



National 4
Course
Specification



National 4 English Course Specification (C724 74)

Valid from session 2024–25

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

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Course outline

Course title: National 4 English

SCQF: level 4 (24 SCQF credit points)

Course code: C724 74

Mandatory units

H23H 74 English: Analysis and Evaluation (National 4) 6 SCQF credit points

or

H6MF 74 English: Analysis and Evaluation (National 4) 6 SCQF credit points
with a Scottish Context

and either:

H23T 74 English: Creation and Production (National 4) 6 SCQF credit points

or

H6NS 74 English: Creation and Production (National 4) 6 SCQF credit points
with a Scottish Context

and

H23W 74 Literacy (National 4) 6 SCQF credit points

and

Added Value Unit

H23Y 74 English: Assignment (National 4) 6 SCQF credit points

This course includes six SCQF credit points for the assessment of added value in the added value unit. Further information on this unit is provided in the 'Assessment' section.

Scottish Studies Award contributing units: this course specification should be read in conjunction with the relevant Scottish Studies unit specification on the [Scottish Studies Award web page](#).

Recommended entry

Entry to this course is at the discretion of the centre. However, learners would normally be expected to have attained the skills and knowledge required by the following or equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

- ◆ National 3 English course or relevant component units

In terms of prior learning and experience, relevant experiences and outcomes may also provide an appropriate basis for doing this course. Further information on relevant experiences and outcomes is given in the course support notes.

Core Skills

Achievement of this course gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill Communication at SCQF level 4

Progression

This course or its units may provide progression to:

- ◆ other qualifications in English or related areas
- ◆ further study, employment or training

Equality and inclusion

This course specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence. For further information, please refer to the course support notes.

Rationale

National Courses reflect Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles. They offer flexibility, provide more time for learning, more focus on skills and applying learning, and scope for personalisation and choice.

In this course, and its component units, there is an emphasis on skills development and the application of those skills. Assessment approaches will be proportionate, fit for purpose and promote best practice, enabling learners to achieve the highest standards they can.

This course provides learners with opportunities to continue to acquire and develop the attributes and capabilities of the four capacities, as well as skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

All courses provide opportunities for learners to develop breadth, challenge and application, but the focus and balance of the assessment will be appropriate for the subject area.

Relationship between the course and Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles

In the National 4 English course, there is emphasis on the key language skills associated with literacy and communication. Language and literacy skills are of personal, social and economic importance. Learners' ability to use language lies at the centre of the development and expression of their emotions, thinking, learning and sense of personal identity. It is generally accepted that competence in language and literacy helps to unlock learning across all subjects.

The course provides learners with the opportunity to develop skills in reading, writing, talking and listening, which are essential for learning, life and work. The course helps learners to develop their ability to communicate their thoughts and feelings and respond to those of other people. This should allow learners to understand, analyse, evaluate and use straightforward language for a range of purposes in relevant contexts.

The course allows learners to encounter and engage with a wide range of texts across language, literature and media, as appropriate. Building on the four capacities, the course enables learners to communicate, to respond critically to straightforward texts, and to be creative. Teachers and lecturers should encourage learners to think about, and to build an understanding of their own experiences, environments and culture, and the experiences, environments, and cultures of others. Language and literature are key aspects of our culture, and the cultures of others, and through these learners can develop an awareness, and a celebration of cultural diversity.

Purpose and aims of the course

The main purpose of the course is to provide learners with opportunities to develop the skills of reading, writing, talking and listening in order to understand and use language that is straightforward in content.

The course offers learners opportunities to develop and extend a wide range of skills. In particular, the course aims to enable learners to develop the ability to:

- ◆ read, write, talk and listen as appropriate to purpose, audience and context
- ◆ understand, analyse and evaluate texts in the contexts of language, literature and media
- ◆ create and produce texts, as appropriate to purpose, audience and context, through the application of their knowledge and understanding of language

As learners develop their literacy skills, they will be able to process information more readily, apply knowledge of language in relevant contexts, and gain confidence to use straightforward language with clarity and purpose. Learners can use these skills in the added value unit, where they write a critical essay or deliver an oral presentation.

Information about typical learners who might do the course

This course is suitable for learners who wish to develop their language and communication skills through the exploration and creation of language, literature and media texts.

It is designed for learners who are at the stage in their learning when they are ready to develop language and literacy skills at SCQF level 4. They might have attained curriculum level 3 or gained an award in National 3 English.

The course provides a pathway for learners who aim to go on to study National 5 English, and provides preparation for learning in other subjects, further study, employment, and/or training.

The course is designed to be accessible and inclusive.

Course structure and conditions of award

Course structure

This course is made up of four mandatory units. The course provides learners with the opportunity to develop their reading, writing, talking and listening skills in order to understand and use straightforward language. The four units include the four language skills of reading, writing, talking and listening.

Units are statements of standards for assessment and not programmes of learning and teaching. They can be delivered in a number of ways.

English: Analysis and Evaluation (National 4)

The purpose of this unit is to provide learners with the opportunity to develop listening and reading skills in at least one of the contexts of language, literature and media. Learners develop the skills needed to understand, analyse and evaluate straightforward texts.

English: Creation and Production (National 4)

The purpose of this unit is to provide learners with the opportunity to develop talking and writing skills in a range of contexts. Learners develop the skills needed to create and produce straightforward texts in both written and oral forms.

Literacy (National 4)

The purpose of this unit is to develop the learners' reading, writing, talking and listening skills in a variety of forms relevant for learning, life and work. Learners develop the ability to understand straightforward ideas and information presented orally and in writing, and the ability to communicate ideas and information orally and in writing with technical accuracy.

English Assignment (National 4) Added Value Unit

The purpose of this added value unit is to provide learners with opportunities to apply their language skills to investigate a selected text (or texts) in the contexts of language, literature or media, or across more than one of these contexts. The assignment allows learners to demonstrate challenge and application through the completion of a critical essay or oral presentation.

Conditions of award

To achieve the National 4 English course, learners must pass all of the required units, including the added value unit. The required units are shown in the course outline section.

National 4 courses are not graded.

Skills, knowledge and understanding

The following provides a broad overview of the skills, knowledge and understanding developed in the course:

- ◆ the development of key communication and literacy skills in reading, writing, talking and listening, as appropriate to purpose and audience
- ◆ understanding, analysing and evaluating straightforward texts in the contexts of language, literature and/or media
- ◆ creating and producing straightforward texts, as appropriate to purpose and audience in a range of contexts
- ◆ knowledge and understanding of language

For the purposes of the course, the skills of reading, writing, talking and listening can be further defined as:

Reading

- ◆ engage with, consider, and select the main ideas of a straightforward text
- ◆ identify and select straightforward information from a text
- ◆ analyse and evaluate a writer's choice and use of language
- ◆ evaluate the overall effects and impact of a text

Writing

- ◆ communicate straightforward ideas
- ◆ communicate straightforward information
- ◆ explore, describe and communicate personal experience
- ◆ write creatively and imaginatively in a literary form (for example short story, poetry or drama script)

Talking

- ◆ communicate straightforward ideas and/or personal experience
- ◆ communicate straightforward information
- ◆ use aspects of non-verbal communication

Listening

- ◆ engage with, consider and select the main ideas of a straightforward spoken text
- ◆ identify and select straightforward information from a spoken text
- ◆ analyse and evaluate spoken language
- ◆ evaluate the overall effects and impact of a spoken text

Skills, knowledge and understanding to be included in the course will be appropriate to the SCQF level of the course. The SCQF level descriptors give further information on characteristics and expected performance at each SCQF level (www.sqa.org.uk/scqf).

Assessment

Further information about assessment for the course is included in the course support notes and the added value unit specification.

Unit assessment

All units are internally assessed against the requirements shown in the unit specification.

They can be assessed on an individual unit basis or by using other approaches that combine the assessment for more than one unit.

Learners will be assessed on a pass or fail basis within centres. SQA will provide external quality assurance, including external verification, to ensure assessment judgements are consistent and meet national standards.

The assessment of the units in this course is:

English: Analysis and Evaluation (National 4)

Through the study of straightforward texts in language, literature or media, learners should use their listening and reading skills to provide evidence of understanding, analysis and evaluation.

English: Creation and Production (National 4)

Learners have to provide evidence of their talking and writing skills to create and produce straightforward texts in a range of contexts, as appropriate to purpose and audience. Learners must demonstrate technical accuracy in written texts.

Literacy (National 4)

Learners have to provide evidence of their reading, writing, talking and listening skills in ways relevant for learning, life and work. Learners must demonstrate their ability to:

- ◆ read, listen to and understand straightforward texts
- ◆ communicate through talking and in writing
- ◆ write texts that are technically accurate

Added Value unit

Courses from National 4 to Advanced Higher include assessment of [added value](#). At National 4, added value is assessed in an added value unit. The added value unit addresses the key purposes and aims of the course as defined in the 'Rationale' section. It does this by addressing one or more of breadth, challenge or application.

In the National 4 English course, the added value unit will focus on:

- ◆ challenge
- ◆ application

Learners must provide evidence of their ability to apply their language skills to investigate a selected text(s). Learners have to demonstrate their ability to understand, analyse and evaluate a text(s) using their reading skills, and present their findings in the form of a critical essay or oral presentation. They will also contribute to a discussion on a topic related to the text(s).

Development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

It is expected that learners will develop broad, generic skills through this course. The skills that learners will be expected to improve on and develop through the course are based on SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work* and drawn from the main skills areas listed below. These must be built into the course where there are appropriate opportunities.

1 Literacy

- 1.1 Reading
- 1.2 Writing
- 1.3 Listening and talking

5 Thinking skills

- 5.3 Applying
- 5.4 Analysing and evaluating

Amplification of these is given in SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*. The level of these skills will be appropriate to the level of the course. Further information on building in skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work for the course is given in the course support notes.

Administrative information

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History of changes

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
1.1	Scottish Studies Award Unit contributing information added. No other changes made to document content.	Qualifications Manager	September 2014
2.0	Updated to reflect new outcome and assessment standards for the added value unit.	Qualifications Manager	May 2024

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