## Higher National Unit specification: general information

**Unit title:** British Sign Language: Complex

**Unit code:** FT5N 35

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| **Superclass:** | HG |
| **Publication date:** | August 2011 |
| **Source:** | Scottish Qualifications Authority |
| **Version:** | 01 |

## Unit purpose

This Unit is designed to develop skills in British Sign Language (BSL) at SCQF level 8.

The Unit is aimed at individuals who may work or aspire to work in an environment that requires the use of professional level skills in BSL. The Unit is also appropriate for those with an interest in developing advanced level skills in BSL for social purposes.

The Unit develops skills in understanding complex signed language and producing signed complex language.

This Unit embodies and further develops the National Occupational Standards in Languages at level 4.

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

1    Demonstrate an understanding of complex signed language.
2    Sign using complex language.

## Recommended prior knowledge and skills

Access to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. However, considerable competence in BSL is required before undertaking this Unit. This competence could be demonstrated through attained formal qualifications in BSL at SCQF level 7 or equivalent. Alternatively, competence could be measured by interviewing the candidate and using an assessment toolkit to test the candidate's level of competence in BSL.

## General information (cont)

Candidates entering the award with a BSL qualification achieved at SCQF level 6 or equivalent or demonstrating the equivalent level of competence may require additional support from the centre to bridge the gap in SCQF levels. For example, the centre may need to increase the number of taught hours, provide additional resources to help candidates with self-study, provide one-to-one tutorials, facilitate guided peer group activity, etc. Candidates should be prepared to increase the amount of self-study required to allow them to exit at SCQF level 8 within the same delivery period and, if possible, practise their skills outside the classroom in social or work settings. Alternatively, the Unit could be delivered over a longer period of time.

In addition, it would be beneficial if candidates had *Communication* Skills at SCQF level 5.

## Credit points and level

2 Higher National Unit credits at SCQF level 8: (16 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.*

## Core Skills

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit specification.

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this Unit.

## Context for delivery

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.

This Unit is a mandatory Unit within the PDA in British Sign Language Studies at SCQF level 8.

The Unit may, however, be taught as a stand-alone Unit, developing skills for a wide range of situations.

# Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

**Unit title:** British Sign Language: Complex

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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

Demonstrate an understanding of complex signed language.

### Knowledge and/or Skills

♦ Complex social interactions, spoken/signed and non-verbal cultural conventions
♦ Complex information
♦ All relevant details and the general meaning of presentations, reports and discussions
♦ Complex enquiries, questions, comments and responses
♦ Complex arguments and lines of reasoning
♦ Complex instructions, advice and requests and their priority
♦ Humour, sarcasm and ambiguity
♦ Opinions and values and distinguishing them from other information
♦ Complex feelings, needs and preferences
♦ Different regional variations and most colloquialisms, and identifying the style and register of language used
♦ Rules and conventions of turn-taking

### Evidence Requirements

The candidate will provide evidence of his/her understanding of BSL by observing two presentations (one formal and one informal) and one discussion. These should be of sufficient complexity and length to cover all of the Knowledge and/or Skills items listed above. The length of each presentation and the discussion will depend on the subject and activity but should be a minimum of five minutes. One assessment should involve face-to-face/live communication. One assessment should involve the use of a recording.

Centres should ensure that all of the Knowledge and/or Skills items are covered across the three assessments.

## Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

**Unit title:** British Sign Language: Complex

The candidate's achievement of all of the Knowledge and Skills items will be deemed satisfactory when:

♦ key points, additional detail and general meaning are understood correctly
♦ understanding is demonstrated of a wide range of sources, even when the complex language is delivered at speed and whatever the length
♦ he/she is comfortable with regional variations, formal and informal language, relevant technical vocabulary and colloquialisms
♦ there is evidence of understanding the rules and conventions of turn taking

The candidate will provide evidence of their understanding in BSL or English.

Two assessments must be undertaken in controlled conditions with a maximum of 90 minutes allotted to each assessment. The candidate will be able to view one of these items of communication as often as required within the timescale and should manage their time in order to be able to provide the evidence required. The other assessment should be viewed only once. For this assessment, the candidate can be given one week's prior notice of the topic and/or presentation.

The third assessment must be carried out in non-controlled conditions. The centre should supply the candidate with the source material which can be viewed as often as required. On submission of the completed assessment, the tutor should question the candidate to ensure the authenticity of his/her work.

## Outcome 2

Sign using complex language.

### Knowledge and/or Skills

♦ Taking an active role in social situations, setting people at ease and including newcomers
♦ Using the correct signed and non verbal cultural conventions (greeting facial expression and gestures, spatial distance, touch, eye contact)
♦ Contributing spontaneously to meetings and discussions, leading if appropriate
♦ Interacting with ease, developing or challenging others' comments and arguments
♦ Making complex presentations using factual information to support theories and ideas
♦ Making complex proposals or suggestions and giving instructions and advice
♦ Making complex requests and enquiries
♦ Expressing complex beliefs, feelings and opinions
♦ Using register, technical language and idiom as appropriate to the subject matter, context and relationship with others
♦ Finding alternative ways to express unfamiliar terms
♦ Maintaining fluency in extended contributions, and accuracy when operating within area of expertise
♦ Using accurate intonation and pronunciation/articulation which puts no strain on other people's understanding
♦ Observing rules and conventions of turn taking

# Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

**Unit title:** British Sign Language: Complex

## Evidence Requirements

The candidate will provide evidence of his/her ability to sign in BSL by:

♦ Delivering one live presentation of 5–8 minutes duration. The candidate will be allowed to refer to prompts
♦ Participating in a group discussion of more than three people with an individual contribution of 3–4 minutes duration
♦ Participating in a one-to-one dialogue/activity of around 10–12 minutes duration

Two of the assessments must be carried out under controlled conditions.

The presentation must be delivered to an audience of BSL users.

All assessments must be video recorded for assessment and verification purposes.

Centres should ensure that all of the Knowledge and/or Skills items are covered across the three assessments.

The candidate's achievement of all of the knowledge and skills items will be deemed satisfactory when:

♦ Signing is clear, fluent and accurate in a range of contexts
♦ Communication is fluent over an extended period with only occasional inaccuracy, which can usually be corrected
♦ Subject matter/topic can be discussed, even when abstract or complex, and the conversation flows smoothly
♦ Language is used to develop relationship(s) with individuals/groups and, if required, to negotiate in meetings to reach decisions or solve problems
♦ there is evidence of using the rules and conventions of turn taking

# Higher National Unit specification: support notes

## Unit title:  British Sign Language: Complex

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 80 hours.

## Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

### Outcome 1 and 2

Language should be developed in a context appropriate to the candidate's needs. This could be for either work or social purposes or both.

### Vocabulary

- Vocabulary to deal with most matters within area of work or required social context
- Current colloquialisms used in work or social contexts
- A wide range of less commonly-used technical terms relevant to area of work
- Most ways to link ideas, make arguments easier to follow and help clarity, precision and fluency
- A wide range of different forms of address, leave taking and other polite conventions to suit different occasions and degrees of formality
- Ways to express feelings
- All numerical terms and ways to discuss numerical data

### Grammatical forms

- All verb forms in normal use
- All grammatical structures, except the most complex or obscure
- A wide range of alternative terms and structures which express standard, colloquial, formal and informal registers

### Cultural conventions

All signed and non verbal cultural conventions (non manual features and gestures, spatial distance, touch, eye contact, tone).

### Reference sources

How to make effective use of relevant language reference sources.

This includes, for example, glossaries, dictionaries, web resources and colleagues or mentors who can advise on vocabulary, expressions and technical language. These may be used, for example, whilst preparing a talk to BSL users or when watching a video letter from a client.

# Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

**Unit title:** British Sign Language: Complex

The following should also be taken into account:

♦ Accuracy of hand shapes, non manual features and word order which are close to those produced by a native sign language user

♦ Concepts and grammatical structures as they are expressed in sign language. Examples of these are:
  — the expression of time, for example to indicate events that happen(ed) in the past, present and future
  — aspect, for example, to express continuation, eg she was feeding the baby when her mobile rang; repetition, eg she kept on walking; habit, eg she used to go out with him
  — modality, for example, to express possibility, eg he may be late; obligation, eg you should have told me

♦ The structure of presentations and exchanges in BSL, as well as communication features which are used in work and social contexts. Examples of this are the way in which BSL users:
  — begin and end a conversation
  — frame a story
  — introduce people to each other
  — use turn-taking and interrupt each other

♦ The use of BSL to express colloquial, informal and formal register. This is expressed through for example:
  — the range of vocabulary
  — the style and speed of delivery
  — the emphasis and tone appropriate to the meaning and nuance the signer intends to convey
  — the use of irony and sarcasm

♦ The culture of the Deaf community as it is expressed in communication.

# Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

**Unit title:**     British Sign Language: Complex

## Guidance on the delivery of this Unit

The delivery of this Unit should be candidate-centred and the approach may be varied to suit the needs of the group. The tutor should use his/her discretion regarding the most effective teaching methods.

This Unit embodies and develops the National Occupational Standards for Languages at level 4, Complex. It is intended that on completion of the Unit candidates will:

*'communicate fluently over extended periods with only occasional inaccuracy — which can usually be corrected; discuss all topics, even when abstract or complex and keep the conversation going smoothly; use language to develop relationships with individuals and groups, and also, if required, to negotiate in formal meetings to reach decisions or solve problems; use a video phone confidently and effectively'*

*'extract complex information from a wide range of sources, even when the language is delivered at speed; be comfortable with a range of regional variations, formal and informal language, relevant technical vocabulary and colloquialisms; take part in negotiations and deal with complaints, problems or disputes; make video calls effectively'*

## Guidance on the assessment of this Unit

The use of new technologies is to be encouraged at all times, for example, the use of video conferencing facilities, video phones, on-line and mobile technologies.

In this Unit, the candidate is required to:

1   Observe two presentations (one formal and one informal) and one discussion.
2   Give a presentation of 5–8 minutes duration; participate in a group discussion with an individual contribution of 3–4 minutes; participate in a one-to-one dialogue of between 10–12 minutes.

A candidate who uses BSL for work purposes could observe presentations and discussions which he/she witnesses or is involved in as part of his/her job. The candidate would need to demonstrate his/her understanding of the presentations and discussions by meeting the Evidence Requirements as set out in the mandatory section of the Unit specification. If the candidate is being assessed in his/her actual workplace, then the assessor will need to record the assessments and complete checklists to attest to the candidate meeting the required standards of performance. The recordings and checklists will then need to be passed to the presenting centre for internal and external verification purposes. It is essential that all assessments are recorded so that centre staff and external verifiers can check that the correct assessment decisions have been made.

# Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

**Unit title:** British Sign Language: Complex

A candidate who uses BSL for work purposes could also make presentations in BSL and contribute to meetings or group discussions, as well as sustaining a dialogue with an individual. Again, the assessor would need to record the assessments and complete checklists to attest to the candidate meeting the required standards of performance. The recordings and checklists would then be passed to the presenting centre for internal and external verification purposes. It is essential that all assessments are recorded so that centre staff and external verifiers can check that the correct assessment decisions have been made.

Similar approaches could be made for those using BSL within a social context. Again, in such cases, all assessment exercises should be recorded and checklists completed for submission to centre staff for assessment, internal and external verification purposes.

Such approaches to assessment may also provide opportunities for the development of Core Skills, particularly *Communication*, *Working with Others, ICT* and *Problem Solving*.

In addition, evidence generated for this Unit may contribute to evidence for formative and summative assessment for the Units *Linguistics of British Sign Language*, *Scottish Deaf History: 1750 to the Present* and *The Community and Culture of Deaf People,* which together with this Unit, form the PDA in BSL Studies at SCQF level 8.

Arrangements would have to be made to ensure that the assessments for each Outcome are generated under the assessment conditions specified.

The following are examples of situations where evidence for assessment could be obtained:

♦ A meeting at work to discuss corporate objectives and developing operational plans
♦ A meeting at a community centre to discuss an annual report and to appoint office bearers for the year ahead
♦ A presentation at work about new proposals or a project being undertaken
♦ A presentation to a group on a proposal for a new community project
♦ A presentation to a group about an area of specialised interest
♦ A dialogue between a bank clerk who discusses a mortgage application with a BSL user
♦ An interview between a police officer and a witness of a car accident
♦ An interview between a social worker and a deaf person who needs to change accommodation in the local area
♦ A discussion between a communication support worker and the parent/guardian of one of his/her pupils
♦ A meeting where a senior manager reviews the performance of a team member and sets personal objectives for the year ahead
♦ A tutor who explains how to do an exercise and gives feedback to his/her learners

Formative and summative assessments should not be based on real situations where sensitive and confidential information is being discussed, eg medical matters, legal matters or other matters of a personal nature. Neither should information of a commercially sensitive nature be used for formative and summative assessment purposes. It would, however, be possible to simulate situations that candidates may encounter on a real life basis eg obtaining a mortgage, discussing educational matters, discussing the performance of a member of staff.

**Unit title:**     British Sign Language: Complex

## Assessment Guidelines

### Outcome 1 and 2

This Unit may be assessed:

♦     in either a work or social context
♦     by tasks that combine as many of the Knowledge and Skills items as required

## Online and Distance Learning

This Unit is not suited to delivery by distance learning because it requires candidates to be observed and questioned by a qualified practitioner.

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or e-checklists. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all candidate evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. Further advice is available in *SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education (AA1641, March 2003), SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools (BD2625, June 2005)*.

## Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skill components of *Communication* at SCQF level 6, *Working with Others* at SCQF level 5, *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* at SCQF level 5 and *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 5 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components. Under certain circumstances, there may be opportunity to develop the Core Skill of *Numeracy* at SCQF level 4.

The extent of the development will depend on the learning opportunities chosen by the candidate or the delivery and assessment methods selected by the tutor.

Oral Communication at SCQF level 6 — candidates can fulfil this component through participating in discussions, one-to-one dialogues and delivering presentations for both formative and summative assessment purposes. Tasks involving group activities and joint feedback sessions will offer the candidate opportunities to make a substantial contribution to a discussion on a complex topic.

Written Communication (Reading and Writing) at SCQF level 6 — candidates can develop this component through research activities and the production of reports, essays or other form of written communication produced for the Unit.

Working Co-operatively with Others at SCQF level 5 — this component can be developed by gathering evidence from the workplace or by taking part in group activities in the centre, for example, joint information and feedback sessions or group research activities.

# Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

**Unit title:** British Sign Language: Complex

*Review Co-operative Contribution* at SCQF level 5 – this component can be developed by reviewing one's own contribution to group activities either in the workplace or in the centre. It would be appropriate to encourage candidates to reflect on their own contribution to any group activity in which they have been involved.

*Accessing Information* at SCQF level 5 — this component could be developed by carrying out searches for and accessing information for tasks in the Unit. This could involve some searching on a complex web site for unfamiliar information.

*Providing/Creating Information at* SCQF level 5 — this component could be achieved through selecting and launching appropriate software, keeping data secure and presenting information in appropriate modes. Presentation could be supported by PowerPoint or other ICT presentation tools. Use could be made of a Virtual Learning Environment to enhance these skills.

Centres should take every opportunity to use modern technologies for communication purposes.

*Critical Thinking* at SCQF level 5 – this component could be developed where a situation or issue has arisen in the course of the candidate's work or study. The candidate would need to analyse and evaluate the situation or issue and devise a strategy to deal with the situation. The candidate should reflect on and evaluate the success of the strategy.

*Planning and Organising* at SCQF level 5 — this component could be developed through planning, organising and completing a task. This could be related to any tasks being undertaken as part of the Unit. The candidate would need to develop a plan, identify and obtain resources to carry out the plan and then carry out the task. Resources could include, for example, time available, sources of information, set procedures, people, equipment and physical resources. The candidate must decide on how the task will be managed, this could include allocation of tasks in a group context.

*Numeracy* at SCQF level 4 – It may be difficult to gather evidence for the components of this Core Skill – *Apply a Range of Straightforward Numerical Skills in Everyday Contexts* and *Interpret and Communicate Straightforward Graphical Information in Everyday Contexts*. However, if a candidate has the opportunity to gather or handle numerical information related to his/her work role as part of a research project or in producing a report, this may contribute towards the development of this Core Skill.

## Other Skills Developed

In addition to the development of components of the five Core Skills of *Communication, Working with Others, ICT, Problem Solving, and Numeracy*, opportunities should be taken to develop other transferable skills, including employability skills.

# Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

**Unit title:** British Sign Language: Complex

Candidates should be provided with opportunities to develop:

♦ **Self-management skills –** This should include working autonomously and taking initiative, taking responsibility, setting goals and milestones, time management , the importance of punctuality, meeting deadlines,  managing and prioritising information, flexibility, readiness to improve own performance based on feedback/reflective learning, peer evaluation.

♦ **Team working –** respecting others, co-operating, negotiating/persuading, contributing to discussions, and awareness of interdependence with others, opportunity to manage or be managed, taking account of own and others' roles, responsibilities and contributions in carrying out and evaluating tasks.

♦ **Research Skills –** research and study skills**,** academic processes**,** critically analysing, evaluating and interpreting information.

♦ **Specialist Skills –** skills, techniques and practices associated with communication in BSL, an understanding of major current issues in the BSL sector, observing ethical codes of practice.

**All of these skills and techniques will contribute to employability and improve professional practice.**

## Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website **www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements**

## History of changes to Unit

| Version | Description of change | Date |
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# General information for candidates

**Unit title:** British Sign Language: Complex

**Unit Purpose**

This Unit is designed to develop your skills in British Sign Language (BSL) at SCQF level 8.

The Unit is aimed at individuals who may work or aspire to work in an environment that requires the use of professional level skills in BSL. The Unit is also appropriate for those with an interest in developing advanced level skills in BSL for social purposes.

The Unit develops skills in understanding complex signed language and producing signed complex language.

This Unit embodies and further develops the National Occupational Standards in Languages at level 4.

**Outcomes**

On completion of the Unit you should be able to:

1    Demonstrate an understanding of complex signed language.
2    Sign using complex language.

**Entry requirements**

In order to undertake this Unit you should already have considerable competence in BSL. This competence could be demonstrated through attained formal qualifications in BSL at SCQF level 7 or equivalent. Alternatively, your competence could be measured in an interview carried out by the centre that you wish to attend.

If you enter the award with a BSL qualification achieved at SCQF level 6 or equivalent or demonstrate the equivalent level of competence at SCQF level 6, you may require additional support from the centre to bridge the gap in SCQF levels. For example, the centre may need to increase the number of taught hours, provide additional resources to help you with self-study, provide one-to-one tutorials, facilitate guided peer group activity, etc. You should also be prepared to increase the amount of self-study required to allow you to exit at SCQF level 8 within the same delivery period. Alternatively, the Unit could be delivered over a longer period of time.

In addition, it would be beneficial if you had *Communication* Skills at SCQF level 5.

**Assessment**

*Receptive Skills*

You will provide evidence of your understanding of BSL by observing two presentations (one formal and one informal) and one discussion.

# General information for candidates (cont)

**Unit title:** British Sign Language: Complex

*Productive Skills*

You will provide evidence of your ability to sign in BSL by:

♦ delivering one live presentation.
♦ participating in a group discussion of more than three people.
♦ participating in a one-to-one dialogue/activity.

## Core Skills

While you are collecting evidence for this Unit, there may be opportunities to develop your Core Skills in *Communication* at SCQF level 6, *Working with Others* at SCQF level 5, *Information and Communication Technology* (ICT) at SCQF level 5 and *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 5. Under certain circumstances, you may also be able to develop your skills in Numeracy at SCQF level 4.

## Other skills developed

In addition to the development of components of the Core Skills of *Communication*, *Working with Others, Information and Communication Technology, Problem Solving* and *Numeracy*, there will be opportunities to develop other transferable skills, including employability skills. For example:

♦ **Self-management skills** — this should include working autonomously and taking initiative, taking responsibility, setting goals and milestones, time management, the importance of punctuality, meeting deadlines, managing and prioritising information, flexibility, readiness to improve own performance based on feedback/reflective learning, peer evaluation.

♦ **Team working** — respecting others, co-operating, negotiating/persuading, contributing to discussions, and awareness of interdependence with others, opportunity to manage or be managed, taking account of own and others' roles, responsibilities and contributions in carrying out and evaluating tasks.

♦ **Research Skills** — research and study skills, academic processes, critically analysing, evaluating and interpreting information.

♦ **Specialist Skills** — skills, techniques and practices associated with communication in BSL, an understanding of major current issues in the BSL sector, observing ethical codes of practice.

All of these skills and techniques will contribute to your employability and improve your professional practice.