

# Advanced Higher Gàidhlig Draft Course/Unit Support Notes



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Please refer to the note of changes at the end of this document for details of changes from previous version (where applicable).

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# Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the Advanced Higher **Gaidhlig** Course. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering the Course and its Units. They should be read in conjunction with the *Course Specification*, the *Course Assessment Specification* and the *Unit Specifications* for the Units in the Course.

These support notes cover both the Advanced Higher Course and the Units in it.

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# General guidance on the Course/Units

## Aims

The Advanced Higher Gàidhlig Course aims to enable learners to:

- ◆ develop the ability to express and communicate meaning at a high level of sophistication
- ◆ develop the ability to communicate in writing at a high level of sophistication with respect to audience, context and purpose
- ◆ deepen awareness of language and how it works, taking account of style, grammar, structure and idiom, and local or regional influences on language
- ◆ develop the ability to analyse and evaluate texts from different genres
- ◆ develop awareness of translation from English to Gaelic and from Gaelic to English
- ◆ interact with an individual or group on Gaelic-related issues and engage in individual and group study of topics of a historical or cultural nature
- ◆ apply higher-order thinking
- ◆ develop advanced critical literacy
- ◆ learn independently
- ◆ plan and research, integrating and applying language skills, for a range of purposes including independent study

## Progression

In order to do this Course, learners should have achieved the

- ◆ Higher Gàidhlig Course

Learners who have achieved this Advanced Higher Course may progress to further study, employment and/or training. Opportunities for progression

- ◆ Progression to further/higher education
  - For many learners a key transition point will be to further or higher education, for example to Higher National Certificates (HNCs) / Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) or degree programmes. Examples of further and higher education programmes that learners doing the Course might progress to are: degree-level subject study of Gaelic and related subject studies such as literature, education and journalism
  - further education, including courses in media and journalism
  - National Certificates
  - employment in careers that require high levels of communication and thinking skills
  - Advanced Higher Courses provide good preparation for learners progressing to further and higher education as learners doing Advanced Higher Courses must be able to work with more independence and less

supervision. This eases their transition to further/higher education.

Advanced Higher Courses may also allow 'advanced standing' or partial credit towards the first year of study of a degree programme.

- ◆ Advanced Higher Courses are challenging and testing qualifications — learners who have achieved multiple Advanced Higher Courses are regarded as having a proven level of ability which attests to their readiness for higher education in HEIs in other parts of the UK as well as in Scotland.
- ◆ Progression to employment
  - For many learners progression will be directly to employment or work-based training programmes. Examples of employment opportunities and training programmes are **education, media, journalism, publishing**.

This Advanced Higher is part of the Scottish Baccalaureate in **Languages**. The Scottish Baccalaureates in Expressive Arts, Languages, Science and Social Sciences consist of coherent groups of subjects at Higher and Advanced Higher level. Each award consists of two Advanced Highers, one Higher and an Interdisciplinary Project which adds breadth and value and helps learners to develop generic skills, attitudes and confidence that will help them make the transition into higher education or employment.

## Hierarchies

**Hierarchy** is the term used to describe Courses and Units which form a structured progression involving two or more SCQF levels.

This Advanced Higher Course is not in a hierarchy with the corresponding Higher Course.

## Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Course

This section provides further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding that could be included in the Course.

Teachers and lecturers should refer to the *Course Assessment Specification* for mandatory information about the skills, knowledge and understanding to be covered in this Course.

The development of subject-specific and generic skills is central to the Course. Learners should be made aware of the skills they are developing and of the transferability of them. It is the transferability that will help learners with further study and enhance their personal effectiveness.

The skills, knowledge and understanding that will be developed in the Advanced Higher Gàidhlig Course are:

- ◆ listening, talking, reading and writing skills, as appropriate to purpose and audience in a wide range of contexts

- ◆ skills in understanding, analysing and evaluating a wide range of complex literary texts, as appropriate to purpose and audience
- ◆ skills in creating and producing a wide range of complex texts
- ◆ translating skills from English to Gaelic and from Gaelic to English
- ◆ developing knowledge of Gaelic language, literature and culture

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# Approaches to learning and teaching

Advanced Higher Courses place more demands on learners as there will be a higher proportion of independent study and less direct supervision. Some of the approaches to learning and teaching suggested for other levels (in particular, Higher) may also apply at Advanced Higher level but there will be a stronger emphasis on independent learning.

For Advanced Higher Courses, a significant amount of learning may be self-directed and require learners to demonstrate a more mature approach to learning and the ability to work on their own initiative. This can be very challenging for some learners, who may feel isolated at times, and teachers and lecturers should have strategies for addressing this. These could include, for example, planning time for regular feedback sessions/discussions on a one-to-one basis and on a group basis led by the teacher or lecturer (where appropriate).

Teachers and lecturers should encourage learners to use an enquiring, critical and problem-solving approach to their learning. Learners should also be given the opportunity to practise and develop research and investigation skills and higher-order evaluation and analytical skills. The use of information and communications technology (ICT) can make a significant contribution to the development of these higher-order skills as research and investigation activities become more sophisticated.

Learners will engage in a variety of learning activities as appropriate to the subject, for example:

- ◆ researching information for their subject rather than receiving information from their teacher or lecturer
- ◆ using active and open-ended learning activities such as research and presentation tasks
- ◆ making use of the internet to draw conclusions about specific issues
- ◆ engaging in wide-ranging independent reading
- ◆ recording in a systematic way the results of research and independent investigation from different sources
- ◆ presenting findings/conclusions of research and investigation activities in a presentation
- ◆ participating in group work with peers and using collaborative learning opportunities to develop team working
- ◆ participating in informed debate and discussion with peers where they can demonstrate skills in constructing and sustaining lines of argument to provide challenge and enjoyment, breadth, and depth to learning
- ◆ drawing conclusions from complex information
- ◆ using sophisticated written and/or oral communication and presentation skills to present information
- ◆ using appropriate technological resources (eg web-based resources)
- ◆ using appropriate media resources (eg video clips)

- ◆ demonstrating development, improvement and refinement of techniques and practices in practical/performance-based subjects
- ◆ using real-life contexts and experiences familiar and relevant to young people to hone and exemplify skills, knowledge and understanding meaningfully
- ◆ participating in field trips and visits

Teachers and lecturers should support learners by having regular discussions with them and giving regular feedback. Some learning and teaching activities may be carried out on a group basis and, where this applies, learners could also receive feedback from their peers.

Teachers and lecturers should, where possible, provide opportunities to personalise learning for learners, and to enable them to have choices in approaches to learning and teaching. The flexibility in Advanced Higher Courses and the independence with which learners carry out the work lend themselves to this. Teachers and lecturers should also create opportunities for, and use, inclusive approaches to learning and teaching. This can be achieved by encouraging the use of a variety of learning and teaching strategies which suit the needs of all learners. Innovative and creative ways of using technology can also be valuable in creating inclusive learning and teaching approaches.

### **Approaches to creating and producing texts**

Learners should:

- ◆ experience many different genres including fiction and non-fiction and should be encouraged to read with discernment
- ◆ develop independent, analytical evaluation skills by discussing the connotations of the words that convey a relationship with the reader/listener
- ◆ meet professional writers where possible

### **Approaches to literature**

Learners should:

- ◆ encounter a wide variety of literature and be encouraged to respond individually
- ◆ explore areas of personal interest and share these with their peers and assessor
- ◆ learn about a range of genre features through both critical and imaginative exercises that allow them to analyse, evaluate and demonstrate a grasp of relevant literary forms
- ◆ work independently and collaboratively to create learning materials which involve reading and critical analysis of a literary text and enable further extended critical response
- ◆ take part in tutorial-type activities to prepare them for further education or employment

Centres are free to sequence the teaching of the Outcomes, Units and/or Course in any order they wish.

Due to the nature of the subject, a combined approach is recommended. This means that parts of different Units may be delivered concurrently but some will not. This will enable learners to acquire skills, knowledge and understanding in a more meaningful way. Such an approach can help learners transfer newly developed skills to new contexts.

## **Developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work**

The following skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work should be developed in this Course.

### **Literacy**

#### **1.1 Reading**

This may be usefully developed by activities that:

- ◆ involve fiction and information texts
- ◆ use discussion to help learners engage with texts and identify the ideas within texts

Activities to support them in identifying the ideas within texts include:

- ◆ asking and answering questions
- ◆ comparing and contrasting
- ◆ sorting and sequencing
- ◆ summarising clarifying and predicting
- ◆ text completion

Learners will also benefit from activities focusing on the audience and purpose of texts

#### **1.2 Writing**

Learners may be encouraged to plan their writing by:

- ◆ creating mind maps
- ◆ peer discussion where they consider the genre, audience and purpose for their writing

Learners' writing will benefit from:

- ◆ discussing structure and layout
- ◆ building up sentences, by linking
- ◆ planning paragraphs
- ◆ use of topic and concluding sentences
- ◆ developing vocabulary

- ◆ developing technical skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling
- ◆ using plans for writing

### 1.3 Listening and talking

Wherever appropriate, learners should be encouraged to use language skills in real language situations. In such situations, particularly drawn from life and work, activities may involve:

- ◆ asking and answering questions
- ◆ listening for and making comparisons/contrasts
- ◆ summarising, clarifying and predicting

Teachers and lecturers should ensure that learners have opportunities to develop these skills as an integral part of their learning experience.

It is important that learners are aware of the skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work that they are developing in the Course and the activities they are involved in that provide realistic opportunities to practise and/or improve them.

At Advanced Higher level it is expected that learners will be using a range of higher-order thinking skills. They will also develop skills in independent and autonomous learning.

# Approaches to assessment

Assessment in Advanced Higher Courses will generally reflect the investigative nature of Courses at this level, together with high-level problem-solving and critical thinking skills and skills of analysis and synthesis.

This emphasis on higher-order skills, together with the more independent learning approaches that learners will use, distinguishes the added value at Advanced Higher level from the added value at other levels.

There are different approaches to assessment, and teachers and lecturers should use their professional judgement, subject knowledge and experience, as well as understanding of their learners and their varying needs, to determine the most appropriate ones and, where necessary, to consider workable alternatives.

Assessments must be fit for purpose and should allow for consistent judgements to be made by all teachers and lecturers. They should also be conducted in a supervised manner to ensure that the evidence provided is valid and reliable.

## Unit assessment

Assessments must ensure that the evidence generated demonstrates, at the least, the minimum level of competence for each Unit. Teachers and lecturers preparing assessment methods should be clear about what that evidence will look like.

Sources of evidence likely to be suitable for Advanced Higher Units could include:

- ◆ meaningful contribution to group work and/or discussions (making use of log books, blogs, question and answer sessions to confirm individual learners have met the required standards)
- ◆ presentation of information to other groups and/or recorded oral evidence
- ◆ practical demonstration with commentary/explanation/narrative
- ◆ answers to multiple choice questions
- ◆ short written responses
- ◆ extended response essay-type questions

Evidence should include the use of appropriate subject-specific terminology as well as the use of real-life examples where appropriate.

Flexibility in the method of assessment provides opportunities for learners to demonstrate attainment in a variety of ways and so reduce barriers to attainment.

The structure of an assessment used by a centre can take a variety of forms, for example:

- ◆ individual pieces of work could be collected in a folio as evidence for Outcomes and Assessment Standards
- ◆ assessment of each complete Outcome
- ◆ assessment that combines the Outcomes of one or more Units
- ◆ assessment that requires more than the minimum competence, which would allow learners to prepare for the Course assessment

Teachers and lecturers should note that learners' day-to-day work may produce evidence which satisfies assessment requirements of a Unit, or Units, either in full or partially. Such naturally occurring evidence may be used as a contribution towards Unit assessment. However, such naturally occurring evidence must still be recorded and evidence such as written reports, recording forms, PowerPoint slides, drawings/graphs, video footage or observational checklists provided.

## Combining assessment across Units

Units will be assessed on a pass/fail basis. All Units are internally assessed against the requirements shown in the *Unit Specification*. Each Unit can be assessed on an individual Outcome-by-Outcome basis or via the use of combined assessment for some or all Outcomes.

A combined approach to assessment will enrich the assessment process for the learner, avoid duplication of tasks and allow more emphasis on learning and teaching. Evidence could be drawn from a range of activities for a combined assessment. Care must be taken to ensure that combined assessments provide appropriate evidence for all the Outcomes that they claim to assess.

Combining assessment will also give centres more time to manage the assessment process more efficiently. When combining assessments across Units, teachers/lecturers should use e-assessment wherever possible. Learners can easily update portfolios, electronic or written diaries and recording sheets.

For some Advanced Higher Courses, it may be that a strand of work which contributes to a Course assessment method is started when a Unit is being delivered and is completed in the Course assessment. In these cases, it is important that the evidence for the Unit assessment is clearly distinguishable from that required for the Course assessment.

## Preparation for Course assessment

Each Course has additional time which may be used at the discretion of the teacher or lecturer to enable learners to prepare for Course assessment. This time may be used near the start of the Course and at various points throughout the Course for consolidation and support. It may also be used for preparation for

Unit assessment, and, towards the end of the Course, for further integration, revision and preparation and/or gathering evidence for Course assessment.

Information given in the *Course Specification* and the *Course Assessment Specification* about the assessment of added value is mandatory.

The Advanced Higher Gàidhlig Course assessment will consist of two Components.

### **Component 1 — question paper**

This question paper has three Sections.

**Section one**, titled ‘Writing’ will have 40 marks.

Marks will be awarded for applying writing skills and knowledge of the language in producing one critical essay on a topic drawn from study of the following aspects of Gaelic heritage and contemporary culture: drama, prose, poetry, film and TV drama, or language.

**Section two**, titled ‘Practical Criticism’, will have 30 marks.

Marks will be awarded for applying reading skills in understanding, analysis and evaluation to one/two unseen texts. Assessment will involve answering questions to show these reading skills and completing a task that involves inference making and summarising. The texts will be either fiction or non-fiction.

**Section three**, titled ‘Literature’, will have 30 marks.

Marks will be awarded for applying reading and writing skills in understanding, analysis and evaluation to a text studied as part of the Coursework. Assessment will involve writing an essay on one aspect of the text studied.

### **Component 2 — performance: talking**

The purpose of this project is to assess learners’ application of their talking and listening skills in their chosen topic for the *Specialist Study of Language and/or Culture* Unit. This component will have 50 marks.

For this Advanced Higher Course, the assessment methods for Course assessment are **as above**. Learners should be given opportunities to practise these methods and prepare for them.

Examples of activities to include within this preparation time include:

- ◆ Preparing for the components of Course assessment, for example:
  - preparing for non-question paper components: selecting topics, gathering and researching information, evaluating and analysing findings, developing and justifying conclusions, presenting the information (as appropriate)
  - practising and refining practical skills
  - practising and refining performance skills

— practising question paper techniques, revising for the question paper

In relation to preparing for assessment, teachers and lecturers should explain requirements to learners and the amount and nature of the support they can expect. However, at Advanced Higher level it is expected that learners will work with more independence and less supervision and support.

## Authenticity

In terms of authenticity, there are a number of techniques and strategies to ensure that learners present work that is their own. Teachers and lecturers should put in place mechanisms to authenticate learners' evidence.

In Advanced Higher Courses, because learners will take greater responsibility for their own learning and work more independently, teachers and lecturers need to have measures in place to ensure that work produced is the learner's own work.

For example:

- ◆ regular checkpoint/progress meetings with learners
- ◆ short spot-check personal interviews
- ◆ checklists which record activity/progress
- ◆ learners' notes for research/preparation

Group work approaches are acceptable as part of the preparation for assessment and also for formal assessment. However, there must be clear evidence for each learner to show that they have met the Evidence Requirements.

For more information, please refer to SQA's [Guide to Assessment](#).

## Added value

Advanced Higher Courses include assessment of added value which is assessed in the Course assessment.

Information given in the *Course Specification* and the *Course Assessment Specification* about the assessment of added value is mandatory.

In Advanced Higher Courses, added value involves the assessment of higher-order skills such as high-level and more sophisticated investigation and research skills, critical thinking skills and skills of analysis and synthesis. Learners may be required to analyse and reflect on their assessment activity by commenting on it and/or drawing conclusions with commentary/justification. These skills contribute to the uniqueness of Advanced Higher Courses and to the overall higher level of performance expected at this level.

In this Course, added value will be assessed by means of **a question paper and a performance**.

This Advanced Higher Course has a question paper as one of the assessment methods. This is used to assess whether the learner can retain and consolidate the knowledge and skills gained in individual Units. It assesses knowledge and understanding and the various different applications of knowledge such as reasoning, analysing, evaluating and solving problems. The learner will provide evidence of reading and writing skills and their ability to understand and use Gaelic.

This Advanced Higher Course also has a performance as one of the assessment methods. As well as assessing application and challenge, the performance allows learners to demonstrate talking skills that show they can apply the theory which underpins the performance. In this way learners can demonstrate not only that they have the practical performance skills but also that they know how and when to use them, how to vary or adapt them to meet different and/or more difficult or unusual circumstances and how to apply them to more complex processes.

# Equality and inclusion

It is recognised that centres have their own duties under equality and other legislation and policy initiatives. The guidance given in these *Course/Unit Support Notes* is designed to sit alongside these duties but is specific to the delivery and assessment of the Course.

It is important that centres are aware of and understand SQA's assessment arrangements for disabled learners, and those with additional support needs, when making requests for adjustments to published assessment arrangements. Centres will find more guidance on this in the series of publications on Assessment Arrangements on SQA's website: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html).

The greater flexibility and choice in Advanced Higher Courses provide opportunities to meet a range of learners' needs and may remove the need for learners to have assessment arrangements. However, where a disabled learner needs a reasonable adjustment/assessment arrangements to be made, you should refer to the guidance given in the above link.

# Appendix 1: Reference documents

The following reference documents will provide useful information and background.

- ◆ Assessment Arrangements (for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs) — various publications are available on SQA's website at: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa//14977.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa//14977.html).
- ◆ Building the Curriculum 4: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work
- ◆ Building the Curriculum 5: A Framework for Assessment
- ◆ [Course Specifications](#)
- ◆ [Design Principles for National Courses](#)
- ◆ [Guide to Assessment](#)
- ◆ [Overview of Qualification Reports](#)
- ◆ Principles and practice papers for curriculum areas
- ◆ [SCQF Handbook: User Guide](#) and [SCQF level descriptors](#)
- ◆ [SQA Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work](#)
- ◆ [Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work: Using the Curriculum Tool](#)
- ◆ [Coursework Authenticity: A Guide for Teachers and Lecturers](#)

## Administrative information

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### History of changes to Advanced Higher draft Course/Unit Support Notes

| Course details | Version | Description of change | Authorised by | Date |
|----------------|---------|-----------------------|---------------|------|
|                |         |                       |               |      |
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