



## Higher National Unit specification

### General information

**Unit title:** History of Theatre: Critical Review (SCQF level 7)

**Unit code:** HD78 34

**Superclass:** LE

**Publication date:** April 2016

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 01

### Unit purpose

This Unit will develop critical and evaluative skills with regard to live performance. Throughout the programme of study, learners will have the opportunity to observe (as an audience member), a variety of shows and events which will provide the focus for critiques. These personal reviews will cover a broad spectrum of theatrical performance styles, genres and disciplines.

### Outcomes

On successful completion of the Unit the learner will be able to:

- 1 Provide critiques of live performances or staged events.
- 2 Analyse the relevance and currency of performances.
- 3 Evaluate concept and artistic interpretation.

### Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7)

### Recommended entry to the Unit

While access is at the discretion of the centre, learners would benefit from having prior knowledge and interest in performing and production arts. These skills could be developed from studying appropriate Units at SCQF level 5 or 6.

## **Higher National Unit Specification: General information (cont)**

**Unit title:** History of Theatre: Critical Review (SCQF level 7)

### **Core Skills**

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes for this Unit specification.

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this Unit.

### **Context for delivery**

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.

### **Equality and inclusion**

This Unit 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.

Further advice can be found on our website [www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements).

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

**Unit title:** History of Theatre: Critical Review (SCQF level 7)

Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

### **Outcome 1**

Provide critiques of live performances or staged events.

#### **Knowledge and/or Skills**

- ◆ The venue
- ◆ Research the performing company and its artistic policy
- ◆ Formal characteristics of the chosen performance
- ◆ Analysis and evaluation of performance

### **Outcome 2**

Analyse the relevance and currency of performances

#### **Knowledge and/or Skills**

- ◆ Genre to which the production belongs
- ◆ Audience engagement
- ◆ Production styles
- ◆ Evaluation skills

### **Outcome 3**

Evaluate concept and artistic interpretation

#### **Knowledge and/or Skills**

- ◆ Artistic intentions
- ◆ Interpretation
- ◆ Evaluation of key elements

## Higher National Unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

**Unit title:** History of Theatre: Critical Review (SCQF level 7)

### Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Learners will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and Skills by showing that they can convey both personal opinions and the general reaction of an audience to a live performance or event. Learners will identify the most suitable ways of presenting and disseminating their opinions of specific performing arts activities, including techniques for gathering research, summarising key points and the management of materials for presentation. Learners will present the researched material in a number of different ways, eg written texts, PowerPoint presentations, audio and video recordings.

Four performances should be critically reviewed, each of a different genre. For each performance learners will be required to produce a critique of the performance which must include:

- ◆ evidence of their research into the performing company and its artistic policy.
- ◆ a description of the venue.
- ◆ an explanation of the formal characteristics of the performance.
- ◆ an identification of the genre to which the production belongs.
- ◆ an evaluation of the engagement of the audience.
- ◆ an analysis of the productions style, ie devised/realistic/symbolic.
- ◆ an evaluation of the success of the interpretation and artistic intentions.
- ◆ an outline of the elements which worked well or could be improved.

The learner's critique must demonstrate her/his intellectual and emotional understanding of the performance by including justifications for the points made.



## Higher National Unit Support Notes

**Unit title:** History of Theatre: Critical Review (SCQF level 7)

Unit Support Notes are offered as guidance and 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

This Unit will encourage development of critical skills and analysis with regard to live performance.

The Unit will develop skills of critical thinking and allow the learner to examine their reactions to a wide range of live performances. Research will be carried out about the context and concept for the performances witnessed, and also about the venue and its suitability to the treatment. Skills learned in this Unit will support all Units on the HNC Costume for Stage and Screen which require a critical approach, either towards individual productions or design work.

Learners will be asked to review specifically:

- ◆ the Venue — its age, architectural style, capacity and primary purpose.
- ◆ the performing company and its artistic intentions.
- ◆ the design concepts of the production; set and scenic design, costume and lighting.
- ◆ the audience response to the performance.
- ◆ personal expectations and prior knowledge.
- ◆ the performance style, ie devised/realistic/symbolic.
- ◆ elements which worked well or could be improved

Learners should be encouraged to read reviews by professional critics which could then be used for debate and class discussion to consolidate and broaden intellectual and emotional understanding of the text or interpretation under scrutiny.

Learners should be encouraged to present the researched material in at least two formats, eg written texts, PowerPoint presentations, audio and video recordings, or graphic illustrations.

Performance reviews can be for Theatre, Dance, Opera, Musical theatre or site-specific events, and be accompanied by evidence of attendance in the form of a ticket, receipt or programme.

## Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

**Unit title:** History of Theatre: Critical Review (SCQF level 7)

### Guidance on approaches to delivery of this Unit

As this Unit relies on appropriate performances for attendance, it is suggested that where possible, attendance should be scheduled across the delivery of the Unit with attempts made by the tutor to choose a broad spectrum of genre suitable for critique.

In advance of attendance, guidance should be given on the venue and producing company, preparing the learners for what they might expect. In the event of learners attending performances performed in a language other than English, it might be appropriate to provide in advance a synopsis of plot. This device should also be considered in advance when attending a dance production where electronic commentary is much less prevalent than with operatic performance.

Any elements or material which might prove offensive to some learners should also be discussed ahead of attendance. After the performance, it could be appropriate to schedule a group discussion and review, to focus thought and clarify opinions.

Printed reviews from newspapers and websites will help learners to be critical in a positive, analytical and reflective way helping them to develop taste, preference and standards.

Where available, attendance either after or before the performance at a 'curtain up' event could be arranged — these are normally included for one or two performances per run as part of a theatre's education programme. Here, learners will have the opportunity to ask questions of the actors and the creative team in addition to the opinions and feelings of a larger audience.

### Guidance on approaches to assessment of this Unit

Evidence can be generated using different types of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners.

The learner will compile reviews of four personally-observed performances with details of date, performance venue, producing company and production details. Alternatively, critical reviews could be recorded and submitted electronically.

Learners might also work in pairs preparing questions and giving responses in an interviewer/interviewee situation which could be recorded electronically or compiled as if for a magazine article.

Assessment of this Unit should focus on the research into the performance before attendance with regard to research into the product, (venue/ producing company/ past standards/ product to be experienced/ past performances of product/ marketing materials/ cast/ reputation/hype/cost of ticket) against the feelings and opinions recorded afterwards. Likely comment here will include: anticipation/value for money/audience reactions/ audience age and size/accuracy of marketing pitch/currency of product and performing style/ success of visual aspects.

## Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

**Unit title:** History of Theatre: Critical Review (SCQF level 7)

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education.

### Opportunities for e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all learner evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at [www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment](http://www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment).

### Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of Oral and written *Communications*, *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* Skills and Critical Thinking at SCQF level 5 in this Unit.

## History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2016

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged.

Additional copies of this Unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Please contact the Business Development and Customer Support team, telephone 0303 333 0330.



## **General information for learners**

### **Unit title:** History of Theatre: Critical Review (SCQF level 7)

This section will help you decide whether this is the Unit for you by explaining what the Unit is about, what you should know or be able to do before you start, what you will need to do during the Unit and opportunities for further learning and employment.

In this Unit you will be given the opportunity to attend live performances which will then be critically reviewed. The performances will be specifically selected by your tutor to offer as a diverse a spectrum of performance and styles of production as is available within the time frame allocated.

Prior to attendance of any performance which you will critically review, you are advised to find out as much as you can about the play/opera/ballet/event you will attend and also about the venue (age, size, function, style) and producing company (reputation, policy, profile). If possible, pick up a promotional; leaflet or flyer to see if it tells you what to expect. Look at newspapers and websites to see how and to whom this performance is being marketed.

After the performances you will have the opportunity to record your feelings and views in a way which best suits you.

This Unit will assist you when you are asked to reflect critically on your own work. It may help you to think about your own priorities and clarify what you want your design ideas to communicate to an audience.