



# **Advanced Higher English**

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## **Draft National Course Specification**

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**Valid from August 2015**

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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:** Advanced Higher English

**SCQF:** level 7 (32 SCQF credit points)

**Course code:** to be advised

### Mandatory Units

<b>English: Literary Studies (Advanced Higher)</b>	<b>8 SCQF credit points</b>
<b>English: Specialist Study (Advanced Higher)</b>	<b>8 SCQF credit points</b>

### Optional Units

<b>English: Textual Analysis (Advanced Higher)</b>	<b>8 SCQF credit points</b>
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or:

<b>English: Creative Writing (Advanced Higher)</b>	<b>8 SCQF credit points</b>
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<b>Course assessment</b>	<b>8 SCQF credit points</b>
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This Course includes eight SCQF credit points to allow additional time for preparation for Course assessment. The Course assessment covers the added value of the Course. Further information on the Course assessment is provided in the Assessment section.

### Recommended entry

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

- ♦ Higher English Course

### Progression

This Course or its Units may provide progression to:

- ♦ degrees in higher education
- ♦ further academic study in English or related areas
- ♦ employment or training

Further details are provided in the Rationale section.

### 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**

All new and revised 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 will be an emphasis on skills development and the application of those skills. Assessment approaches will be proportionate, fit for purpose and will 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**

Advanced Higher English provides learners with the opportunity to develop complex language skills which are essential for learning, life and work; and to develop their ability to interpret complex literary forms and to produce sophisticated language.

Advanced Higher English fosters an appreciation, in depth, of complex language awareness, and of a wide range of literature and texts in different media. This enables learners to access their own cultural heritage and history, as well as the culture and history of others.

Learners have the opportunity to personalise their study; choices enable learners to encounter a wide range of different types of texts in different media and to produce sophisticated writing in chosen literary forms. Building on the four capacities, Advanced Higher English enables learners to communicate, be critical thinkers, develop cultural awareness, and be creative.

## **Purpose and aims of the Course**

The main purpose of the Course is to provide learners with the opportunity to apply critical, analytical and evaluative skills to a wide range of complex texts from different genres. Learners develop the ability to analyse and evaluate complex literary texts and may also apply these skills to media texts. Learners develop sophisticated writing skills, responding to the way structure, form and meaning shape the overall meaning of texts.

The Course provides personalisation and choice for learners by allowing them to choose to develop skills in creative and/or discursive writing or by developing their awareness of the relationship between text and context in the analysis and evaluation of literary or media texts.

The Course aims to provide opportunities for learners to develop the ability to:

- ◆ analyse and evaluate complex language
- ◆ apply critical, analytical and evaluative skills across a wide range of complex literary texts
- ◆ apply sophisticated writing skills
- ◆ extend creative writing skills, or analytical and evaluative skills in literary or media contexts
- ◆ critically respond to complex texts through extended writing
- ◆ critically analyse sophisticated concepts, using appropriate terminology
- ◆ apply higher-order thinking skills
- ◆ apply research and investigative skills for a range of purposes
- ◆ apply independent, individual interests to a chosen topic in either literature or media

Learners will apply knowledge and understanding of complex language in a wide range of contexts and use creative and critical thinking to synthesise ideas and arguments. The Course also develops high levels of analytical thinking and understanding of the impact of language.

## **Information about typical learners who might do the Course**

The Course is appropriate for learners who wish to develop their understanding and use of complex language through a range of higher-order skills. This Course offers learners personalisation and choice appropriate to their personal and vocational needs and aspirations. Learners will encounter academic and personal challenges in the study of Advanced Higher English.

Entry to this Course is at the discretion of the centre. However, it may be beneficial for a learner to have the skills and knowledge required by Higher English and relevant component Units or equivalent qualifications. The Course may also be suitable for learners who have experience of Higher Media.

The Course provides flexibility, personalisation and choice to enable learners to achieve in different ways. Learners will develop their reading skills by reading as widely as possible within and beyond the set list of specified authors and texts in pursuit of their own interests and enthusiasms, and will gain enrichment and comparative insights.

Through the successful completion of this Course, important transferable skills are developed. These skills include: analysing and evaluating a range of complex literary texts, and developing an independence of thought while taking account of the opinions of others.

The ability to analyse and evaluate complex texts, and apply highly developed thinking and communication skills, is important in a number of professions and degree programmes. This Course can lead to:

- ◆ degree programmes in education, humanities, law, journalism, drama, media, social science and business
- ◆ careers in education, journalism, media, law, marketing, politics, commerce and industry

English Units and Courses are offered from SCQF level 2 to SCQF level 7.

This Course is recognised as an entry qualification to employment, training, and higher and further education. This Course also provides preparation for a diverse range of occupations and careers.

The Course is designed to be accessible. Units have been designed to take into account the needs of learners.

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## **Course structure and conditions of award**

### **Course structure**

The Course is made up of two mandatory Units and one further Unit from a choice of two optional Units. The main purpose of the Course is to provide learners with the opportunity to apply analytical and evaluative skills to a wide range of texts of different genres. Learners interpret complex literary forms, produce sophisticated language and develop the skills outlined in the optional Units.

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

### **Mandatory Units**

#### **English: Literary Studies (Advanced Higher)**

The purpose of this Unit is to provide learners with opportunities to develop the skill of critically responding in depth to complex texts by applying knowledge of the various ways by which meaning is created, and by understanding critical concepts and approaches. Learners extend and refine their analysis and evaluation skills through the study of selected complex literary texts from a set list in drama, poetry and prose (fiction and non-fiction).

#### **English: Specialist Study (Advanced Higher)**

The purpose of this Unit is to provide learners with the opportunity to carry out an independent study by selecting, studying, analysing and responding to texts of their own choice drawn from literature or media. Learners extend their critical, investigative and analytical skills by choosing a topic of personal interest, and develop independent learning skills by selecting the materials for study, formulating relevant tasks and researching primary and secondary sources. Learners also develop organisational and presentational skills required in the production of a dissertation.

### **Optional Units — one of the following**

#### **English: Textual Analysis (Advanced Higher)**

The purpose of this Unit is to provide learners with opportunities to develop interpretative, analytical and evaluative skills by applying these to a wide variety of either media or literary texts. Learners develop knowledge of literary or media terms and concepts in order to be able to respond critically to any given text and to show an awareness of the relationship between text and context. Learners develop knowledge of the various ways by which meaning is created, and understanding of critical concepts and approaches.

#### **English: Creative Writing (Advanced Higher)**

The purpose of this Unit is to provide learners with the opportunity to extend and refine their writing skills through the production of a range of imaginative and/or discursive writing in different genres. Learners will use language creatively for a variety of purposes and in a variety of forms to extend and refine their awareness of themselves and of the world around them. Learners will develop knowledge of the various ways by which meaning is created, and develop a range of skills necessary for the deployment of language to create effect.

## **Conditions of award**

To gain the award of the Course, the learner must pass all of the Units as well as the Course assessment. The required Units are shown in the Course outline section. Course assessment will provide the basis for grading attainment in the Course award.

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## Skills, knowledge and understanding

Further information on the assessment of skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course is given in the *Course Assessment Specification*. A broad overview of the mandatory subject skills, knowledge and understanding that will be assessed in the Course is given in this section.

These cover:

- ◆ critically analysing and evaluating a wide range of complex literary texts from a list of set texts, as appropriate to purpose and audience
- ◆ applying critical, investigative and analytical skills to a topic of personal interest drawn from literature or media

and either:

- ◆ creating a wide range of complex text, using imaginative and/or discursive writing, as appropriate to a range of purposes and audiences

or:

- ◆ critically responding to given literary texts from a range of genres to show awareness between text and context

or:

- ◆ critically responding to given media texts to show awareness between text and context

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.ukscqf](http://www.sqa.org.ukscqf)).

## Assessment

Information about assessment for the Course is included in the *Course Assessment Specification*, which provides full details including advice on how a learner's overall attainment for the Course will be determined.

### Unit assessment

All Units are internally assessed against the requirements shown in the *Unit Specification*.

They can be assessed on a Unit-by-Unit basis or by combined assessment.

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

The assessment of the Units in this Course will be as follows.

#### Mandatory Units

##### **English: Literary Studies (Advanced Higher)**

Learners will be required to provide evidence of their analytical and evaluative skills by applying knowledge and understanding of complex language. Learners will be required to provide evidence of critically responding in depth to familiar complex literary texts by using appropriate critical terminology.

##### **English: Specialist Study (Advanced Higher)**

Learners will be required to provide evidence of their critical, investigative and analytical skills by applying these to an aspect or aspects of either a chosen literary or media topic.

#### Optional Units

##### **English: Textual Analysis (Advanced Higher)**

Learners will be required to provide evidence of their interpretative, analytical and evaluative skills by critically responding in depth to a given complex text in either literature or media by using appropriate critical terminology.

##### **English: Creative Writing (Advanced Higher)**

Learners will be required to provide evidence of their writing skills by creating and producing imaginative or discursive writing in different genres. Learners will be required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of high levels of technical accuracy in the creation of texts.

Exemplification of possible assessment approaches for these Units is provided in the *National Assessment Resource*.

### Course assessment

Courses from National 4 to Advanced Higher include assessment of [added value](#)<sup>1</sup>. At National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher, the added value will be assessed in the Course assessment. The added value for the Course must

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<sup>1</sup> Definitions can be found here: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/47692.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/47692.html)

address the key purposes and aims of the Course, as defined in the Course rationale. It will do this by addressing one or more of breadth, challenge or application.

In the Advanced Higher English Course, added value will focus on:

- ♦ challenge
- ♦ application

The Course assessment will take the form of:

- ♦ a [question paper](#)<sup>2</sup> through which learners will demonstrate in-depth knowledge and understanding of a set complex literary text from either drama, poetry or prose

and either:

- ♦ a [portfolio](#)<sup>3</sup>, which will contain evidence of creative writing, and the specialist study

or:

- ♦ a portfolio which will contain evidence of textual analysis skills in either a literary or a media text, and the specialist study

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<sup>2</sup> Definitions can be found here: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/47692.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/47692.html)

<sup>3</sup> See link above for definition.

## **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
- 5.5 Creating

Amplification of these skills 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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**Published:** May 2012 (draft version 1.0)

**Superclass:** to be advised

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## History of changes to National Course Specification

Course details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date

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Note: You are advised to check SQA's website (**[www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)**) to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of the Course Specification.