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 Assisting

Level 5  N22834

www.fetac.ie
Module Title    Special Needs Assisting

Module Code    N22834

Level    5

Credit Value    1 credit

Purpose
This module is a statement of the standards to be achieved to gain an FETAC credit in Special Needs Assisting at Level 5. It is an elective module for the Level Certificate in Childcare.

The module is designed to enable learners to acquire the knowledge, skills and aptitudes required to work safely and effectively, as special needs assistants under direction.

This module must be taken in conjunction with Understanding Special Needs. In addition this module should be integrated with Work Experience so that candidates may be judged suitable to work in special needs contexts and to facilitate the integration of theory and practice.

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

Special Requirements
This module must be taken in conjunction with Understanding Special Needs

General Aims


Learners who successfully complete this module will:

8.1 be familiar with ways of relating to children with special needs

8.2 be capable of creating and maintaining appropriate relationships with children, their parents, their primary carers, teachers and other professionals

8.3 acquire knowledge, skills and competence in the role of the special needs assistant

8.4 reflect on their abilities and aptitudes to work as a special needs assistant

8.5 demonstrate good practice in working as a special needs assistant
The specific learning outcomes are grouped into 4 units.

**Unit 1** Good Practice

**Unit 2** Relating to children with Special Needs

**Unit 3** Relating to other Stakeholders

**Unit 4** Special Needs Assisting Skills

### Specific Learning Outcomes

**Unit 1 Good Practice**

*Learners should be able to:*

10.1.1 follow appropriate health and safety procedures in the workplace

10.1.2 summarise key elements of child protection policy

10.1.3 work within principles of good practice in e.g. confidentiality, inclusion, independence, boundaries, etc.

10.1.4 understand the role of the special needs assistant in relation to professionals in promoting the health and safety of children in their care

10.1.5 reflect on one’s own values and attitudes in working with children with special needs

10.1.6 explain the rights of children with special needs in relation to personal autonomy, participation and choice in decision making

10.1.7 understand the importance of on-going training, reflection, supervision and support

10.1.8 demonstrate an ability to work effectively with others in promoting and maintaining good practice including confidentiality, appreciating boundaries etc.
Unit 2 Relating to children with Special Needs

*Learners should be able to:*

10.2.1 outline the impact of a range of special needs on communication styles and needs

10.2.2 examine the importance of non-verbal communication

10.2.3 explore practical ways of relating to children with special needs including the use of communication aids where appropriate

10.2.4 identify the personal challenges and opportunities associated with creating and maintaining relationships with children with special needs

Unit 3 Relating to other Stakeholders

*Learners should be able to:*

10.3.1 outline the role and responsibilities of the special needs assistant and how it differs from that of the teacher

10.3.2 describe the roles of the multidisciplinary team in the child’s life

10.3.3 recognise the role of parents/guardians as the child’s primary care givers

10.3.4 relate appropriately to parents, teachers and other carers

10.3.5 contribute insights and experiences to team discussions and meetings as appropriate

Unit 4 Special Needs Assisting Skills

*Learners should be able to:*

10.4.1 assist children with special needs with a range of activities in their daily routine under direction including:
- boarding and alighting from school buses
- assisting with communication including assistive technology and writing
- clothing, feeding toileting and general hygiene
- out of school visits walks etc
- assembly recreational and dispersal periods
- accompanying individuals or small groups
- and other activities as appropriate
10.4.2. support the teacher in preparing for activities, resources and tidying up the classroom

10.4.3 work effectively under direction as a special needs assistant

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skills Demonstration</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td>40%</td>
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11.1 Skills Demonstration

In two skills demonstrations, candidates will be assessed on a broad range of practical skills and knowledge from the specific learning outcomes.

Assessment Strategy

The internal assessor should design briefs for a series of skills demonstration activities and exercises that require the candidate to demonstrate specific skills and aptitudes required to work safely and effectively as part of a team under direction in the special needs assistant setting. The skills demonstrations should be assessed across all units over a period of time, in conjunction with the candidate and other Assessors. The skills demonstrations should be assessed directly in special needs settings and the wider learning environment.

Assessment must be verified by the course Assessor or workplace supervisor along with the candidates supporting evidence. Assessor verification of each skills demonstration should include details of the activity and context or circumstances of the demonstration element.

The briefs for specific exercises, situations and activities undertaken, should be drawn from the attached role of the special needs assistant and should be made available to the external Authenticator.
11.2 Assignment

The assignment will use the two case studies from the Understanding Special Needs Module as a starting point. Using the findings from the case study reports the candidates will be required to consider the role of the special needs assistant in each one.

Reports will be prepared based on each case study that demonstrates understanding of the issues and challenges for the special needs assistant in each context. These will include:

- Identification of the skills required of the special needs assistant
- Identification of the issues and challenges in relation to good practice
- Evaluation of the role of the special needs assistant
- Identification of personal learning, future and continuing learning needs

The assignment reports may be presented in a variety of media e.g. written, audio, video, graphic, visual or any combination of these. Any audio or video evidence must be presented on tape.

12 Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>50 - 64%</td>
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<td>Merit</td>
<td>65 - 79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td>80 - 100%</td>
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Candidate Name: ________________________________ PPSN: ______________________
Centre: _______________________________________________ Centre No: ________

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Criteria</th>
<th>Max Mark</th>
<th>Exercise 1</th>
<th>Exercise 2</th>
<th>Total Marks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relating Skills:</strong> making contact, use of name, awareness of own processes, active listening and participation, motivated, giving and accepting feedback, non-verbal and verbal communication, etc.</td>
<td>5 x 2</td>
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<td><strong>Interpersonal Skills:</strong> co-operate and work effectively in a team context in learning and work environment</td>
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<td><strong>Good Practice Qualities:</strong> reliability, dependability, flexibility, adaptability etc.</td>
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<td><strong>Practical Skills:</strong></td>
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<td>o assisting children in relation to:</td>
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<td>- accompanying individuals or small groups</td>
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<td><strong>Good Practice Skills:</strong> confidentiality, non-judgemental attitude, appropriate boundaries, respect, working inclusively etc.</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL MARKS</strong></td>
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<td>This mark should be transferred to the Module Results Summary Sheet</td>
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1Internal Assessor’s Signature: ________________________________ Date: ____________

External Authenticator’s Signature: ________________________________ Date: ____________
Candidate Name: _________________________________  PPSN: ______________________

Centre: __________________________________________________  Centre No: _________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Criteria</th>
<th>Max Mark</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tr>
<td>• correct identification of the situation, skills, issues and challenges</td>
<td>5 X 2</td>
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<td>• clear relevant and critical analysis and insight into role</td>
<td>10 X 2</td>
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<td>• critical evaluation of personal learning and future development needs</td>
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**TOTAL MARKS**  
*This mark should be transferred to the Module Results Summary Sheet*

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<th>Max Mark</th>
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<td>20 x 2</td>
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Internal Assessor’s Signature: _________________________________  Date: __________

External Authenticator’s Signature: ______________________________
Role of Special Needs Assistant

Their duties are assigned by the Principal Teacher in accordance with Circular 10/76: "Duties and responsibilities of Principal Teachers" and sanctioned by the Board of Management.

Their work should be supervised either by the Principal or by a class teacher.

Those duties involve tasks of a non-teaching nature such as:

1. Preparation and tidying up of classroom(s) in which the pupil(s) with special needs is/are being taught.
2. Assisting children to board and alight from school buses. Where necessary travel as escort on school buses may be required.
3. Special assistance as necessary for pupils with particular difficulties e.g. helping physically disabled pupils with typing or writing.
4. Assistance with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene.
5. Assisting on out-of-school visits, walks and similar activities.
6. Assisting the teachers in the supervision of pupils with special needs during assembly, recreational and dispersal periods.
7. Accompanying individuals or small groups who may have to be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom.
8. General assistance to the class teachers, under the direction of the Principal, with duties of a non-teaching nature. (Special Needs Assistants may not act either as substitute or temporary teachers. In no circumstances may they be left in sole charge of a class).

Preparation and tidying up of classroom(s) in which the pupil(s) with special needs is/are being taught.
Assisting children to board and alight from school buses
Special assistance as necessary for pupils with particular difficulties e.g. helping physically disabled pupils with typing or writing.
Assistance with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene.
Assisting on out-of-school visits, walks etc.
Supervision assistance during assembly, recreational and dispersal periods.
Accompanying individuals or small groups
## FETAC Module Results Summary Sheet

**Module Title:** Special Needs Assisting  
**Module Code:** N22834  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate Surname</th>
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<th>Assignment 2 (40%)</th>
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<th>Grade*</th>
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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.