

Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Shakespeare in Practice

Unit code: DG4A 34

Unit purpose: This unit is designed to enable candidates to recognise the key components of Shakespearean text through analysis and practice. It prepares them by giving them the underpinning knowledge of the use of language together with practical opportunities to demonstrate the speaking of Shakespeare's verse and prose. It allows candidates to determine an actor's relationship with the audience through a variety of means including the exploration of a piece of text. The unit is primarily intended for candidates who expect to enter the professional world of acting and/or theatre after completing a Diploma or Degree at Further or Higher Education level. It would also be relevant to those with appropriate experience of acting and theatre performance who wish to develop their knowledge and understanding of theatre.

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

1. Analyse Shakespeare's heightened use of language.
2. Explore the speaking of Shakespeare's verse and prose.
3. Investigate opportunities for developing relationship with audience when performing.
4. Prepare and present Shakespearean text.

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, it would be beneficial, although not essential, if candidates had some experience of theatre performance or had participated in an NQ Theatre Arts or equivalent performance related programme.

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.

General information for centres (cont)

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.

Assessment: This unit will be assessed by three instruments of assessments which require the candidate to produce evidence of knowledge, understanding and practice of Shakespeare's work. For Outcome 1, a written assessment is required. This assessment should be carried out in controlled conditions and should last one hour. It is recommended that Outcomes 2 and 3 should be assessed through checklists that indicate that the candidate has participated appropriately in practical exercises and demonstrated a thorough understanding of the knowledge and skills through practical application. A practical performance is recommended for Outcome 4 that should be assessed in controlled conditions. The candidate will be required to demonstrate a synthesis of technique through presentation of an extract of text lasting between 2 – 3 minutes.

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.

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

Analyse Shakespeare's heightened use of language.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Use of irony
- ◆ Alliteration
- ◆ Antithesis and double antithesis
- ◆ Assonance
- ◆ Onomatopoeia
- ◆ Caesura
- ◆ Enjambement
- ◆ Simile
- ◆ Metaphor
- ◆ Sarcasm
- ◆ Paradox
- ◆ Ambiguity and double meaning

Evidence requirements

Evidence for the knowledge and/or skills in this Outcome will be provided through application of understanding in a written assessment in controlled conditions. Candidates will answer questions and label text(s) from Shakespeare's plays and/or sonnet(s) as required. Candidates must complete a question paper that requires them to:

- ◆ Identify examples of all the knowledge/skills through selected Shakespearean text or sonnets
- ◆ Select and interpret a piece of text for ambiguity and double meaning

Candidates must achieve a minimum pass mark of 60%

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Shakespeare in Practice

Assessment guidelines

Evidence should be generated through an assessment event undertaken in controlled conditions. Candidates may not bring textbooks, handouts or other written material to the assessment event. The assessment could be either oral or written and should last one hour.

The assessment should contain questions that enable all the areas listed under knowledge and skills to be examined.

Outcome 2

Explore the speaking of Shakespeare's verse and prose.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Understanding and speaking heightened and naturalistic verse
- ◆ Using the rhythm of blank verse
- ◆ Speaking prose
- ◆ Exploring Tragedy and Comedy in Shakespeare

Evidence requirements

Evidence for this Outcome will be generated by the candidate through practical exercises in which they will work with a variety of extracts from Shakespeare's plays and sonnets that will enable them to explore all the areas listed above. Progress will be assessed by an observation checklist which requires the candidate to develop an understanding and demonstrate application of the skills listed. The candidate should be able to fully engage with the speaking of heightened text, naturalistic verse and prose. The candidate must clearly demonstrate an understanding of the meaning and content of the text and be able to demonstrate the vocal requirements in relation to breath control and application of the rhythm required of the text. The candidate should be open to experimentation and be able to identify areas of weakness throughout the process of development.

Assessment guidelines

Assessors should use observation checklists that demand an effective and appropriate practical understanding and application of the knowledge and skills.

Outcome 3

Investigate opportunities for developing relationship with audience when performing.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Complicity with an audience
- ◆ Using the audience

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Shakespeare in Practice

- ◆ Realism in heightened performance for actor and audience
- ◆ Awareness of the dramatic possibilities for soliloquy
- ◆ Timing

Evidence requirements

Evidence for this Outcome will be generated by the candidate through practical exercises. They will work with a variety of extracts from Shakespeare's plays and sonnets that will enable the candidate to explore all the areas listed above. The candidate must demonstrate complicity with an audience and realism in heightened performance. The Candidate should be able to engage an audience in a soliloquy. Effective understanding of timing should be demonstrated in the delivery of text.

Assessment guidelines

Assessors should use observation checklists that demand a basic practical understanding and application of the knowledge and skills.

Outcome 4

Prepare and present Shakespearean text.

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Intellectual and emotional understanding of the text
- ◆ Imaginative and creative interpretation of text and character
- ◆ Demonstration of heightened language
- ◆ Demonstration of character in appropriate action
- ◆ Application of a synthesis of technique
- ◆ Appropriate rehearsal
- ◆ Effective presentation

Evidence requirements

Evidence for the knowledge and/or skills in this Outcome will be provided through the practical experience of working with an appropriate extract from Shakespeare's text that enables the candidate to further explore the knowledge and skills from Outcomes 1, 2 and 3. The candidate will be required to present the extract of text, lasting approximately 2 – 3 minutes, in controlled conditions.

The candidate will demonstrate:

- ◆ synthesis of technique
- ◆ intellectual and creative interpretation of text and character
- ◆ effective and appropriate relationship with an audience.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Shakespeare in Practice

Assessment guidelines

Assessors should use observation checklists that demand effective and appropriate application of the knowledge and skills in this Outcome. A video recording of the performance is required for supporting evidence.

Administrative Information

Unit code:	DG4A 34
Unit title:	Shakespeare in Practice
Superclass category:	LC
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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Shakespeare in Practice

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 36 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This unit would be best served if it is delivered as a series of practical workshops and exercises. Although it is a stand-alone unit there are opportunities here for it to operate in conjunction with a performance unit where the text selected is one of Shakespeare's plays. It would be hugely beneficial if the candidate was undergoing, or had completed, an acting skills unit.

It is highly recommended that a number of individual tutorials are a key component to Outcome 4 so that the candidate can receive feedback and guidance on his/her progress together with recommendations for development. Tutors should ensure that they play an active and collaborative role in the selection of an extract that is appropriate for the individual candidate. It should stretch and challenge him/her but not beyond his/her capabilities. It would be wise if the selected text was within a reasonable age range.

Wherever possible, handouts and theoretical notes relating to all the Outcomes should be discussed, explored and demonstrated in a practical environment. There may be some value in inviting small groups to research particular areas of the knowledge and skills list in Outcome 1 and selecting examples from text that demonstrate the relevant theory.

Although not compulsory, the tutor might like to consider the following additional topics for exploration in exercises and workshops throughout the unit:-

- ◆ Listening and communicating complex arguments within a text
- ◆ Emotional and intellectual demands of the text
- ◆ Examination of passion, pain, emotion and extremes
- ◆ Physical preparation of the voice to meet the demands of heightened language
- ◆ Breathing through difficult speeches
- ◆ Appreciation of a modern audience's needs
- ◆ Understanding of Elizabethan audience
- ◆ Truth and clarity of expression
- ◆ Demonstration of relationship with audience

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Shakespeare in Practice

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

This unit requires the candidates to recognise the key components of Shakespearean text through analysis and practice. It prepares them by giving them the underpinning knowledge of the use of language together with practical opportunities to demonstrate the speaking of Shakespeare's verse and prose. It allows the candidates to determine an actor's relationship with the audience through a variety of means including the exploration of a piece of text.

It is recommended that the tutor provides the candidate with examples of Shakespeare's text and/or sonnets that show all the areas listed under Outcome 1 together with a description of each. When exploring examples of text in the other Outcomes, and particularly in Outcome 4, the candidate should be encouraged to list areas that they recognise. It would be helpful if the tutor had a list of possible appropriate extracts for candidate consideration for Outcome 4. It may be useful to show the candidate extracts from videos or DVDs of Shakespeare's plays in order to examine how heightened language is delivered. The candidate should be given as much time as is reasonable within class to experiment with the use of language and delivery of heightened text. Most of the exploration should happen in a practical setting rather than be developed outwith the class time. There are a large number of books written on Shakespeare's individual plays which include notes on text. It may be helpful to refer candidates to those in order to support them in their understanding of the text relevant to the extract under study in Outcome 4. Indeed, there may be value in watching a video of the play although there is always a danger that the candidate may attempt to emulate a performance. This should be discouraged. Equally there are many books written on performing Shakespeare and the following three titles may support, in varying degrees, the practical work in class: John Barton, in *Playing Shakespeare* (Methuen Drama), Malcolm Morrison, *Classical Acting*, (A and C Black) and John Russell Brown, *Shakespeare's Plays in Performance* (Applause Books).

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 very 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.

Because of the intensive nature of the training and the rehearsal requirements for this unit when taken as part of a course, part-time provision would be most unusual and difficult to achieve.

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: Shakespeare in Practice

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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This unit is designed to enable candidates to recognise the key components of Shakespearean text through analysis and practice. It prepares them by giving them the underpinning knowledge of the use of language together with practical opportunities to demonstrate the speaking of Shakespeare's verse and prose. It allows the candidates to determine an actor's relationship with the audience through a variety of means including the exploration of a piece of text.

It will:

- ◆ Introduce the components of Shakespeare's language
- ◆ Enable an exploration into the speaking of Shakespeare's heightened and naturalistic text
- ◆ Enable exploration of the speaking and use of rhythm and blank verse
- ◆ Enable opportunities to develop an appreciation and application of comedy and tragedy in Shakespeare's plays
- ◆ Enable candidates to explore opportunities for developing relationships with an audience
- ◆ Enable opportunities to develop a character from an extract of Shakespeare's text
- ◆ Enable candidates to demonstrate a synthesis of technique in presentation of an extract of text.

There are three main assessments:

1. Outcome 1 requires a written assessment in controlled conditions.
2. Assessment will be on-going and recorded through a series of checklists for Outcomes 2 and 3
3. Candidates will be required to demonstrate a synthesis of technique through practical presentation of an extract lasting approximately 2 – 3 minutes for Outcome 4.