

## **National Unit specification: general information**

**UNIT** English: Language Study (Advanced Higher)

**NUMBER** D8VH 13

**COURSE** English (Advanced Higher)

### **SUMMARY**

The English: Language Study Unit is concerned principally with developing the skills of linguistic analysis through the study of a range of contemporary or historical forms of English or Scots as used by different people for different purposes. Candidates will study a substantial number and variety of aspects of English or Scots related to topics specified by SQA.

The content of the Unit comprises:

- knowledge of the various ways by which meaning is communicated in Modern English or in Scots: phonology, spelling, vocabulary/lexis, grammatical structures, semantics
- understanding of the concepts and approaches required for linguistic analysis.

What distinguishes the study of English or Scottish language at Advanced Higher level from that at Higher is the greater range of contexts and concepts studied, the greater depth to which these are studied and the greater emphasis on comparison, contrast and generalisation.

### **OUTCOME**

Describe and analyse key aspects of English or Scottish language.

### **RECOMMENDED ENTRY**

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained:

- a Higher Course award in English.

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### **Administrative Information**

**Superclass:** KC  
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## **National Unit Specification: general information (cont)**

**UNIT**      English: Language Study (Advanced Higher)

### **CREDIT VALUE**

1 credit at Advanced Higher.

### **CORE SKILLS**

There is no automatic certification of core skills or core skills components in this Unit.

Additional information about core skills is published in the *Catalogue of Core Skills in National Qualifications* (SQA, 2001).

## **National Unit Specification: statement of standards**

**UNIT**      English: Language Study (Advanced Higher)

### **OUTCOME**

Describe and analyse key aspects of English or Scottish language.

#### **Performance criteria**

##### *Understanding*

The response takes a relevant and thoughtful approach to the prescribed task and demonstrates secure understanding of key elements of language study.

##### *Analysis*

The response makes relevant and thoughtful analytical comment and demonstrates secure handling of linguistic concepts, forms, usages.

##### *Evaluation*

Judgements made are relevant, thoughtful and securely based on detailed evidence drawn from a range of sources and contexts.

##### *Expression*

Structure, style and language, including the use of appropriate analytical terminology, are consistently accurate and effective in developing a relevant argument.

#### **Evidence requirements**

Candidates must produce one essay/analytical report.

The essay/analytical report must involve analysis of text.

The essay/analytical report must be written:

- without assistance
- under supervision
- within the centre
- in response to an unseen question
- on a language topic selected from the list of language topics specified on page 43.

Candidates must:

- have access to relevant text(s) during the writing of the essay/analytical report
- meet all of the performance criteria in the essay/analytical report.

## **National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)**

### **UNIT**      English: Language Study (Advanced Higher)

The following is the list of language topics specified by SQA

- varieties of English or Scots
- the historical development of English or Scots
- multilingualism in contemporary Scotland
- the use of Scots in contemporary literature
- language and social context
- the linguistic characteristics of informal conversation
- the linguistic characteristics of political communication

The list of specified topics may be changed from time to time.

## National Unit Specification: support notes: summary

### UNIT English: Language Study (Advanced Higher)

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.

#### **Content**

As relevant to the language topic chosen, candidates will study linguistic concepts, forms and usages, such as:

- historical aspects of English language
- the sounds and spelling of Modern English
- the forms of Modern English
- the vocabulary of Modern English
- variations in contemporary usage of English or Scots
- the origins and sources of contemporary Scots
- the sounds and spelling of Scots
- the forms of Scots
- the vocabulary of Scots
- the linguistic features of Scottish oral traditions
- social influences on Scots.

#### **Activities**

Candidates will engage in a variety of language activities such as:

- analysing and describing textual materials and discourses, both historical and contemporary
- consulting reference materials, including dictionaries, glossaries and thesauruses
- using linguistic concepts, terminology and techniques in the study of aspects of English or Scottish language.

#### **Outcome**

Describe and analyse key aspects of English or Scottish language.

#### **Assessment**

Candidates will produce one essay/analytical report in accordance with the evidence requirements of the Unit.

## National Unit Specification: support notes

**UNIT** English: Language Study (Advanced Higher)

### GUIDANCE ON CONTENT AND CONTEXT

The summary table gives indication of content and context. While the focus of study in this Unit will be on the skills of linguistic analysis, opportunities will arise for integrating related skills – in textual analysis and critical appreciation, for example – which will be developed in other Units.

As relevant to the selected topic, work in this Unit will be informed by (and be dependent upon) the acquisition of knowledge about:

- the sounds and spellings of Modern English or of Scots (phonology and orthography). Candidates will learn about the basic components of the sound system, typical patterns of intonation/stress and the main characteristics of English or Scots spelling.
- the syntactic structure of Modern English or of Scots. Candidates should be familiar with concepts such as number, gender, tense and aspect (the manner in which the verbal action is experienced or regarded, for example, completed or in progress). They should recognise how these are expressed through the syntax and morphology of English or Scots. At the same time, concepts such as subject, object, agent, instrument, for example, will also be used in the study, together with sentence and clause structure (including subordination and co-ordination).
- the vocabulary of Modern English or of Scots. Vocabulary study will include word formation, neologisms, meaning change, semantic fields, historical influences, loan words.

Understanding and fluent use of linguistic terminology and description are key aspects of the work in this Unit.

Study of each selected topic will require, at least to some degree, comparison of the chosen aspect of language use with these characteristics of standard English or of Scots.

The notes that follow identify points of likely interest within each specified topic.

#### *Varieties of English or Scots*

Candidates should become familiar with the distinctive linguistic features of a particular variety of contemporary English or Scots. This variety might be one used by speakers in the United Kingdom (eg Cockney or Glaswegian) or might be one elsewhere in the world where English and/or Scots speakers played a significant part in the settlement of the area (eg in parts of Africa or the United States). Study of this topic should identify major phonological, lexical and syntactic features of the variety and should relate these features, where appropriate, to the historical context in which the variety developed. Candidates should also be introduced to some of the basic principles of dialectology.

#### *The historical development of English or Scots*

Candidates should consider how English or Scots has changed over time, from the language of medieval manuscripts to the language of text messaging and communication on the internet. Candidates should be encouraged to explore texts in their historical contexts and to consider the various external factors which have influenced changes in certain aspects of English or Scots. Potential areas of enquiry here might include changes in orthography, the development of standard languages in England or Scotland, and lexical change (relating to both form and meaning) in English or Scots.

## **National Unit Specification: support notes**

### **UNIT English: Language Study (Advanced Higher)**

#### ***Multilingualism in contemporary Scotland***

Candidates should be encouraged to consider the status of a range of languages (for example, English, Scots, Gaelic and Urdu) in contemporary Scotland, and the linguistic behaviour of multilinguals in conversation, examining the structural and functional patterns associated with codeswitching. Other areas of enquiry might include issues of language policy in contemporary Scotland and on-going examples of language shift in particular communities. Candidates should be encouraged to consider the use of different languages in their own communities as well as in communities with which they are less familiar.

#### ***The use of Scots in contemporary literature***

Study of this topic should include the use of Scots vocabulary, grammatical forms, and forms of spelling, in the work of at least two authors. In addition to the identification of such forms, candidates should also consider the aesthetic effect of such language choices made by authors writing in different genres.

#### ***Language and social context***

Candidates should explore the ways in which variation in English or Scots is partly associated with the social characteristics of participants in a discourse (for instance, their social class, gender and ethnic background) and the function of that discourse (for instance, whether the discourse is a casual conversation between friends or team or group discussion or a job interview). Attitudes to language variation in the larger community (eg the notion of correct usage) should also be explored. Candidates should be introduced to some of the basic principles of quantitative and qualitative sociolinguistics, and their application to varieties of English and Scots.

#### ***The linguistic characteristics of informal conversation***

Candidates should develop the linguistic skills and critical apparatus required to describe and analyse phonological, lexical, semantic and syntactic characteristics of oral interaction in informal conversation between pairs of participants and in groups of three or four (ie not formally planned discussions). There should be a particular focus on the nature of the interaction and the means of sustaining it and taking it forward. Issues might include, for example:

- the extent to which conversations have social purposes and how these are achieved
- strategies for clarifying understanding of what someone else has said
- agreement with and reinforcement of contributions made by others
- introduction of new topics and new ideas on the same topic
- linguistic indicators of relationships among participants

#### ***The linguistic characteristics of political communication***

Candidates should develop the linguistic skills and critical apparatus required to describe and analyse phonological, lexical, semantic and syntactic characteristics of political communication. In this topic, imagery, vocabulary, semantic fields, rhetorical devices, orientation to audience and tone are likely to be key issues for investigation and analysis.

## **National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)**

### **UNIT English: Language Study (Advanced Higher)**

#### **GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES**

This Unit offers clear extension of work already undertaken in English at Higher. There are, however, significant differences.

- Candidates must select topics from a specified list. This has the merit – and the added difficulty – of requiring candidates to develop awareness and understanding of key aspects of language related to the cultural and social dimensions of their own lives.
- Candidates will, in all probability, find themselves in much smaller teaching groups and in more flexible and varied learning/teaching contexts. Direct, teacher/lecturer-led guidance and instruction will still have a place, but there will be greater emphasis on independent study, on supported self-study, on interaction with tutors and fellow candidates in tutorial groups, seminar groups and workshops in which views and insights are exchanged. Candidates will require to take greater responsibility for their own learning and progress.
- There will be a larger volume of work to be undertaken and more demanding study of more complex language topics.
- Activities will include analysis of a range of primary texts and materials (print texts, media texts, audiotapes, videotapes, textbooks, other informational materials)
- Access will be required to a selection of appropriate grammar books and dictionaries, introductory materials on phonology and syntax, a general history of the English or Scottish language, along with a range of resources to illustrate regional, social and functional variations in language use.

#### **GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT**

In order to achieve the Unit outcome, the essay/analytical report which candidates are required to produce **must** meet:

- all of the evidence requirements
- all of the performance criteria.

As assessment is an integral part of the learning and teaching process, candidates should undertake a number of activities for formative purposes.

In summative assessment, care must be taken in question design. Questions must create a framework within which candidates have opportunity to demonstrate coverage of all of the performance criteria. In particular, there must be opportunity to demonstrate competence in linguistic analysis.

#### **CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES AND/OR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS**

This Course Specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (SQA, 2004).