



# Common questions about National 3, National 4 and National 5 Drama

## Course assessment

### National 5 visiting assessment process

#### **What is the new assessment model for the National 5 Drama Performance exam?**

This is a visiting assessment model like Higher and Advanced Higher Drama, but the main difference for National 5 is that the Visiting Assessor (VA) will assess a sample of 12 candidates (or in centres where there are less than 12 candidates, the VA will assess all candidates). This is an assessment model where SQA's VA and the centre assessor\* mark live performances simultaneously and collaboratively.

\* The Drama teacher who acts as the centre assessor (it is up to centres to decide on which member of staff carries out this role).

#### **How much time is allocated to this assessment visit and when will it take place?**

The National 5 Drama visiting assessment period is from 17 February 2014 to 2 May 2014 and one day is allocated to each centre. This is a very wide window and you will be able to negotiate your one-day visit with your VA, at a time which best suits you and your candidates.

#### **Is this is same as verification?**

No, this assessment model is quite different from verification. Verification is about Units and confirming the internal assessment decisions made by centres: in common with all subjects, verification for National 5 Drama now takes place in three rounds during the year. Visiting assessment is for the external components of a Course; in the case of National 5 Drama, the Performance marks are assigned to this and this counts towards the overall mark and grade for a Course.

#### **Who selects the sample of 12 candidates?**

The centre selects the sample. The VA is looking for a range of candidates and a possible range of production roles. Being in control of the sample selection means that you can plan in a practical way and it means that you have up until the day of the visiting assessment to finalise the sample and substitute other candidates in the run-up to the day.

#### **How does the process work?**

An SQA-appointed Visiting Assessor (VA) will be allocated to your school for one day (regardless of how many candidates you have). The process starts with the initial phone

conversation with your VA to set up the assessment date. You can discuss the potential sample with the VA then and planning can start. On the day, the VA and the centre assessor will collaboratively mark the sample of 12 and the VA will guide the centre staff to the national standard. The agreed marks will stand for the sample of 12, and these marks are final.

Please note that the **Preparation for Performance** is also part of the assessment day. Candidates in the sample will complete their Preparation for Performance in advance of the VA visit and then the VA and the centre assessor will mark these collaboratively and marks will be agreed.

### **What happens to the candidates who are not in the sample?**

As soon as possible after the VA visit, the centre assessor will assess all the other candidates in the group according to the national standards endorsed by the VA and in line with the assessment decisions made and the marks allocated to the sample of 12. The timing of this is up to each centre, but best practice would be to do this as soon as possible after the VA visit, while it is fresh in your mind, and so that no candidate is either advantaged or disadvantaged by time passing. For example, you could choose to assess the rest of the group the following day or within the week. However, all assessments for all candidates must take place within two weeks of the VA visit (and no later than two weeks after the visit).

### **What if a candidate is absent during that two-week period?**

If the candidate has continued to be absent because of, for example, a medical condition and your two-week period for assessment has passed, you would enter into the new Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service. This new service will run before results are published and you would submit evidence for that candidate. For full details, see the document *Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Guidance for Centres* (published October 2013), publication code: FA6673.

### **When will there be more information about this?**

In preparation for annual visiting assessment, SQA publishes the document *Instructions to Centres* which contains comprehensive instructions and guidance about documentation, processes and timescales. You will receive this in early 2014.

### **In summary, what are the advantages of this new way of working in external assessment for National 5 Drama?**

- ◆ The model of assessing a sample of 12 candidates has operated successfully in Dance and in some other subjects for years. Teachers find this supportive and developmental; national standards are shared and understood. It is a collaborative marking model where SQA works with and supports teachers.
- ◆ This type of visiting assessment means that for National 5 Drama every centre is visited each year: this is different from verification which samples centres from year to year.
- ◆ The timing of the assessment visit can be negotiated to suit each centre (February-May).
- ◆ The centre selects the candidates for the sample and this will give additional flexibility in terms of what is most practicable.

## What should be submitted for National 5 Drama Coursework and when is the uplift date?

The following is taken from the *Questions Answered* leaflet sent to centres from SQA about National 5:

**25 March** — Uplift for externally assessed Coursework for all National 5 subjects that also have a timetabled exam (with the exception of Art and Design which will be uplifted on 30 April)

Please note that Drama is not required to submit anything on this date. The Coursework in Drama is the visiting assessment. The new forms for Preparation for Performance for National 5 are contained within the candidate mark sheets which are distributed to centres prior to the external visiting assessment. Centres retain these to be used on the visiting assessment day.

## National 5 Acting pieces: is there a resource or guide to choosing texts for National 5 students? Are there recommended texts or extracts?

There are no prescribed texts for National 5. Please see the attached update letter from SQA's Drama website:

[http://www.sqa.org.uk/files\\_ccc/NQDramaUpdateLetterOct07.pdf](http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/NQDramaUpdateLetterOct07.pdf)

This update letter provides information regarding Intermediate 2. Appendix 1 (page 8 onwards) includes a list of Intermediate 2 texts. This can be used as a starting point and guide to selecting texts appropriate to National 5 level.

## What is meant by the terms 'Performance Concept' and 'Production Concept'?

Please see below for definitions that may help for acting/performance concepts and technical/production concepts; these are wide and really open to allow for personalisation and choice.

In terms of acting, a **performance concept** may include:

- social and cultural influences on ideas from the stimulus/text
- influence of form, structure, genre on acting style
- characterisation
- character relationships
- actor/audience relationship
- staging
- planned use of voice
- planned use of movement

In summary, it is the overall interpretation of the character/text/stimulus that the candidate wants to achieve in performance.

In terms of technical, a **production concept** may include:

- social and cultural influences on ideas from the stimulus/text
- influence of form, structure, genre on design elements
- staging
- design concepts
- theatrical effects

In summary, it is the overall interpretation of the technical skill in relation to the characters/text/stimulus/other technical areas to achieve a certain look or feel for the performance.

## **Can the National 4 Added Value Unit Performance be a scripted play?**

The performance content will be agreed between the candidate and the teacher/lecturer. It may be **devised or scripted**.

Please see the following link to an update letter which was published in May 2013. This should help clarify concerns regarding bi-level National 4 and National 5.

[http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files\\_ccc/Drama\\_N4\\_Update\\_May\\_2013.pdf](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/Drama_N4_Update_May_2013.pdf)

The link to all update letters can be found on the NQ Drama page of SQA's website, on the bottom right-hand side under Related Information:

<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/2546.html>

## **National 5 Drama: we have entered our pupils for the *Drama Skills (H231)* and the *Production Skills (H232)* Units. If they are doing the whole Course what else do we need to enter them for?**

For National 5, centres must enter candidates as follows:

- ◆ the two component Units of the Course: (H231 75 Drama Skills Unit + H232 75 Drama Production Skills Unit)
- ◆ the external exam: (X721 75 Drama — entry for the Question Paper Exam and the external Performance Exam)

Unit H233 74 *Drama Performance* is the Added Value Unit at National 4 and belongs to the Course at that level. For National 5, you would not enter for H233 74 as a matter of course.

## **If half way through the year it looks like a National 5 candidate is not going to make it at that level, what are the options?**

You would track and monitor pupil progress during the National 5 Course. If a candidate is achieving the Units at National 5 level, but if it looks like the candidate is not going to make it in the National 5 external exam, you could then change the entry and enter for the National 4 Added Value Unit (rather than the National 5 external exam). The candidate would then achieve the *Drama Skills* Unit and *Drama Production Skills* Unit at National 5 + the Added Value Unit at National 4 and this results in the Course award at National 4.

## **What are the implications for a candidate moving from National 4 to National 5?**

There is flexibility. Here is an example:

A candidate has been working on the National 4 Units and at a point in the session looks able to undertake National 5 level. You would then change the entry level from National 4 to National 5 for: the Units (*Drama Skills* and *Drama Production Skills*); and the external exam (Question Paper and Performance).

## **Is there guidance for the length of acting pieces at National 4 and National 5 where candidates are working in pairs?**

*National 5:* Minimum time of 15 minutes and maximum time of 45 minutes, with minimum of two actors and maximum of ten. The maximum time would be enough to assess up to ten actors.

*National 4:* Minimum time of ten minutes and minimum of two actors, but the Added Value Unit states 'Small Scale' and National 5 is maximum 45 minutes so, as a guide at National 4, the maximum time should be approximately 30 minutes.

## **What are the minimum number of lanterns that a centre will need for lighting candidates at both National 4 and National 5?**

*National 4 Added Value Unit:* The lighting rig available for this area of specialism must consist of a minimum of six lanterns. A minimum of four lighting states and six lighting cues should be used in the lighting plot.

*National 5 Coursework:* The lighting rig available for use in this production role must consist of a minimum of eight lanterns. A minimum of seven lighting cues and five states should be designed and used in the lighting plot.

## **Is there a glossary of Drama terms available?**

The Drama lexicon can be found in Appendix 2 (pages 43 + 44) of the National 5 Drama Course and *Unit Support Notes* on SQA's website. Please see the following link:

[http://www.sqa.org.uk/files\\_ccc/CfE\\_CourseUnitSupportNotes\\_N5\\_ExpressiveArts\\_Drama.pdf](http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_CourseUnitSupportNotes_N5_ExpressiveArts_Drama.pdf)

## **How may we use the National 5 Drama Specimen Question Paper?**

The Specimen Question Paper may be used for formative assessment events in centres.

However, please remember that if you are entering into exceptional circumstances consideration for any candidate, SQA will consider a wide range of candidate evidence to support this request. Please see page 10 of the document *Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Guidance for Centres*, which states 'a past paper in its entirety (either SQA or commercial) will not be accepted as support for an exceptional circumstances consideration.

These papers and associated marking instructions are in the public domain and can be accessed by candidates'.

This indicates that, for exceptional circumstances consideration, evidence should be drawn from a number of different sources. Use the Specimen Question Paper as a template in terms of duration, format, types of questions and course coverage. Additional sources of questions could be, for example, past Standard Grade Credit-type questions or Intermediate 2-type questions or centre-devised questions of a similar standard.

## Units

### **Drama Unit assessment support packs (UASPs)**

**In these documents for National 4 and National 5 there is a set of stimuli. Are these stimuli suggestions or do they need to be used explicitly?**

The second round of Drama UASPs provides specific stimuli. The first round of UASPs is 'open' for you to choose your own stimuli. You can use the UASPs (1) to work with your own stimuli.

The 'judging evidence' tables for both packs are very similar and it may be useful to refer to UASP (2) to see how the specific stimuli is used for evidence. But if you are choosing your own stimuli you should use UASP (1).

The stimulus in the UASPs is an exemplar and it is acceptable for you to change the context. If, however, you plan to make considerable changes to the assessment that involves altering the overall Assessment Standard, you would need to enter into the prior verification process. As long as you do not change the nature or the level of demand of the task, there is no need for prior verification.

Your SQA Co-ordinator in your centre will have access to all support materials on SQA's secure site.

If you wish to submit a prior verification request, please see the following link for more details:

[http://www.sqa.org.uk/files\\_ccc/Prior%20Verification%20Centre%20Guidance%20FINAL.pdf](http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/Prior%20Verification%20Centre%20Guidance%20FINAL.pdf)

**At the end of each Unit assessment, candidates have to complete an evaluation. Does this evaluation have to be completed in controlled conditions?**

The evaluation does not have to be completed in controlled conditions, ie exam-type conditions. The gathering of this evidence is very flexible.

General Curriculum for Excellence questions and answers can be found on the [frequently asked questions section](#) of SQA's website.