



National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Drama: Acting Skills (SCQF level 6)

CODE F5KY 12

SUMMARY

This Unit is designed to help candidates understand the overall acting process. Candidates will be given the opportunity to develop and demonstrate acting skills through practical, imaginative and creative exploration. They will be introduced to the key acting skills through exploration of the self, others and environments, using a range of exercises. Candidates will then be required to develop a character from either text or observation, exploring in some detail the depth of this character. The Unit provides candidates with opportunities to evaluate the acting process and their own individual strengths and areas for development.

This is a mandatory Unit within the National Certificate in Acting and Theatre Performance (SCQF level 6), but can also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

This Unit is suitable for candidates who have some previous acting experience and who wish to explore and develop a deeper understanding of the process of acting.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Develop and demonstrate acting techniques using a range of exercises.
- 2 Create and portray two contrasting characters in performance.
- 3 Review and evaluate own acting techniques and final performance.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Entry is at the discretion of the centre.

Administrative Information

Superclass: LC

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CREDIT VALUE

2 credits at Higher (12 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6*).

**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

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

This Unit provides opportunities for candidates to develop aspects of the following Core Skills:

- ◆ Communication
- ◆ Working with Others
- ◆ Problem Solving

These opportunities are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit Specification.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

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Acceptable performance in 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 SQA.

OUTCOME 1

Develop and demonstrate acting techniques using a range of exercises.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Develop and demonstrate acting techniques through exploration of the self as an actor.
- (b) Develop and demonstrate acting techniques through interaction with others.
- (c) Develop and demonstrate acting techniques through interaction with environments.

OUTCOME 2

Create and portray two contrasting characters in performance.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Use acting techniques to create and build fully developed characters.
- (b) Effectively portray the characters in performance.

OUTCOME 3

Review and evaluate own acting techniques and final performance.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Identify strengths and areas for development in own acting techniques.
- (b) Identify strengths and areas for development in the final performance.
- (c) Identify strategies for own development as an actor.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Evidence is required to demonstrate that candidates have achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

Outcome 1

Performance Criteria (a)

Performance evidence, supplemented by an Assessor Observation Checklist, is required to show that the candidate is able to use effectively a range of acting exercises to:

- ◆ demonstrate development of the actor's imagination
- ◆ identify physical and mental tensions
- ◆ explore emotional recall
- ◆ recognise the effects of surroundings on the self
- ◆ explore and develop an awareness of the self in relation to intellectual, emotional, physical and vocal expression

Performance Criteria (b) and (c)

Performance evidence, supplemented by an Assessor Observation Checklist, is required to show that the candidate is able to use effectively a range of acting exercises to:

- ◆ demonstrate an ability to interact with others in a variety of situations
- ◆ explore action and reaction
- ◆ demonstrate an awareness of listening and observing in relation to others
- ◆ explore status in given circumstances
- ◆ demonstrate an awareness of changing atmosphere, space and time

The evidence for this Outcome must be obtained under supervised conditions at appropriate points during the delivery of the Unit.

Outcome 2

Performance Criteria (a)

Performance evidence, supplemented by an Assessor Observation Checklist, is required to show that the candidate has successfully developed two contrasting characters, one from text and one devised or from observation, using a range of acting techniques. Evidence must demonstrate the following:

- ◆ research of the characters
- ◆ exploration of the intellectual, emotional, physical and vocal characteristics for the characters/roles
- ◆ appropriate characteristics for the roles, in relation to interacting with others and environments
- ◆ positive response to guidance and advice regarding the portrayal of the characters/roles

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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Performance Criteria (b)

Performance evidence, supplemented by an Assessor Observation Checklist, is required to show that the candidate can portray two contrasting characters effectively in performance.

The evidence must be gathered during live performances, in which the candidate must perform for approximately five minutes. The candidate must portray characters as part of a dramatic scene involving interaction with at least one other performer, therefore monologues should not be used. The performance should take place in front of an appropriate audience.

Outcome 3

The candidate is required to produce written and/or oral evidence detailing their understanding of the acting process and reflecting on the development of their own acting skills throughout the Unit.

The evidence for **Performance Criteria (a) and (b)** must include reference to acting skills, character development and performance.

The evidence for **Performance Criteria (c)** must include personal reflection on the acting process, including strengths and weaknesses, awareness of self, others and environments and strategies for development.

This evidence should be obtained under supervised, open-book conditions with a minimum of 1,000 words on one assessment occasion towards the end of the Unit.

The Assessment Support Pack (ASP) for this Unit provides sample assessment material including assessor checklists. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the Assessment Support Pack to ensure a comparable standard.

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 80 hours.

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

This is a mandatory Unit within the National Certificate in Acting and Theatre Performance (SCQF level 6), but can also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

The aim of this Unit is to allow the candidate to explore and develop a deeper understanding of the process of acting. The delivery of Outcomes should be approached in a detailed and structured manner with continuous tutor feedback and recommendations for development.

Outcomes 1

This Outcome should be delivered using a series of practical exercises to build and develop the candidate's acting skills and techniques. Candidates should be made aware that there is a great deal of individual exploration which an actor has to undertake. This exploration and development should be a process of continuous discovery and reflection for the candidate, while being constantly monitored by the tutor. The use of structured practical exercises should allow candidates time to analyse, adjust and adapt to the exploration and discovery of self, others and environments.

Outcome 2

This Outcome centres on the candidate building and delivering two contrasting characters for performance, one from text and one devised or from observation. Emphasis is placed on the candidate using the skills learned in Outcome 1 to assist them in developing characterisation. Character research could take the form of background information, vocal, physical and emotional characteristics, placing the character in context and social and historical research.

Outcome 3

This Outcome is a reflection of the candidate's development throughout the Unit. The candidate should be encouraged to keep a diary or log of their progress as a basis for their final evaluation. This log could detail thoughts, feelings, strengths, weaknesses, areas of improvement and strategies for development.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

For Outcome 1, tutors should consider using practical and structured drama exercises, with candidates working solo and in small groups. From this, candidates should begin to develop a deeper awareness of the self, others and environments. Possible exercises may include identifying tension, relaxation techniques, improvisation, observation, spatial awareness, time and atmosphere, concentration and focus, objective, obstacles, status, behavioural patterns, spontaneity, relationships, script analysis and interpretation, action and reaction, responding to stimuli, sub-text, character research, movement, researching a role, emotional range and emphasis, coherence and consistency. The use of group and individual feedback instigated by the student as well as the tutor should also be encouraged.

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In Outcome, 2 the text used should be sufficient to allow candidates to demonstrate interactive skills with others as well as environments. For this reason, monologues are not suitable. The choice of devised or observed character must allow for candidates to make a significant contribution to the scene and demonstrate a synthesis of technique through presentation of their piece.

As a potentially valuable learning and teaching tool, audio/video recording could be used for the candidate to reflect on individual/group rehearsal and performing approaches and for formative assessment strategies.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Outcomes 1 and 2 offer an ideal opportunity for candidates to develop aspects of the Core Skill *Working with Others*, as candidates will work closely as part of a group to perform acting exercises and will rehearse and portray characters in dramatic scenes involving other actors.

Candidates will be producing written and/or oral communication evidence as part of the assessment. This offers ideal opportunities to develop aspects of the Core Skill in *Communication*. In addition, Outcome 3 provides opportunities for candidates to develop *Problem Solving Skills* in reviewing and evaluating their learning experience.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

A suitable instrument of assessment for Outcome 1 is practical acting exercises.

A suitable instrument of assessment for Outcome 2 is a practical assignment. Assessor checklists should be used to supplement the performance evidence. It is also recommended that the final performance is recorded on video, DVD, or another appropriate recording device.

The suggested instrument of assessment for Outcome 3 is a written assignment of approximately 1,000 words.

The ASP for this Unit provides useful checklists and guidance for assessing candidate performance against Performance Criteria detailed in the statement of standards.

Time should be allowed for any necessary re-assessment.

Opportunities for the use of e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by information and communications 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)*.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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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