and should be made on the NCFE Portal.

There are no specific prior learning requirements a learner must have for this qualification. However, learners may find it helpful if they have already achieved a level 1 qualification.

Centres are responsible for ensuring that all learners are capable of achieving the learning outcomes (LOs) and complying with the relevant literacy, numeracy, and health and safety requirements.



Learners registered on this qualification should not undertake another qualification at the same level, or with the same/a similar title, as duplication of learning may affect funding eligibility.

Achieving this qualification

To be awarded this qualification learners are required to successfully achieve **3** mandatory units. Please refer to the list of units in appendix A or the unit summaries in section 2 for further information.

To achieve this qualification, learners must successfully demonstrate their achievement of all LOs of the units as detailed in this Qualification Specification. A partial certificate may be requested for learners who do not achieve the full qualification but have achieved at least one whole unit; partial achievement certificate fees can be found in the Fees and Pricing document on the NCFE website.

Progression

Learners who achieve this qualification could progress to the following:

- further education:
 - mentoring
 - information, advice or guidance
 - counselling skills
 - healthcare or health and social care
 - supporting teaching and learning in schools.

Resource requirements

There are no mandatory resource requirements for this qualification, but centres must ensure learners have access to suitable resources to enable them to cover all the appropriate LOs.

How the qualification is assessed

Assessment is the process of measuring a learner's skill, knowledge and understanding against the standards set in a qualification.

This qualification is internally assessed and externally quality assured.

The assessment consists of one component:

- an internally assessed portfolio of evidence, which is assessed by centre staff and externally quality assured by NCFE (internal quality assurance must still be completed by the centre as usual).

Unless otherwise stated in this specification, all learners taking this qualification must be assessed in English and all assessment evidence presented for external quality assurance must be in English.

Internal assessment

Each learner must create a portfolio of evidence generated from appropriate assessment tasks to demonstrate achievement of all the LOs associated with each unit. The assessment tasks should allow the learner to respond to a real-life situation that they may face when in employment. On completion of



each unit, learners must declare that the work produced is their own and the assessor must countersign this. Examples of suitable evidence for the portfolio for each unit are provided in section 2.

If a centre needs to create their own internal assessment tasks, there are four essential elements in the production of successful centre-based assessment tasks; these are:

- ensuring the assessment tasks are meaningful with clear, assessable outcomes
- appropriate coverage of the content, LOs or assessment criteria (AC)
- having a valid and engaging context or scenario
- including sufficient opportunities for stretch and challenge for higher attainers.

Assessment guidance is provided for each unit. Assessors can use other methods of assessment as long as they are valid and reliable and maintain the integrity of the assessment and of the standards required of this qualification.



Section 2: unit content and assessment guidance

This section provides details of the structure and content of this qualification.

The types of evidence listed are for guidance purposes only. Within learners' portfolios, other types of evidence are acceptable if all learning outcomes (LOs) are covered, and if the evidence generated can be internally and externally quality assured. For approval of methods of internal assessment other than portfolio building, please contact your external quality assurer (EQA).

The explanation of terms explains how the terms used in the unit content are applied to this qualification. This can be found in section 3.



Unit 01 Developing self-awareness for the helping relationship (D/507/4044)



Unit summary				
This unit will develop the learners' understanding of themselves and the personal qualities that can be used within a helping role. Learners will identify how to meet organisational policy, recognise areas for self-development, and how to act in a way that upholds equality and diversity in the context of a helping relationship.				
Assessment				
Internal assessed and externally quality assured.				
Mandatory	Achieved/not yet achieved	Level 2	3 credits	25 GLH

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	Assessment criteria (AC) The learner can:
1. Be able to develop self-understanding	1.1 Identify own motivation for helping others
	1.2 Identify own values and beliefs
	1.3 Assess how own values and beliefs could have an effect on relationships
	1.4 Identify own blocks to listening and learning
	1.5 Explain ways to overcome blocks to listening and learning
	1.6 Explain the benefits of giving and receiving feedback for personal development
	1.7 Explain ways in which a helper can look after their own emotional health and wellbeing
2. Understand personal qualities relevant to the helping role	2.1 Identify the personal qualities relevant to a specific helping role
	2.2 Compare own personal qualities against those relevant to the chosen helping role
	2.3 Explain the importance of developing a range of personal qualities
	2.4 Identify own personal qualities for development
3. Understand the role of the 'core' conditions within helping relationships	3.1 Explain each of the core conditions
	3.2 Identify the skills that can be used to demonstrate each of the core conditions
	3.3 Identify own barriers to offering the core conditions
	3.4 Explain the meaning of 'in the here and now'
	3.5 Describe when self-disclosure might be beneficial to the helping relationship
	3.6 Explain the risks involved with self-disclosure in a helping relationship
4. Know aspects of equality and diversity	4.1 Define the terms: • equality • diversity • stereotyping • labelling • discrimination.
	4.2 Outline the importance of valuing individuality
	4.3 Explain why people stereotype others
	4.4 Give examples of the effects that stereotyping, labelling and discrimination can have on individuals or groups



Range
1. Be able to develop self-understanding 1.7. Health and wellbeing Ways in which one's own health and wellbeing can be looked after including: • making use of opportunities for support • having adequate rest and relaxation • recognising the need for personal space • participating in activities.
2. Understand personal qualities relevant to the helping role 2.1. Qualities could include: • trustworthiness • honesty • respectfulness • sincerity • fairness.
3. Understand the role of the 'core' conditions within helping relationships 3.1. Core conditions including: • empathy • genuineness (congruence) • respectfulness (unconditional positive regard).
Delivery and assessment guidance
LO1 (AC1.1–1.5) Learners could respond to a set of pre-prepared questions covering the assessment criteria. Questions and answers should be clearly recorded. LO1 (AC1.6, 1.7), LO3 (AC3.2, 3.3), LO4 (AC4.1–4.4) Learners could participate in a small group discussion which could be assessed via a tutor witness testimony or video recording. They could also prepare a learner report. LO2 (AC2.1–2.4), LO3 (AC3.1, 3.4–3.6) Learners could conduct research and prepare notes or a learner report.



Unit 02 Developing listening and communication skills for the helping relationship (K/507/4046)

Unit summary				
In this unit learners will investigate the range of communication skills used in helping relationships. They will look at overcoming the barriers to communication they may encounter and develop ways to evaluate their communication skills. Learners will also develop their understanding of the core conditions and other counselling concepts used during helping relationships.				
Assessment				
Internally assessed and externally quality assured.				
Mandatory	Achieved/not yet achieved	Level 2	2 credits	12 GLH

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	Assessment criteria (AC) The learner can:
1. Understand the use of different types of communication skills	1.1 Identify different forms of communication
	1.2 Outline why different types of communication skills are used
	1.3 Identify barriers to communication
	1.4 Describe ways to overcome barriers to communication
2. Be able to use different types of communication skills	2.1 Demonstrate the use of a range of communication skills
3. Be able to evaluate own use of different communication skills	3.1 Evaluate own communication skills
	3.2 Identify own communication skills for development
	3.3 Reflect on the development of own communication skills

Range
1. Understand the use of different types of communication skills 1.1 Forms of communication including: - written - verbal - non-verbal. 1.3 Barriers Barriers are the range of physical, environmental, psychological, social and cultural factors that can interfere with, or distort communication, such as: - impairment (mental or physical, including sensory) - the use of jargon or slang - inappropriate facial expressions or gestures - environmental noise. 1.4 Ways to overcome barriers including: - making the best use of the environment - listening carefully to what is being communicated - speaking clearly and only using jargon or slang when appropriate



Range

- speaking at an appropriate pace and in an appropriate tone of voice
- engaging appropriately with people and using non-judgmental language
- using gestures and body language to emphasise what is being communicated
- being aware of individual differences in relation to disability, culture, language, gender and age
- avoiding over-familiarity and respecting personal space.

2. Be able to use different types of communication skills

2.1 Communication skills

All of the following should be covered:

- reflecting
- paraphrasing
- open questioning
- summarising and focusing
- the use of silence
- the use of body language.

Delivery and assessment guidance

LO1 (AC1.1–1.4) Learners could respond to a set of pre-prepared questions covering the assessment criteria. Questions and answers should be clearly recorded.

LO2 (AC2.1) A witness testimony could be prepared by the learner's line manager, supervisor or assessor. The testimony should be an objective account of what the learner has done and should provide sufficient detail to confirm that the learner has met the assessment criteria.

LO3 (AC3.1–3.3) Learners could conduct research and prepare notes or a learner report.



Unit 03 Managing the helping relationship (H/507/4045)



Unit summary				
This unit will give learners an understanding of issues that are specific to helping relationships, including personal safety and appropriate record-keeping. Learners will cover defining and maintaining boundaries and how to set up, manage and end the helping relationship.				
Assessment				
Internally assessed and externally quality assured.				
Mandatory	Achieved/not yet achieved	Level 2	2 credits	15 GLH

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	Assessment criteria (AC) The learner can:
1. Understand issues related to the helping relationship	1.1 Identify situations where helping skills could be used
	1.2 Explain which helping skills would be beneficial in different situations
	1.3 Summarise how the broad principles of an organisational document relate to the use of helping skills
	1.4 Identify guidance to use when presented with an ethical dilemma
	1.5 Identify potential issues of risk and safety related to helping relationships
	1.6 Explain how potential issues of risk and safety could be addressed
	1.7 State the importance of following organisational guidelines on record-keeping and reporting
	1.8 Identify the need for support and/or supervision for different situations
2. Understand how to structure a helping relationship	2.1 Define 'limits of confidentiality' and explain their importance
	2.2 Identify the limitations to own role and level of competence
	2.3 Explain the responsibilities that a provider of help may have to others
	2.4 Explain how to begin , manage and end the helping relationship
3. Understand the purpose and process of referral	3.1 State why a referral may be necessary
	3.2 Identify a situation when a referral would be required
	3.3 Identify an organisation that can offer help and information relating to a referral situation
	3.4 Outline the range of services that the organisation identified can offer
	3.5 Explain how the services identified can be accessed
	3.6 Outline how to conduct an ethical referral

Range
1. Understand issues related to the helping relationship
1.3. Broad principles could include:
- personal qualities - confidentiality - maintaining - skills and knowledge - fitness to practice.



Range

1.5. Risk and safety issues include:

- visiting service users in their own homes
- outreach/fieldworkers
- basic safety (letting people know who you are seeing, where you are, how long you will be checking in at frequent times)
- insurance issues.

1.7. Record-keeping

Issues surrounding record-keeping during helping sessions, including:

- what should be recorded
- how it should be recorded
- who can access the information
- how the information should be stored
- what may need disclosing to others
- requirements relating to data protection.

2. Understand how to structure a helping relationship

2.2. Role

Role in interpersonal relationships with others within a work or voluntary setting.

2.3. Responsibilities include:

- organisational constraints and duties
- legal constraints and duties
- complying with organisational policies
- working codes of practice.

2.4. Begin

Setting and explaining boundaries (contract) for a session, or series of sessions, and agreeing the initial requirements for help.

2.4. End such as:

- recognise the signals for ending
- consider possibilities for referral
- recognise factors that make endings difficult
- ending the session, or series of sessions, appropriately.



Range

3. Understand the purpose and process of referral

3.3. Organisation

An organisation should be chosen; a wide variety of organisations offer help and advice on a range of issues, for example:

- drugs/alcohol
- debt
- relationships
- health
- employment
- rights
- victimisation/bullying
- abuse.

The organisation may be local or national.

Delivery and assessment guidance

LO1 (AC1.1, 1.2, 1.5–1.7), LO2 (AC2.1, 2.3) Learners could respond to a set of pre-prepared questions covering the assessment criteria. Questions and answers should be clearly recorded.

LO1 (AC1.3, 1.4) Learners could conduct research and prepare notes or a learner report.

LO1 (AC1.8), LO2 (AC2.2, 2.4) Learners could participate in a small group discussion which could be assessed via a tutor witness testimony or video recording. Learners could also prepare a learner report.

LO3 (AC3.1–3.6) Learners could conduct research and prepare notes or a learner report.



NCFE assessment strategy

The key requirements of the assessment strategies or principles that relate to units in this qualification are summarised below.

The centre must ensure that individuals undertaking assessor or quality assurer roles within the centre conform to the assessment requirements for the unit they are assessing or quality assuring.

Knowledge learning objectives (LOs)

- assessors will need to be both occupationally knowledgeable and qualified to make assessment decisions
- internal quality assurers (IQAs) will need to be both occupationally knowledgeable and qualified to make quality assurance decisions.

Competence/skills learning objectives (LOs)

- assessors will need to be both occupationally competent and qualified to make assessment decisions
- IQAs will need to be both occupationally knowledgeable and qualified to make quality assurance decisions.



Section 3: explanation of terms

This table explains how the terms used at **level 2** in the unit content are applied to this qualification (not all verbs are used in this qualification).

Apply	Link existing knowledge to new or different situations.
Assess	Consider information in order to make decisions.
Classify	Organise according to specific criteria.
Compare	Examine the subjects in detail looking at similarities and differences.
Define	State the meaning of a word or phrase.
Demonstrate	Show an understanding of the subject or how to apply skills in a practical situation.
Describe	Write about the subject giving detailed information.
Differentiate	Give the differences between two or more things.
Discuss	Write an account giving more than one view or opinion.
Distinguish	Show or recognise the difference between items/ideas/information.
Estimate	Give an approximate decision or opinion using previous knowledge.
Explain	Provide details about the subject with reasons showing how or why. Some responses could include examples.
Give (positive and negative points)	Provide information showing the advantages and disadvantages of the subject.
Identify	List or name the main points. (Some description may also be necessary to gain higher marks when using compensatory marking).
Illustrate	Give clear information using written examples, pictures or diagrams.
List	Make a list of key words, sentences or comments that focus on the subject.
Perform	Do something (take an action/follow an instruction) that the question or task asks or requires.
Plan	Think about and organise information in a logical way. This could be presented as written information, a diagram, an illustration or other suitable format.
Provide	Give relevant information about a subject.
Reflect	Learners should look back on their actions, experiences or learning and think about how this could inform their future practice.



Select	Choose for a specific purpose.
Show	Supply sufficient evidence to demonstrate knowledge and understanding.
State	Give the main points clearly in sentences.
Use	Take or apply an item, resource or piece of information as asked in the question or task.



Section 4: support

Support materials

The following support materials are available to assist with the delivery of this qualification and are available on the NCFE website:

- Qualification Factsheet.

Useful websites

Centres may find the following websites helpful for information, materials and resources to assist with the delivery of this qualification:

- [The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy \(BACP\)](#)
- [Citizens Advice](#)
- [The National Counselling and Psychotherapy Society \(NCPS\)](#)

These links are provided as sources of potentially useful information for delivery/learning of this subject area. NCFE does not explicitly endorse these websites or any learning resources available on these websites. For official NCFE-endorsed learning resources, please see the additional and teaching materials sections on the qualification's page on the NCFE website.

Other support materials

The resources and materials used in the delivery of this qualification must be age-appropriate and due consideration should be given to the wellbeing and safeguarding of learners in line with your institute's safeguarding policy when developing or selecting delivery materials.

Products to support the delivery of this qualification may be available. For more information about these resources and how to access them, please visit the NCFE website.

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Appendix A: units

To simplify cross-referencing assessments and quality assurance, we have used a sequential numbering system in this document for each unit

 Knowledge-only units are indicated by a star. If a unit is not marked with a star, it is a skills unit or contains a mix of knowledge and skills.

Mandatory units



Unit number	Regulated unit number	Unit title	Level	Credit	GLH
Unit 01	D/507/4044	Developing self-awareness for the helping relationship	2	3	25
Unit 02	K/507/4046	Developing listening and communication skills for the helping relationship	2	2	12
Unit 03	H/507/4045	Managing the helping relationship	2	2	15

The units above may be available as stand-alone unit programmes. Please visit the NCFE website for further information.



Change history record

Version	Publication date	Description of change
v4.1	February 2020	Information regarding the wellbeing and safeguarding of learners added to Other support materials .
v4.2	June 2022	Further information added to the qualification summary section to confirm that unless otherwise stated in this specification, all learners taking this qualification must be assessed in English and all assessment evidence presented for external quality assurance must be in English. Information added to the entry guidance section to advise that registration is at the discretion of the centre, in accordance with equality legislation and should be made on the Portal. Information added to the Support Handbook section about how to access support handbooks.
v4.3	July 2025	Content moved from old Qualification Specification template to new template. Please note information that is no longer relevant has been removed, for example, in the assessment guidance section after each unit. Reference is made to National Skills Standards; this information is no longer relevant and has therefore been removed. Some other removed information can now be found in the Support Handbook on the NCFE website.
v4.4	August 2026	The qualification image and the explanation of terms table have been updated accordingly.