

Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Text and Performance

Unit code: DG4G 34

Unit purpose: The purpose of this unit is to enable candidates to actively and practically explore theatre texts. Candidates will develop an understanding of text, and then work through selected text(s) from a recognised theatrical form or era. Candidates will be required to explain and demonstrate their interpretation of the text in terms of its form/era. Extracts will be selected and then practically explored within class.

The unit is primarily intended for candidates on acting courses, but may also be of use to candidates on other performing arts courses.

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

1. Develop a theoretical understanding of text.
2. Investigate the form and structure of a selected text.
3. Demonstrate understanding of a selected text.

Credit value: 1 HN Credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7*)

**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. For this unit, candidates will find it beneficial to have some acting and directing experience.

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.

General information for centres (cont)

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.

Assessment: This unit will be assessed holistically through observational checklists. Evidence for the knowledge and/or skills for the whole unit may be assessed wherever it occurs. Candidates will generate evidence through performance in workshops and a logbook of learning and research.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Text and Performance

Unit code: GB/TPS

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

Please refer to *Knowledge and/or skills for the Unit* and *Evidence requirements for the Unit* after the Outcomes.

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

Develop a theoretical understanding of text.

Outcome 2

Investigate the form and structure of a selected text.

Outcome 3

Demonstrate understanding of selected text.

Knowledge and/or skills for the Unit

- ◆ Dramatic forms/eras
- ◆ How texts represent forms/eras
- ◆ Historical themes
- ◆ Social themes
- ◆ Structure of text
- ◆ Theatrical form
- ◆ Characterisation
- ◆ Vocal requirements
- ◆ Physicality
- ◆ Performance style
- ◆ Textual themes
- ◆ Contextual references
- ◆ Theatrical venue
- ◆ Performance media

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Text and Performance

Evidence requirements for the Unit

Candidates will participate in introductory workshops which will allow them to explore the knowledge and skills theoretically. They will demonstrate a basic working knowledge of most of the knowledge and skills through discussion and practice.

Candidates will then select text to work on from a negotiated list, and explore it practically, through class-based exercises and by self-guided research. The focus will be on exploring the text in relation to its form or era. Structured discussions will cover the full range of knowledge and skills. Candidates should be encouraged to work in groups. Evidence will be generated through a minimum of four entries into a logbook that should record learning and relevant research. The logbook should be 800-1000 words in total.

Candidates will:

- ◆ Explore selected scenes/text from a chosen play
- ◆ Explore vocal requirements as suggested by the text
- ◆ Explore the range of physical qualities, moves and gestures suggested and/or implied by the text
- ◆ Explore character mood and thought process within the text
- ◆ Explore possible performance style(s) required by the text
- ◆ Identify themes within the text
- ◆ Explain textual and contextual references where relevant
- ◆ Discuss appropriate theatre spaces for presentation of the text
- ◆ Discuss appropriate performance media for presentation of the text

Assessment guidelines for the Unit

Evidence for the knowledge and skills will be generated throughout this unit, and may be assessed wherever sufficient competence is demonstrated.

Assessment will be by observation checklist. Between the written evidence and the practical work, assessors must be confident that the candidate has developed an overall grounding and understanding in their chosen area of textual work.

Administrative Information

Unit code:	DG4G 34
Unit title:	Text and Performance
Superclass category:	LC
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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Text and Performance

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 form an integral part of an Acting and Performance course. As such, it may be taught alongside other units which would provide further opportunities for deepening understanding of text and performance.

This unit has been devised in order to allow candidates the opportunity to develop a deeper textual understanding of plays. Whilst it is not designed to be a literature unit, centres may wish to develop a textual analysis as long as it serves to deepen the candidate's skills, primarily for use in the *rehearsal studio*. Centres wishing to look at the practitioner's or director's viewpoints are directed to other units within the HNC/D Acting and Performance framework that deal specifically with those roles.

The unit is designed to equip candidates with the fundamental skills and awareness required when preparing and performing dramatic text. These skills are developed through a practical exploration of the nature of theatrical performance, and centres may wish to make some reference to the work of an influential theatre practitioner such as Stanislavski, Artaud, Brecht, Grotowski, Hagen, and so on. It must be emphasised, however that such reference should be used to enhance a candidate's understanding of performance specifically in relation to the text under study.

During Outcome 1, areas of study for candidates may include the following:

Dramatic text

- ◆ This can range from an author's published play to devised or extemporized text.

Theatre Space

- ◆ This can range from all varieties of purpose-built theatre to a found or site-specific space.

Theatre Elements

- ◆ Lighting (of all kinds)
- ◆ Sound (live and recorded of all kinds)
- ◆ Costume (nominal and symbolic)
- ◆ Stage Properties (actual and symbolic)
- ◆ Set (realistic to symbolic)

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Text and Performance

The Performer

- ◆ The actor and the nature of vocal, physical, and mental demands
- ◆ The actor and notions of characterisation

The Performer-Audience

- ◆ Firstly, spatial.
 - Where are the performers in relation to the audience?
- ◆ Secondly, impact.
 - What emotional, intellectual (and perhaps social) impact does the practitioner see as a desired effect of theatrical production?

A Practitioner's View

Candidates may also be referred to practitioner's effect and influence upon a selected text through:

- ◆ The practitioner's view of dramatic text and its status within theatrical production
- ◆ The practitioner's view of the theatre space, evaluating any innovations suggested by the ideas/practice that have been explored
- ◆ The practitioner's view of theatre elements, evaluating the use of stage design, lighting, sound, costume and stage properties suggested by the ideas/practice that have been explored
- ◆ The practitioner's view of the performer, evaluating vocal, physical and mental demands suggested by the practitioner's work
- ◆ The practitioner's view of the performance-audience relationship, evaluating the desired impact of the practitioner's production style.

Outcome 2 should develop the textual skills and practice required by an actor during the rehearsal process. Knowledge and skills are therefore those that are most relevant to the actor: vocal; physical; and those relating to characterisation.

Vocal work involves how loud/quiet/fast/slow the text may be performed, what tonal qualities it should be given, and what accent is required. Candidates should provide reasons for the choices made.

Physical work should flesh out character from direct textual suggestion and implication. It shouldn't lead to nominal casting but should at least reflect a possible physicality for characters with sound textual support.

Character progression should aim to map the journey the character makes during the play. Textual and sub-textual reasons should be given for findings. Textual references and themes should be explored, especially in direct reference to characterisation.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Text and Performance

Recognition should be given to the influence of a given performance style on the text. Definitions of naturalism/realism/expressionism and so on are, of course, myriad but some attempt should be made to describe the style required.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

As stressed earlier, this is not a literary unit. In aiming to teach skills appropriate to actors, teaching methods and location should reflect this. Informative and relevant tutor-led exposition should be followed by group work in which candidates actively explore and tutors can observe. Candidates thus generate evidence in a way that mirrors rehearsal practice: discussion, trial, error and annotation. As evidence is being generated by each class, students must take care with notes, annotated scripts and so on.

The tutor should informally observe the exploration and rehearsal of the selected text, facilitating where necessary.

Time constraints will probably mean that selected text extracts should be explored in depth rather than skimming the whole play.

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.

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

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The purpose of this unit is to enable you to actively and practically explore theatre texts. You will develop a theoretical understanding of text, and then work through a selected text from a recognised theatrical form or era. You will be required to explain and demonstrate how this text may be interpreted in terms of its genre. Extracts from this text will be selected and then practically explored within class.

This unit is designed to make you aware of, and competent in, the textual skills required by an actor. Acting tends to favour instinct over (but not in place of) intellect. The unit therefore encourages you to try out ideas you have about texts, rather than merely writing or talking about them. Performance decisions can then be justified directly through experience.

During the Unit, you will:

1. Develop a theoretical understanding of text
2. Investigate the form and structure of a selected text
3. Demonstrate understanding of a selected text

As you progress through the unit, skills and knowledge that you learn should gradually become second nature. This means that you will become an active participant during any activity where text is being used.

You will be required to participate actively in workshops to develop knowledge and practically explore approaches to text. You will then select a text in negotiation with your tutor, and explore it practically and carry out research on it. You will record your learning and your findings in at least four separate entries into a logbook of 800-1000 words.

Between the written evidence and the practical work, you have to demonstrate that you have developed an overall grounding and understanding of your chosen area of textual work. You may be assessed on your ongoing work at any point during the unit