

Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Directing a Text

Unit code: DG3Y 35

Unit purpose: The purpose of this unit is to enable the student to investigate and develop knowledge of production skills in the overall process of theatre direction.

On completion of this unit the candidate should be able to:

1. Explore the role of a director throughout the production process.
2. Direct a short extract for theatre, using a variety of approaches.
3. Evaluate the process and end product.

Credit value: 1 HN Credit at SCQF level 8: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8*)

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: Access will be at the discretion of the centre and the following recommendations are for guidance only.

Where a candidate has achieved the course entry criteria for HNC/D Acting and Performance, they will have shown sufficient knowledge and skills for access to this unit.

Core skills: There may be opportunities to gather evidence towards core skills in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of core skills or core skills components.

Context for delivery: This unit is included in the optional framework of HNC/D Acting and Performance. If this Unit is delivered as part of a group award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the group award to which it contributes.

It is recommended the candidate undertakes this unit in their second year (HND) and may draw their performers from HNC students as part of the HNC scene work (Production 1). Alternatively, the HND students taking this unit could both direct their own piece and perform in other candidates' scenes.

General information for centres (cont)

Assessment: This unit is assessed in the 3 specific Outcomes. Outcome 1 is knowledge based and relates to the role of the Theatre Director. This knowledge will then enable the students to achieve Outcome 2 which is the practical application of the knowledge gained in Outcome 1, covering the actual directing of a piece of text.

Outcome 3 focuses on the candidate's evaluation of their own experience of directing a piece of text

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

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The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, knowledge and/or skills, and evidence requirements are mandatory.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the knowledge and/or skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Outcome 1

Explore the role of a director throughout the production process.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Knowledge of the role of a theatre director
- ◆ Knowledge of different approaches used in theatre directing.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the knowledge and/or skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Evidence requirements

Evidence will be generated through an essay of no less than 800 words, covering the role of a director and different approaches to a text used in theatre directing. The candidate must display a thorough knowledge of the tasks in pre-production and production, various approaches to a text, and creating a positive and dynamic working environment. Candidates will explore specific methods used in taking the play extract text from page to performance.

The candidate must demonstrate a thorough understanding of:

- ◆ A director's tasks in pre-production and production
- ◆ A variety of approaches to a text
- ◆ How to create a positive and dynamic working environment
- ◆ How to produce a working prompt copy of a selected extract.

Assessment guidelines

The essay should explore the role of a theatre director, describing a variety of approaches used in taking script from page to performance as taught by the lecturer. The essay should not be based directly on the presented piece in Outcome 2. It can be completed in the candidate's own time or as an open book exercise in class time.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Directing a Text

Outcome 2

Direct a short extract for theatre, using a variety of approaches

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Practical application of the role of a theatre director
- ◆ Personal exploration of different approaches used in theatre directing
- ◆ Interpersonal and group skills

Evidence requirements

Evidence will be generated through:

- ◆ A presentation of the directed extract, which must be videoed as supporting evidence
- ◆ A working prompt copy of the extract.

Candidates will demonstrate specific approaches used in taking the play extract text from page to performance of the presented piece. Evidence will be generated throughout the process and within the presented piece.

Evidence must include:

- ◆ Planned rehearsals with structured warm-ups and good time management
- ◆ An understanding of pace and changes in thought/intentions
- ◆ An exploration of sub-text (if appropriate)
- ◆ Enabling an actor's physical interpretation of character
- ◆ The use of non-text based exercises to develop character(s)
- ◆ An understanding of use of stage space demonstrating an awareness of different spatial possibilities
- ◆ An understanding of use and significance of different props and furniture
- ◆ An understanding of use and significance of costume
- ◆ How to respond to the various needs of the performer(s)
- ◆ An ability to create a positive and dynamic working environment
- ◆ Demonstration of good interpersonal and group skills
- ◆ The production of a working prompt copy of the selected extract
- ◆ Where appropriate, demonstrate good practice in dealings with technical/production personnel

Assessment guidelines

The assessment of this Outcome should be integrated with the requirements for Outcome 3. The process and the presentation should be assessed through observation checklists.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Directing a Text

Outcome 3

Evaluate the process and the end product.

Knowledge / or Skills

- ◆ Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the process
- ◆ Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the product
- ◆ Identify strategies to be developed for future implementation.

Evidence requirements

Candidates are required to produce evidence to demonstrate effective self-evaluation. The evidence should identify the candidate's strengths and weaknesses with regard to the directing process and the final presented piece. The evidence should be based on continuous self-evaluation and should:

- ◆ Explain how and why the piece for presentation was chosen
- ◆ Explain why and how the cast was selected
- ◆ Explain how effective your rehearsals were with regard to: time management; warm-ups; approaches used in direction
- ◆ Identify less successful approaches of direction
- ◆ Explain any personal strategies for future improvement.

The evaluation will be oral, and should last a minimum of three minutes, covering all of the above areas.

Assessment guidelines

The assessment of this Outcome should be integrated with Outcome 2. The oral evaluation can take place in a group environment with all candidates present or can take place in a tutorial environment, depending on specific circumstances and the tutor's discretion.

Administrative Information

Unit code: DG3Y 35

Unit title: Directing a Text

Superclass category: LC

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Directing a Text

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This unit is intended to give candidates an initial experience of directing for theatre. It should be an opportunity for candidates to explore the relationship between their ideas of staging an excerpt of text and the development and realisation of those ideas. Since it is delivered within an HN context, it is assumed that candidates will already have some experience of theatre, if not any actual directing experience.

No guidelines on the selection of text are given to allow the candidate as much creative scope as possible, with guidance from the tutor. The candidate should be encouraged to read plays to discover one that appeals to them and in this way, the unit aims to broaden the candidate's general knowledge of plays.

Outcome 1 covers the teaching from the lecturer to give the candidate a basic understanding of the processes involved in directing a text for theatre. It should give the candidate a general knowledge of the various roles of a director in the wider professional environment, with the understanding that the creative process in Outcome 2 may not include the practical application of all this knowledge. Outcome 1 should also provide the candidate with a variety of approaches to analysing and directing a text that s/he can apply in a practical way in Outcome 2.

Areas covered by the lecturer should include:

1. Pre-Production and Production Skills including:
 - ◆ How and why a play is chosen for production
 - ◆ Identifying the different production needs of different plays
 - ◆ How to run a casting process
 - ◆ How to plan rehearsals with structured warm-ups and good time management
 - ◆ The roles and relationships with other production staff: lighting designer, set designer, production/company manager, stage manager(s)
2. An introduction to a variety of approaches to a text including:
 - ◆ An understanding of pace and changes in thought/intentions
 - ◆ An understanding of sub-text significance of different props and furniture
 - ◆ An understanding of use and significance of costume
 - ◆ How to respond to the various needs of the performer(s)

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Directing a Text

3. General Skills

- ◆ How to create a positive and dynamic working environment
- ◆ How to produce a working prompt copy of selected extract.

Outcome 2 covers the entire creative process. Candidates should be encouraged to have clarity on their reasons for choosing a text, identifying the elements of the text (theme, style, location, characters etc) that particularly draw them to it. In this way, the unit aims to encourage the candidate to have a self-awareness of their interest in theatre and drama. No process for selecting a cast is outlined since it is assumed that each centre may have a different method for assigning actors to a director and it should be clear that not all of the various roles of the director covered in Outcome 1 will be practical and applicable in Outcome 2. Nevertheless, the unit emphasises the candidate's ability to relate to others, in particular how they interact with and manage the actors they are working with. Consideration for others and clarity in the explanation and delivery of ideas are central to the successful completion of this unit. Candidates need to demonstrate that however good their initial staging ideas, they can also translate those ideas into coherent staging and can inspire and motivate actors in the process.

Outcome 3 covers the evaluative process. Candidates should be able to reflect on both the more and less successful areas of the process and delivery and identify areas for improvement should the candidate wish to continue exploring directing for theatre.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

Whilst this unit could stand alone as an individual piece of learning, it has been designed as part of a group award, which is primarily designed to provide candidates with professional knowledge and skills required for work within a specific occupational area. It is suggested that this unit be delivered towards the end of the award, by which time candidates should have a good appreciation and understanding of text and will have learned to develop personal social skills – such as co-operation, negotiation, compromise and team work. They will also have gained a deeper understanding of production requirements and the discipline required during rehearsals.

This unit could be successfully integrated with the Production and/or Text and Performance and/or Acting units to allow all candidates equal opportunity of time, space and group in which to direct their extract.

It is envisaged that teaching time would break down in the following way: Outcome 1 basics 9 hours; Outcome 1 essay feedback 3 hours; Outcome 2 extract rehearsals 18 hours with regular tutor input; Outcome 2 presentation of pieces 3 hours; Outcome 3 evaluations 3 hours.

The directed extract – Outcome 2 - will be presented close to the end of the delivery period for the unit. Evidence of student presentations should be video taped as supporting evidence.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Directing a Text

Outcome 3 is an oral evaluation and can take place in a group environment with all candidates present or can take place in a tutorial environment, depending on specific circumstances and the tutor's discretion. The evaluation should last a minimum of 3 minutes.

Open learning

The Outcomes in this unit rely on developing skills through interaction with a lecturer and/or fellow candidates, and so the opportunities for distance learning are very limited. Centres may, however, find it possible to develop solutions, provided all unit and moderation requirements are met in full. Technological advances may make the possibility of such creative solutions more widespread in the future.

Because of the intensive nature of the training and the rehearsal requirements for this unit when taken as part of a course, part-time provision would be most unusual and difficult to achieve.

For information on normal open learning arrangements, please refer to the SQA guide *Assessment and Quality Assurance and Distance Learning (SQA 2000)*.

Special needs

This Unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. Special needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering special alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment Arrangements (SQA, 2001)*.

General information for candidates

Unit title: Directing a Text

The HN Unit: Directing a Text will give you a knowledge and understanding of directing for theatre, it will introduce you to the skills required to direct for the theatre and will enable you to demonstrate these skills with 'hands on' experience of directing. The unit culminates in your directing of a short extract for theatre. You will learn about the role of the theatre director, his/her responsibilities/job. You will learn about the considerations required when directing and the various methods used in taking 'page to stage' - such as selection of cast, planning of rehearsals, warm-ups, and good time management to use of props, furniture, stage space, pacing of the piece etc.

You are required to write an essay on the role of the theatre director, describing a variety of approaches used in taking script from page to performance. The essay will be no less than 500 words in duration.

You will be working with your selected cast and will learn to demonstrate good interpersonal and group skills.

The assessment of this unit is largely practical and will involve developing ideas, through working with others to produce a presented extract for theatre- within this you will demonstrate various approaches in direction.

You will also have learned to do a prompt copy and will produce a working prompt copy for your selected extract.

You will also be required to give an oral evaluation of the process and end product of directing your selected extract.

You will explain the development of ideas as director - you will:

- ◆ Explain how and why the piece for presentation was selected
- ◆ Explain how and why the cast was selected
- ◆ Explain how effective your rehearsals were with regard to time management/warm-ups and approaches used in direction
- ◆ Identify less successful approaches of direction
- ◆ Explain any personal strategies for future improvement.