The Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) was set up as a statutory body on 11 June 2001 by the Minister for Education and Science. Under the Qualifications (Education & Training) Act, 1999, FETAC now has responsibility for making awards previously made by NCVA.

Module Descriptor

Special Needs Assistant Training

Level 5   L22100

www.fetac.ie
Level 5 Module Descriptor

Summary of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Describes how the module functions as part of the national vocational certificate framework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module Title</td>
<td>Indicates the module content. This title appears on the learner’s certificate. It can be used to download the module from the website <a href="http://www.fetac.ie">www.fetac.ie</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module Code</td>
<td>An individual code is assigned to each module; a letter at the beginning denotes a vocational or general studies area under which the module is grouped and the first digit denotes its level within the national vocational certificate framework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Indicates where the module is placed in the national vocational certificate framework, from Level 3 to Level 6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit Value</td>
<td>Denotes the amount of credit that a learner accumulates on achievement of the module.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Describes in summary what the learner will achieve on successfully completing the module and in what learning and vocational contexts the module has been developed. Where relevant, it lists what certification will be awarded by other certification agencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred Entry Level</td>
<td>Recommends the level of previous achievement or experience of the learner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Requirements</td>
<td>Usually ‘none’ but in some cases detail is provided here of specific learner or course provider requirements. There may also be reference to the minimum safety or skill requirements that learners must achieve prior to assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Aims</td>
<td>Describe in 3-5 statements the broad skills and knowledge learners will have achieved on successful completion of the module.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Units</td>
<td>Structure the learning outcomes; there may be no units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Learning Outcomes</td>
<td>Describe in specific terms the knowledge and skills that learners will have achieved on successful completion of the module.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio of Assessment</td>
<td>Provides details on how the learning outcomes are to be assessed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grading</td>
<td>Provides details of the grading system used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Candidate Marking Sheets</td>
<td>List the assessment criteria for each assessment technique and the marking system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module Results Summary Sheet</td>
<td>Records the marks for each candidate in each assessment technique and in total. It is an important record for centres of their candidate’s achievements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>Can include approval forms for national governing bodies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary of Assessment Techniques</td>
<td>Explains the types of assessment techniques used to assess standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Principles</td>
<td>Describes the assessment principles that underpin FETAC approach to assessment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

A module is a statement of the standards to be achieved to gain an FETAC award. Candidates are assessed to establish whether they have achieved the required standards. Credit is awarded for each module successfully completed.

The standards in a module are expressed principally in terms of specific learning outcomes, i.e. what the learner will be able to do on successful completion of the module. The other elements of the module - the purpose, general aims, assessment details and assessment criteria - combine with the learning outcomes to state the standards in a holistic way.

While FETAC is responsible for setting the standards for certification in partnership with course providers and industry, it is the course providers who are responsible for the design of the learning programmes. The duration, content and delivery of learning programmes should be appropriate to the learners’ needs and interests, and should enable the learners to reach the standard as described in the modules. Modules may be delivered alone or integrated with other modules.

The development of learners’ core skills is a key objective of vocational education and training. The opportunity to develop these skills may arise through a single module or a range of modules. The core skills include:

- taking initiative
- taking responsibility for one’s own learning and progress
- problem solving
- applying theoretical knowledge in practical contexts
- being numerate and literate
- having information and communication technology skills
- sourcing and organising information effectively
- listening effectively
- communicating orally and in writing
- working effectively in group situations
- understanding health and safety issues
- reflecting on and evaluating quality of own learning and achievement.

Course providers are encouraged to design programmes, which enable learners to develop core skills.
Module Title: Special Needs Assistant Training

Module Code: L22100

Level: 5

Credit Value: 1 credit

Purpose
This module is a statement of the standards to be achieved to gain a FETAC credit in Special Needs Assistant’s training at Level 5. The module is designed to facilitate learners who intend working with children with special needs in an educational environment. Its aim is to instil knowledge with regard to various difficulties and disabilities in order to ensure both positive learning and life experiences for the children with whom they will be working.

Preferred Entry Level
Level 4 Certificate, Leaving Certificate or equivalent qualifications and/or relevant life and work experiences.

Special Requirements
Confidentiality
Names, and information that might identify a particular child will not be recorded in evidence for assessment purposes.

Permission
Permission must be obtained from the relevant teacher/supervisor and also from the relevant parent/guardian when carrying out any written or visual evidence on the child. This permission must take a written format and be produced as evidence when completing work for assessment.

General Aims

Learners who successfully complete this module will:

8.1 understand the role and responsibilities of the special needs assistant

8.2 appreciate the importance of working effectively as part of the multi-disciplinary team

8.3 promote equal opportunities and respect for all children within the work setting

8.4 have acquired the knowledge to stimulate and provide positive learning experiences for children with specific special needs

8.5 be familiar with the main difficulties and disabilities that children may present with in the work setting.
The specific learning outcomes are grouped into 5 units.

Unit 1 The Role of the Special Needs Assistant
Learners should be able to:
10.1.1 outline the personal qualities required to be an effective special needs assistant
10.1.2 list the responsibilities of the special needs assistant within the work setting
10.1.3 define the differing roles and functions of the multi-disciplinary team, depending on the specific special need of the child
10.1.4 explain the importance of confidentiality within the work setting
10.1.5 demonstrate the importance of ensuring a safe work environment.

Unit 2 Equal Opportunities and Child Development (overview)
Learners should be able to:
10.2.1 describe the duties of the special needs assistant under current child protection legislation
10.2.2 discuss the importance of ensuring children of all denominations are afforded equal respect within the work setting
10.2.3 summarise the merits of integration within the work setting
10.2.4 list the rights afforded to all children (as listed by the United Nations)
10.2.5 identify the stages of child development (0-12)
10.2.6 explain the concept of normative child development and the variations which occur within this spectrum.
Unit 3  Theories of Learning and Behaviour

*Learners should be able to:*

10.3.1 discuss in detail strategies which deal effectively with challenging behaviour

10.3.2 demonstrate an understanding of behavioural differences with regard to disabilities

10.3.3 recognise different conduct disorders

10.3.4 identify the different types of disorders within the autistic spectrum

10.3.5 use the knowledge gained to show good work practise when working with children with emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Unit 4  Physical /Intellectual Disabilities

*Learners should be able to:*

10.4.1 identify different forms of physical disabilities

10.4.2 recognise the spectrum of intellectual disabilities/difficulties

10.4.3 explain the role and function of the multi-disciplinary team when working with the child with a physical or intellectual disability

10.4.4 discuss ways in which the work environment can be adapted in order to integrate the child with a particular difficulty or disability

10.4.5 demonstrate ways in which the specials needs assistant can be of benefit to the child with a specific special need while in their care.

Unit 5  Communication and Language Development

*Learners should be able to:*

10.5.1 explain the importance of effective communication skills with children with varying disabilities
10.5.2 demonstrate the uses of verbal and non-verbal communication skills within the work setting

10.5.3 display a knowledge of different barriers to effective communication when dealing with children with specific needs

10.5.4 discuss in detail the range of language and communication difficulties/disabilities with which children may present while in the work setting

10.5.5 analyse the different theories relating to conflict resolution

10.5.6 devise means of overcoming conflict situations within the work setting.

11 Portfolio of Assessment

Please refer to the glossary of assessment techniques and the note on assessment principles at the end of this module descriptor. All assessment is carried out in accordance with FETAC regulations. Assessment is devised by the internal assessor, with external moderation by FETAC.

Summary

- Project 40%
- Learners Record 30%
- Collection of work 30%

11.1 Project

The internal assessor will devise a brief that requires the candidate to produce evidence that demonstrates an understanding and application of a range of specific learning outcomes. The candidate will be required to select a topic that focuses on a specific special need.

The candidate should produce evidence that demonstrates their ability to:

- Investigate the topic concerned
- Reference and research relevant sources of information
- Give a detailed account of the day to day living of a child with this specific need
- Evaluate the services available for this child

The project should reflect the integration of three or more units within the module. This project requires in-depth research on behalf of the learner and shall be carried out individually.
11.2 **Learners Record**  
A personal reflective diary will be compiled by the candidates.

It will include reflection on:
- relationships within the work setting among other professionals
- the need for confidentiality within the work setting
- the importance of good work practices
- reflection on work situations and areas in which improvements can be made
- training in the area of special needs and the link between theory and practical work when working with children with special needs

Candidates will also record:
- personal strengths and weaknesses within the work setting
- personal effectiveness as a special needs assistant
- strategies to overcome difficulties and areas of weakness when working with children with special needs.

11.3 **Collection of Work**  
The internal assessor will devise guidelines for candidates on gathering a collection of work that demonstrates evidence of a range of specific learning outcomes. These learning outcomes shall be drawn from each unit.

The collection will include:
- observational report on a chosen child’s development
- group report on strategies used to resolve conflict situations
- report on the accessibility and safety for the child with special needs. The report will include modifications needed to ensure inclusivity for all

Documents should be handwritten or word processed. Evidence of drafting, re-drafting and editing should be attached to at least one of the finished pieces.

At least one item should be hand-written where possible.

12 **Grading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>50 - 64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merit</td>
<td>65 - 79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td>80 - 100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Candidate Name: ___________________________ PPSN: ___________________________

Centre: ______________________________________ Centre No.: _______

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Criteria</th>
<th>Maximum Mark</th>
<th>Candidate Mark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• clear identification of form and causes of this specific special need</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• detailed explanation of characteristics and associated conditions of specific special need</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• detailed description of the day to day living of a child with this specific need (to include home and school life)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• detailed analysis of the different treatment options for the child with this particular need (medical /alternative therapies)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• comprehensive study of the role of the special needs assistant in providing positive learning experiences for the child</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• detailed presentation of the educational options for this child</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• summary of the services available for the child with this special need</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• clear identification of research and background information used to support the project</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL MARKS

This mark should be transferred to the Module Results Summary Sheet

40

Internal Assessor’s Signature: ___________________________ Date: __________

External Authenticator’s Signature: ___________________________ Date: __________
Candidate Name: _______________________________ PPSN: _______________________

Centre: ____________________________________________ Centre No.: ______

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Criteria</th>
<th>Maximum Mark</th>
<th>Candidate Mark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• detailed description of activity</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• clear explanation of candidate’s own role within the activity</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• detailed reflection on personal and working relationships within the work setting</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• clear explanation of the links between theoretical learning and practical work with children</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• considered evaluation of personal strengths and weaknesses when working with children</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• considered recommendations for the development of strategies to overcome the difficulties and weaknesses in working with children with special needs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL MARKS**

*This mark should be transferred to the Module Results Summary Sheet*

30

*Internal Assessor’s Signature: _______________________________ Date: ___________

*External Authenticator’s Signature: _______________________________ Date: ___________*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Criteria</th>
<th>Maximum Mark</th>
<th>Candidate Mark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• observational report on a specific child’s development</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• group report on conflict resolution</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• report on the accessibility and safety of the work setting for the child with special needs. report to include modifications needed to ensure that the work place is inclusive to all.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| TOTAL MARKS                                                                 | 30           |

*This mark should be transferred to the Module Results Summary Sheet*

**Internal Assessor’s Signature:** ________________________________  **Date:** __________

**External Authenticator’s Signature:** ________________________________  **Date:** __________
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate Surname</th>
<th>Candidate Forename</th>
<th>Mark Sheet 1</th>
<th>Mark Sheet 2</th>
<th>Mark Sheet 3</th>
<th>Total 100%</th>
<th>Grade*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FETAC Module Results Summary Sheet**

**Module Title:** Special Needs Assistant Training

**Module Code:** L22100

**Assessment Marking Sheets**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mark Sheet</th>
<th>Mark Sheet</th>
<th>Mark Sheet</th>
<th>Total 100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Maximum Marks per Marking Sheet**

- Mark Sheet 1: 40
- Mark Sheet 2: 30
- Mark Sheet 3: 30

**Signed:**

**Internal Assessor:** ___________________________  **Date:** ___________________________

This sheet is for internal assessors to record the overall marks of individual candidates. It should be retained in the centre. The marks awarded should be transferred to the official FETAC Module Results Sheet issued to centres before the visit of the external Authenticator.

**Grade***

- D: 80 - 100%
- M: 65 - 79%
- P: 50 - 64%
- U: 0 - 49%
- W: candidates entered who did not present for assessment
**Glossary of Assessment Techniques**

**Assignment**
An exercise carried out in response to a brief with specific guidelines and usually of short duration.

Each assignment is based on a brief provided by the internal assessor. The brief includes specific guidelines for candidates. The assignment is carried out over a period of time specified by the internal assessor.

Assignments may be specified as an oral presentation, case study, observations, or have a detailed title such as audition piece, health fitness plan or vocational area profile.

**Collection of Work**
A collection and/or selection of pieces of work produced by candidates over a period of time that demonstrates the mastery of skills.

Using guidelines provided by the internal assessor, candidates compile a collection of their own work. The collection of work demonstrates evidence of a range of specific learning outcomes or skills. The evidence may be produced in a range of conditions, such as in the learning environment, in a role play exercise, or in real-life/work situations.

This body of work may be self-generated rather than carried out in response to a specific assignment eg art work, engineering work etc.

**Examination**
A means of assessing a candidate’s ability to recall and apply skills, knowledge and understanding within a set period of time (time constrained) and under clearly specified conditions.

Examinations may be:
- practical, assessing the mastery of specified practical skills demonstrated in a set period of time under restricted conditions
- oral, testing ability to speak effectively in the vernacular or other languages
- interview-style, assessing learning through verbal questioning, on one-to-one/group basis
- aural, testing listening and interpretation skills
- theory-based, assessing the candidate’s ability to recall and apply theory, requiring responses to a range of question types, such as objective, short answer, structured, essay. These questions may be answered in different media such as in writing, orally etc.

**Learner Record**
A self-reported record by an individual, in which he/she describes specific learning experiences, activities, responses, skills acquired.

Candidates compile a personal logbook/journal/diary/daily diary/record/laboratory notebook/sketch book.
The logbook/journal/diary/daily diary/record/laboratory notebook/sketch book should cover specified aspects of the learner’s experience.
Project

A substantial individual or group response to a brief with guidelines, usually carried out over a period of time.

Projects may involve:

- research – requiring individual/group investigation of a topic
- process – eg design, performance, production of an artefact/event

Projects will be based on a brief provided by the internal assessor or negotiated by the candidate with the internal assessor. The brief will include broad guidelines for the candidate. The work will be carried out over a specified period of time.

Projects may be undertaken as a group or collaborative project, however the individual contribution of each candidate must be clearly identified.

The project will enable the candidate to demonstrate: (some of these – about 2-4)

- understanding and application of concepts in (specify area)
- use/selection of relevant research/survey techniques, sources of information, referencing, bibliography
- ability to analyse, evaluate, draw conclusions, make recommendations
- understanding of process/planning implementation and review skills, planning and time management skills
- ability to implement/produce/make/construct/perform
- mastery of tools and techniques
- design/creativity/problem-solving/evaluation skills
- presentation/display skills
- team working/co-operation/participation skills.

Skills

Demonstration

Assessment of mastery of specified practical, organisational and/or interpersonal skills.

These skills are assessed at any time throughout the learning process by the internal assessor/another qualified person in the centre for whom the candidate undertakes relevant tasks.

The skills may be demonstrated in a range of conditions, such as in the learning environment, in a role-play exercise, or in a real-life/work situations.

The candidate may submit a written report/supporting documentation as part of the assessment.

Examples of skills: laboratory skills, computer skills, coaching skills, interpersonal skills.
FETAC Assessment Principles

1. Assessment is regarded as an integral part of the learning process.

2. All FETAC assessment is criterion referenced. Each assessment technique has assessment criteria which detail the range of marks to be awarded for specific standards of knowledge, skills and competence demonstrated by candidates.

3. The mode of assessment is generally local i.e. the assessment techniques are devised and implemented by internal assessors in centres.

4. Assessment techniques in FETAC modules are valid in that they test a range of appropriate learning outcomes.

5. The reliability of assessment techniques is facilitated by providing support for assessors.

6. Arising from an extensive consultation process, each FETAC module describes what is considered to be an optimum approach to assessment. When the necessary procedures are in place, it will be possible for assessors to use other forms of assessment, provided they are demonstrated to be valid and reliable.

7. To enable all learners to demonstrate that they have reached the required standard, candidate evidence may be submitted in written, oral, visual, multimedia or other format as appropriate to the learning outcomes.

8. Assessment of a number of modules may be integrated, provided the separate criteria for each module are met.

9. Group or team work may form part of the assessment of a module, provided each candidate’s achievement is separately assessed.