

## Higher National Unit Specification

### General information for centres

**Unit title:** Creating Drama Scripts

**Unit code:** DG3W 34

**Unit purpose:** This unit is designed to enable candidates to understand and practise the creating of drama scripts. It covers the basic skills of writing on their own, and leads to the candidate writing their own 15 minute play. The unit is intended for aspiring playwrights, for actors or indeed for any candidate who wishes to understand the part the playwright plays in the process of theatre. Writing drama scripts can help a student to appreciate the structure of plays and the purpose and function of character, as well as developing their analytical skills. This will all support them in the development of their acting skills. The unit does not assess the standard of the writing.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

1. Explore the process of writing plays.
2. Write a 15 minute play.
3. Evaluate the processes of writing a play.

**Credit value:** 1 HN Credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7\*)

*\*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.*

**Recommended prior knowledge and skills:** Access will be at the discretion of the centre and the following recommendations are for guidance only.

Where a candidate has achieved the course entry criteria for HNC/D Acting and Performance, they will have shown sufficient knowledge and skills for access to this unit. For this unit, candidates may find it beneficial to have had experience of creative writing, perhaps through Creative Writing 1 or 2 (EX95 10; D0YF 12).

**Core skills:** There may be opportunities to gather evidence towards core skills in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of core skills or core skills components.

**Context for delivery:** This unit is included in the optional framework of HNC/D Acting and Performance. If this Unit is delivered as part of a group award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the group award to which it contributes.

## **General information for centres (cont)**

**Assessment:** This unit may be assessed holistically by observation checklists. Evidence will be generated through performance in workshops, the candidate's own script and a written evaluation. The script is not expected to be performed, although candidates may benefit from a final rehearsed reading.

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards**

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The sections of the unit stating the Outcomes, knowledge and/or skills, and evidence requirements are mandatory.

Please refer to *Knowledge and/or skills for the Unit* and *Evidence requirements for the Unit* after the Outcomes.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the knowledge and/or skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

### **Outcome 1**

Explore the process of writing plays.

### **Outcome 2**

Write a 15-minute play.

### **Outcome 3**

Evaluate the processes of writing a play.

### **Knowledge and/or skills for the Unit**

- ◆ importance of action
- ◆ dynamics of theatre space
- ◆ creation of a character
- ◆ the start of a play
- ◆ functions of a monologue
- ◆ dialogue
- ◆ target audience
- ◆ editing
- ◆ plotting and structure
- ◆ writing a play
- ◆ editing and redrafting
- ◆ the use of different sources for writing
- ◆ generating material for writing
- ◆ defining the aim of the play
- ◆ evaluating the process of writing, rehearsal and performance

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)**

**Unit title:** Creating Drama Scripts

### **Evidence Requirements for the Unit**

Candidates will initially develop knowledge and/or skills relating to the process of writing plays within tutor-led workshops. The workshops will allow the candidates to investigate and explore the knowledge and skills, and develop an understanding of the issues around writing a play. They will participate in short writing exercises within and/or outside the classroom. All candidates must actively participate in the workshops and interact with the tutor and each other.

Candidates will then write a first draft of a fifteen minute play, which they will edit and rewrite to produce a second draft. The rewrite should be in response to discussions with the lecturer which reflect the necessary standard, if not already achieved.

The play must demonstrate originality, be of an acceptable performance standard, and must contain evidence of a practical and applied understanding of the knowledge and skills.

It is not expected that the candidate shall have their play performed to an audience.

In evaluating the process of writing a play, candidates will produce an extended response of approximately 800 words. The candidate will explain the processes of writing, and will also define the aim of the play in terms of who their audience was intended to be, how they wanted it to affect that audience and how they saw it being staged. They should also outline their personal aims in terms of the challenges that they set themselves in writing the play.

The candidate shall be expected to create a response that is sufficiently complex and comprehensive in its review of the process from initial stimulus to final presentation.

### **Assessment guidelines for the Unit**

This unit may be assessed holistically through observation checklists. Assessors may find sufficient evidence of competence in some areas of knowledge and skills fairly early in the unit, as candidates develop their understanding of the process of writing plays. This knowledge will solidify as candidates put it into practice in Outcome 2, and in order to achieve the unit, candidates must demonstrate a practical and applied understanding of the required knowledge and skills through their script. Where assessors haven't witnessed evidence of sufficient knowledge and understanding within workshop participation and discussion, they may infer competence through the written performance piece or the evaluation.

The assessor must be confident that the script is of the appropriate standard, and may offer suggestions for improvement if necessary.

The extended response should be completed outside of class time and handed in after a period has been allowed for reflection and peer group discussion.

## **Administrative Information**

<b>Unit code:</b>	DG3W 34
<b>Unit title:</b>	Creating Drama Scripts
<b>Superclass category:</b>	KC
<b>Date of publication:</b>	1 July 2004
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## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes**

### **Unit title:** Creating Drama Scripts

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**

The unit is intended both for aspiring playwrights, and for actors who want to understand the processes involved in writing plays. Its focus is therefore not on the standard of the writing and devising, but on the understanding of the processes involved.

Centres might start by exploring some basic ground rules for writing a piece that is to be performed. The following list is intended as a starting point and not designed as list to be checked off as the workshops are delivered. Centres may therefore wish to take some or all of these into account:

- ◆ Writing in a way that generates action on stage
- ◆ Writing for the dynamics of theatre space
- ◆ Creating at least one clearly defined character
- ◆ Drawing in an audience through the start of a play
- ◆ Writing a monologue with a clearly defined purpose
- ◆ Writing dialogue which demonstrates an understanding of rhythm, style, language and purpose
- ◆ Relating their work to a specific target audience
- ◆ Editing their written exercises

During the scripting process in Outcome 2, centres may wish to consider the following:

- ◆ Plotting and structure
- ◆ Different forms of scripting
- ◆ Methods of plotting and the importance of structure
- ◆ Developing the voice of a character. Where this involves a monologue, this would also involve the function of a monologue
- ◆ Writing dialogue.

## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

**Unit title:** Creating Drama Scripts

### **Guidance on the delivery and assessment**

Outcome 1 should enable candidates to make an informed choice as to the form, structure and aim of their 15-minute performance piece. It gives a clear and unambiguous starting point to the unit. It is easily structured and candidates should quickly feel secure.

The practical exercises in Outcome 1 should be short, in order to build the confidence of candidates. These exercises can be written inside or outside the classroom situation. Some candidates prefer the pressure of achieving the task immediately and some prefer having time to work creatively. There should be a clear order of delivery within the workshops and a sense that candidates are building towards a goal.

Candidates will write or devise their own 15 minute play outside of class time. Their plays can grow from work they have created during Outcome 1.

It is important that candidates understand why they need to be clear about their aims in writing a play, and the need to be able to write a second draft, in professional terms. A professional writer needs to be aware of their target audience, financially appropriate cast size, appropriate themes/issues/stories etc. This should not be confused with the candidates' personal aims in learning to write, which should also be outlined. Similarly, it should be made clear that professionally, a playwright may be asked to write a number of drafts before the play is accepted or produced.

The extended response in Outcome 3 should clearly explain the process the candidate has gone through, and use their practical exercises as examples. Where the candidate has not fully achieved a particular part of the process, they should explain this particular weakness.

In Outcomes 1 and 3, it is especially helpful for candidates to have peer feedback. This can be the most confidence-building part of the unit.

### **Open learning**

The Outcomes in this unit rely on developing skills through interaction with a lecturer and/or fellow candidates, and so the opportunities for distance learning are limited. Centres may, however, find it possible to develop solutions, provided all unit and moderation requirements are met in full. Technological advances may make the possibility of such creative solutions more widespread in the future.

For this unit, part-time provision would be achievable.

For information on normal open learning arrangements, please refer to the SQA guide *Assessment and Quality Assurance and Distance Learning (SQA 2000)*.

## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

**Unit title:** Creating Drama Scripts

### **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 special alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment Arrangements* (SQA, 2001).



## **General information for candidates**

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On completion of the Unit you should be able to:

1. Explore the process of writing plays
2. Write a 15 minute play
3. Evaluate the processes of writing a play.

You will take an active part in writing workshops, write a script and redraft it. You will then be required to evaluate the process. Although you may have a rehearsed reading of your script, you don't have to have the play performed.

Your script must demonstrate originality and be of an acceptable performance standard.

In your evaluation, of approximately 800 words, you will be expected to explain: -

- ◆ The processes of writing
- ◆ The aim of the play in terms of
  - Who the audience was intended to be,
  - How you wanted it to affect that audience
  - How you saw it being staged.

You should also outline:

- ◆ Your personal aims for your play
- ◆ What challenges you gave yourselves in writing the play.

You will complete your evaluation outside of class time.