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

Level 6    L32344

www.fetac.ie
# Level 6 Module Descriptor
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<th>Description</th>
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<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>
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<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>
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<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>
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<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
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<td>Glossary of Assessment Techniques</td>
<td>Explains the types of assessment techniques used to assess standards.</td>
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<td>Assessment Principles</td>
<td>Describes the assessment principles that underpin FETAC approach to assessment.</td>
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</table>
Introduction

A module is a statement of the standards to be achieved to gain a 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.
1 Module Title  Special Needs Assistant
2 Module Code  L32344
3 Level 6
4 Credit Value 1 credit
5 Purpose
This module is a statement of the standards to be achieved to gain a FETAC credit in the progression of their information, knowledge and skills at Level 6.

The module is designed to ensure enhancement of both the personal and professional development of the person working within the area of special needs. The candidate is expected to develop an in-depth understanding of the legislative changes that have occurred to ensure accessibility and equal opportunities for all children with special needs when entering the educational system in Ireland.

6 Preferred Entry Level
Learners wishing to complete this module should have successfully completed the locally devised FETAC Level 5 module entitled “Special Needs Assistant Training”.

7 Special Requirements
As stated above.

8 General Aims
Learners who successfully complete this module will:

8.1 be familiar with both local and international legislative changes specific to the educational system for the special needs child
8.2 acquire an understanding of computer technologies available for the special needs child and recognise their specific benefits
8.3 demonstrate an understanding of the curriculum and it’s implications for the child with special needs
8.4 recognise the importance of observational skills when working with children within the educational system
8.5 develop an in-depth understanding into the importance of both personal and professional development when working in the area of special needs.
9 Units

The specific learning outcomes are grouped into 5 units.

Unit 1 Educational Provision for the Special Needs Child
Unit 2 Specific Curriculum Issues and the Special Needs Child
Unit 3 Observational Skills
Unit 4 Personal and Professional Development

10 Specific Learning Outcomes

Unit 1 Educational Provisions for the Special Needs Child

Learners should be able to:

10.1.1 display an understanding of the historical background to the education of children with special needs in Ireland

10.1.2 describe the changes in legislation that have taken place within Ireland since the 1960’s with regard to special education up to the age of 18

10.1.3 explain the different educational options available for the child with special needs throughout the European Union

10.1.4 outline the provision of education for the child with a specific special need within the Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)

10.1.5 outline the role and responsibilities of specific individuals and organisations named within the Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)

10.1.6 describe the current stages of assessment for the child with special needs within the educational system

10.1.7 discuss the importance of individual education plans as reviewed under the Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)

10.1.8 working on individual education plans and person centred plans (this is a theoretical exercise as it is the multi disciplinary team which develop this plan)

10.1.9 outline the importance of confidentiality during this process.

Unit 2 Specific Curriculum Issues and the Special Needs Child

Learners should be able to:

10.2.1 evaluate the importance of circle time for the child with a specific special need within the classroom

10.2.2 analyse different skills that can be used by the special needs assistant to aid the teacher in the administering of the curriculum within the classroom
10.2.3 discuss the importance of the (primary school) visual arts curriculum in developing independence skills for the child with special needs

10.2.4 list guidelines, which must be taken into consideration when planning and preparing drama activities for those with special needs

10.2.5 construct a drama session for a mainstream group of children, which have a child with a specific special need, integrated within the class

10.2.6 describe ways in which the special needs assistant could assist the teacher in providing music-based activities within the classroom

10.2.7 discuss the role of music within the curriculum

10.2.8 list different computer applications that can be helpful for a child with specific special need within the educational setting

10.2.9 discuss the role that computer technology has to play within the educational system for the child with a specific special need

10.2.10 evaluate the benefits of computer technology for the child with a specific special need.

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Unit 3 Observational Skills

*Learners should be able to:*

10.3.1 evaluate a range of observational techniques

10.3.2 describe the role of the multi-disciplinary team within the observation system

10.3.3 describe ethical issues involved in the observation of all children (confidentiality and permission issues)

10.3.4 examine the importance of understanding the rights of the child within the observational system

10.3.5 demonstrate the ability to effectively observe and report findings

10.3.6 discuss the difficulties that need to be understood within all methods of observation

10.3.8 discuss the role and importance of ongoing observations to ensure that the special needs child is integrating well to the classroom situation

10.3.9 describe the importance of observation in understanding difficulties that a child may be displaying

10.3.10 discuss the different responses to specific special needs that children show (different reactions dependant on age, type of disability etc.)
Unit 4  
**Personal and Professional Development**

*Learners should be able to:*

10.4.1 discuss different categories of stress that people encounter during adult/childhood

10.4.2 devise strategies for dealing with stressors within the workplace

10.4.3 outline the importance of communicating effectively with members within the special needs assistants working team

10.4.4 explain the importance of re-evaluating our approach to working situations

10.4.5 devise ways to evaluate our personal strengths and weaknesses in our working life

10.4.6 explain the importance of listening skills when working with children with special needs

10.4.7 outline the role of the special needs assistant in building the self esteem and self confidence of a child that they are working with who has a particular special need.

10.4.8 devise strategies for creative problem solving within the workplace

10.4.9 recognising the impact of working with the special needs child has on the life of the individual

10.4.10 analyse the role of the working life of a person working within this system.
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

| Summary | Project 60% | Assignment (2) 40% |

11.1 Project

The internal assessor will devise a project brief that requires candidates to demonstrate their understanding and application of concepts in the area of assessments for children with specific special needs under the current education for persons with disabilities bill.

Candidates will be required to examine the Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004. Candidates will detail the assessment procedures for the child with a disability as stated under the above bill. As part of the study, candidates will be required to evaluate this process and devise the benefits of the assessment procedure.

Candidates will be required to examine the act stated above. Candidates will detail the assessment procedure for the child with a specific disability as stated under the above bill. As part of the study, candidates will be required to evaluate this process and devise the benefits of the assessment procedure.

Candidates will be required to:

- describe the educational needs of the child chosen for this case study (test case)
- list clearly the reasons why this specific child would be eligible for assessment under the current bill
- describe different types of observational methods and discuss the type that would provide the best method of assessment in looking into the specific needs of the child
- outline clearly the role of the governmental/pre school/school organisations within this assessment procedure
- define the role of the special needs assistant within this process
- discuss the role of the parents within this process
- analyse the process of assessment/reviews
- evaluate the benefits of assessment for this child
- devise an individual educational plan based on the above findings (case study only as this plan is devised by the
multi disciplinary team and the Special Needs Assistant may not play a part in this process)

Confidentiality

Names, addresses or information used during this process will not be used outside this project. It is expected that this project is theoretically based and shall not contain persons within your work placement.

The project should reflect the integration of three or more units within this module. This project requires in-depth research on behalf of the learner and shall be carried out individually.

11.2 Assignments (2)

Assignment 1: The internal assessor will devise a brief that requires the candidate to produce a drama session for a group of five students who are all mobile and have basic language skills. Write the outline keeping in mind the four basic elements i.e. warm up, games, development, and closure.

Candidates will be required to:
- detail guidelines to consider when constructing a drama session for a child/children with special needs
- discuss in detail the four elements required for the drama section of the primary school curriculum
- design a detailed plan of these activities
- discuss the purpose of each activity under Piaget’s theory of child development.

Assignment 2: The internal assessor will devise a brief that requires the candidate to produce a body of work that comprehensively discusses the impact of working with a child with a specific special need.

Candidates will be required to:
- analyse the role of the candidate while working with children with special needs
- detail the most challenging and most positive moments encountered by the candidate when working with a specific special needs child
- detail stressors that may be encountered by the candidate
- devise strategies to deal with these stressors within the work place
- describe the impact that working with special needs children may have on the candidate personally
- evaluate the candidate’s current performance within the work place and recommendations for improving performance levels.

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>• comprehensive summary of the specific special need chosen</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• clear identification of the purpose of assessments/reviews</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• detailed description of the benefit of using observations before assessment takes place</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• detailed explanation of the role of governmental/school organisations involved in the assessment process</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• detailed explanation of the stages of assessment as laid down under current legislation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• outline the role of the special needs assistant within this procedure</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• clear identification of the role of parents during this process</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• clear and appropriate recommendations which would be made after assessment of specific child chosen by candidate</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• detailed presentation of the sample individual education plan which would be used for the child</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• detailed explanation of the educational changes that have been made for children with disabilities within Ireland over the past 10 years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• clear identification of research and background information used to support the project</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL MARKS**

This mark should be transferred to the Module Results Summary Sheet

60

Internal Assessor’s Signature: _______________________________ Date: __________

External Authenticator’s Signature: ______________________________ Date: __________
### Assignment 1
- detail guidelines to consider when constructing a drama session for a child/children with special needs
- design a detailed plan of these activities
- discuss the purpose of each activity under Piaget’s theory of child development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Criteria</th>
<th>Maximum Mark</th>
<th>Candidate Mark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>detail guidelines to consider when constructing a drama session for a child/children with special needs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>design a detailed plan of these activities</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discuss the purpose of each activity under Piaget’s theory of child development</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Assignment 2
- analyse the role of the candidate while working with children with special needs
- detail stressors that may be encountered and strategies to deal with these difficulties
- describe the impact that working with special needs children may have on the candidate personally
- evaluate the candidates current performance within the workplace and recommendations for improving performance levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Criteria</th>
<th>Maximum Mark</th>
<th>Candidate Mark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>analyse the role of the candidate while working with children with special needs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>detail stressors that may be encountered and strategies to deal with these difficulties</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>describe the impact that working with special needs children may have on the candidate personally</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>evaluate the candidates current performance within the workplace and recommendations for improving performance levels</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL MARKS**

40

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

**Internal Assessor’s Signature:** ___________________________  **Date:** ________

**External Authenticator’s Signature:** ___________________________  **Date:** ________
FETAC Module Results Summary Sheet

Module Title: Special Needs Assistant
Module Code: L32344

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Marking Sheets</th>
<th>Mark Sheet 1</th>
<th>Mark Sheet 2</th>
<th>Total 100%</th>
<th>Grade*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Marks per Marking Sheet</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Candidate Surname | Candidate Forename | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|---|---|
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| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

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 e.g. artwork, 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 – e.g. 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 teamwork may form part of the assessment of a module, provided each candidate’s achievement is separately assessed.