



National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Contemporary Scottish Theatre (Higher)

NUMBER D198 12

COURSE Drama (Higher)

SUMMARY

The purpose of this unit is to develop competence in analysing and appreciating specified trends and issues in contemporary Scottish theatre and in acting a character from a contemporary Scottish play.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of specified trends and issues in contemporary Scottish theatre.
- 2 Perform an acting role from a contemporary Scottish play.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained one of the following:

- Standard Grade Drama at Credit level
- Intermediate 2 Drama
- other appropriate prior experience in drama.

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Higher.

CORE SKILLS

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

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

Administrative Information

Superclass: LC

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Additional copies of this unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. The cost for each unit specification is £2.50 (minimum order £5).

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Contemporary Scottish Theatre (Higher)

Acceptable performance of this unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

OUTCOME 1

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of specified trends and issues in contemporary Scottish theatre.

Performance criteria

- a) Analyses two texts/productions in terms of how each exemplifies one or more specified trends or issues.
- b) Discusses relevantly a specified trend or issue with reference to a minimum of two appropriate texts/productions.

Evidence requirements

Specified trends and issues: social, political and religious dimensions; use of history, nostalgia and popular tradition; issues of gender; and current productions and issues. One or more of the specified trends and issues should be studied. One written/taped assignment is required, demonstrating the investigation of a specified trend or issue and making reference to two or more texts/productions. At least 2 plays should be studied and this should be evident from the assignment. (See the section 'Course Specification: Approaches to Learning and Teaching - Contemporary Scottish Theatre' for advice on choice of play related to 'current productions and practice').

OUTCOME 2

Perform an acting role from a contemporary Scottish play.

Performance criteria

- a) Interprets the character convincingly, showing use of textual clues.
- b) Uses a voice which is appropriate to both character and clarity of words.
- c) Uses movement which is appropriate to character and which makes effective use of the acting space in relation to the audience.
- d) Interacts effectively with other characters.
- e) Communicates effectively the overall portrayal of the character to the audience.

Evidence requirements

Performance assessed by staff checklist. The candidate is expected to sustain the role for around five minutes and to communicate with an audience which may comprise the other candidates in the teaching group. Where spoken language is not the candidate's main mode of communication, special arrangements will need to be made.

National Unit Specification: support notes

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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

For the purposes of this course, any post-1900 play which is set in Scotland and/or written by a Scottish playwright is considered to be Contemporary Scottish Theatre. Plays which have been performed by a Scottish theatre company using a Scots translation, a Scottish idiom or a Scottish setting are also appropriate for study. A minimum of three contemporary Scottish plays, which may be texts and/or productions, must be studied.

For further details about the content of this unit, please refer to the course specification.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

For advice about sequencing of this unit if taught as a course component and suggestions for integration, please refer to the section 'Course details - Approaches to Learning and Teaching: Unit 3 - Contemporary Scottish Theatre'.

A minimum of two specified areas of study should be chosen from those listed. The teacher/lecturer should select at least three plays, each of which will exemplify one or more of the chosen specified areas of study. It is important for the selected plays to provide comparative as well as appropriate individual study. These plays may be studied as texts and/or productions. The candidate should explore the plays from the perspective of an audience and of an actor.

If choosing 'Current Productions and Issues' from the specified areas of study, it may be advisable to choose two or more plays which have been performed by the chosen theatre company or two or more plays written by the chosen playwright.

It may be necessary to use a combination of exposition, resource-based learning and some self-supported study to present an overview of contemporary Scottish theatre and to contextualise the study of the chosen areas and related plays, but practical workshops should form the core from which other activities are derived. It may not be possible to workshop an entire text and therefore the focus for workshop activities may be key scenes identified as those which provide particularly clear exemplification of one or more of the chosen areas of study. Workshops may also be used as a focus for further developing interpretation, characterisation and acting skills.

The workshops will focus on actively exploring how the playwright puts his/her message across through the text. The text will include both dialogue and any stage directions such as descriptions of set or costume which the playwright has included. The candidates should take the roles of both actors and audience appreciating the play.

If undertaking the study of an aspect of 'Current Productions and Issues', there will be a need for research and the provision of source materials for the candidates other than just related texts. These materials may include reviews and articles, leaflets published by theatre companies and reference books or information packs produced by the teacher/lecturer. This area of study could be handled as a project in class, integrated with textual workshops which focus also on another area of study.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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A theatre visit to see a production of any contemporary Scottish play will enhance study. If the text is not available, the play may still be used for study if sufficient follow-up work is done in school/college so that the candidates have some related study materials.

Candidates will be required to study the interpretation and acting of one role from contemporary Scottish theatre. The acting role does not need to be taken from one of the plays which have been studied in class and it may be taken from any contemporary Scottish theatre text.

For further details about the teaching of investigating, acting and directing skills, it is recommended that teachers/lecturers should read the section 'Course Specification - Approaches to Learning and Teaching: General advice on learning and teaching'.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

Each unit is assessed on a pass/fail basis. Candidates will be required to provide evidence of the achievement of each of the learning outcomes. Teachers/lecturers may select the instruments of assessment which they consider will provide a valid, reliable and practicable assessment of the candidates' work

Outcome 1

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of specified trends and issues in contemporary Scottish theatre.

The suggested assessment instrument is a question requiring an extended response on a specified trend or issue. It is likely that this assignment will be undertaken towards the end of the teaching of the unit.

Outcome 2

Perform an acting role from a contemporary Scottish play.

The recommended assessment instrument is observation of a performance of the acting role within an interactive acting piece from any contemporary Scottish play. The performance must involve the candidate in an acting contribution of around five minutes. An observational checklist listing the performance criteria should be used to record achievement. This will form the main evidence but teacher/lecturer notes and a video recording may be used as supporting evidence.

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 alternative outcomes for units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment Arrangements* (SQA, September, 2003).