



National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Theatre History: An Introduction to Theory and Practice (SCQF level 6)

CODE F691 12

SUMMARY

The Unit is designed to be approached both theoretically and practically, enabling the candidates to explore Western theatre before the 20th century and the resulting practical implications for the actor.

Candidates will have the opportunity to investigate four periods of theatre history and identify the main characteristics of each period in the context of the development of Western theatre. Candidates will also explore the acting techniques required for the relevant specific periods of theatrical history.

This Unit is an optional Unit within the National Certificate in Acting and Theatre Performance (SCQF level 6), but the Unit is also available on a free standing basis.

This Unit is suitable for candidates who are undertaking a programme of study in Drama and/or for those who have an interest in the practical exploration of theatre history.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Describe four key periods in theatre history.
- 2 Explore textual extracts from each of the selected periods of theatre history.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Entry is at the discretion of the centre.

Administrative Information

Superclass: LC

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CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at SCQF level 6 (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6*).

**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.*

CORE SKILLS

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

The Unit provides opportunities for candidates to develop aspects of the following Core Skills:

- ◆ Working with Others
- ◆ Communication
- ◆ Information and Communication Technology

These opportunities are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit Specification

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

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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 the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

OUTCOME 1

Describe four key periods in theatre history.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Identify and describe the key components and characteristics of theatre in the selected periods.
- (b) Describe the social/historical influences on theatre in these selected periods.

OUTCOME 2

Explore textual extracts from each of the selected periods of theatre history.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Discuss and interpret textual extracts from each selected period.
- (b) Explore the practicalities of acting textual extracts in the style of the selected period.
- (c) Demonstrate the relevant acting techniques from each period in performance.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Evidence is required to demonstrate that candidates have achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

OUTCOME 1

Written and/or oral evidence is required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of four selected periods of theatre history. These four periods will be selected by the assessor and must provide the candidate with a broad understanding of a range of key periods in the development of theatre.

The evidence will be gathered in open-book conditions at appropriate points during the delivery of the Unit and the minimum word count is 1,000 words. This evidence will demonstrate an understanding of the following in each of the selected periods:

- ◆ social/historical context
- ◆ target audience
- ◆ venues
- ◆ acting styles
- ◆ key theatrical figures

OUTCOME 2

Performance evidence supplemented by an Assessor Observation Checklist is required.

For each of the four periods identified in Outcome 1, one extract is required. These extracts will be selected by the assessor, or by the candidate in negotiation with the assessor.

For Performance Criteria (a), performance evidence supplemented by an Assessor Observation Checklist is required to show practical exploration and understanding of the requirements for the presentation of the selected textual extracts. This will include an understanding of the structure, style and content of the text.

For Performance Criteria (b) and (c), performance evidence supplemented by an Assessor Observation Checklist is required to show the candidate's exploration and demonstration of the relevant acting techniques required in the context of the chosen periods. This will include an understanding of:

- ◆ voice and movement
- ◆ use of space
- ◆ staging
- ◆ actor/audience relationship
- ◆ freedoms/constraints of costume and/or set

The evidence will be gathered in supervised conditions at appropriate points during the delivery of the Unit.

National Unit Specification: support notes

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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

This Unit could be delivered as a series of workshops, integrating delivery of the theory of the social/historical contexts with a practical approach to text. The following list is not exhaustive, but provides guidance on the potential broad range of periods of theatrical history from before the 20th century:

- ◆ Greek
- ◆ Roman
- ◆ Medieval
- ◆ Italian Renaissance (Comedia dell Arte)
- ◆ Elizabethan
- ◆ Restoration
- ◆ Victorian Melodrama
- ◆ Naturalism

In Outcome 2, it is important that candidates can demonstrate an understanding of the different approaches an actor might take when approaching texts from different periods in history. It may be useful if the candidates were undergoing, or had completed, *Drama: Acting Skills (SCQF level 6)* but it should be noted that this Unit is about the practical exploration of different styles of acting.

Centres may choose to perform the textual extracts in a variety of ways from candidates still *on the book* to full performance, but this is entirely at the discretion of the centre. This Unit could be successfully integrated with other Acting and Theatre Performance and Technical Theatre Units, eg *Creative Project (SCQF level 6)*; *Theatre Performance (SCQF level 6)*; *Theatrical Design (SCQF level 6)*; *Theatrical Prop Making (SCQF level 6)* and *Theatre Stage Model Making (SCQF level 6)*.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

The Evidence Requirements for the Unit state that four key periods of theatre history are selected and, in turn, that one textual extract from each of these periods must be explored. In selecting the periods of theatre history, it is desirable that those chosen offer diverse learning experiences for the candidate. At least one of the selected extracts should be of sufficient duration to afford breadth and scope for learning and provide a clear understanding of the style of the period and characters.

Learning and teaching approaches could take the form of a tutor-led presentation highlighting the main characteristics of the period alongside the social/historical influences on theatre of the time, followed by a practical workshop looking at extracts from one or more key dramatic texts of the period. The tutor-led presentations could be in the form of lectures, discussions or presentations which, in turn, could lead to further personal research on the part of the candidate.

One approach could be for the candidate to keep a diary or log of the practical exploration activities as an *aide memoire* in gathering information for learning and assessment purposes.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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It would be beneficial for candidates to work in a variety of situations: individually, in pairs, in small groups or as part of a larger group. This would enhance the learning experience.

Candidates could be encouraged to see a variety of styles of professional productions to further enhance their understanding of the overall context of this Unit.

Although the Outcomes could be delivered sequentially, an alternative approach could be to select one period and deliver both Outcomes concurrently. The key focus of this Unit is the integration of theory and practical work.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Candidates will be producing written and/or oral evidence for Outcome 1 as part of the assessment. This offers ideal opportunities to develop aspects of the Core Skill *Communication*.

Through using the internet for research purposes, candidates would have the opportunity to develop aspects of the Core Skill *Information and Communication Technology*.

Candidates will also have the opportunity to develop skills in *Working with Others* if they work as part of a group in Outcome 2.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

The suggested instrument of assessment for Outcome 1 is a written assignment in the form of four shorter written assignments of 250 words each, or one extended essay.

The suggested instrument of assessment for Outcome 2 is a practical assignment.

Time should be allowed for any necessary reassessment.

Opportunities for the use of 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 communications technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or e-checklists. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all candidate evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. Further advice is available in *SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education (AA1641, March 2003)*, *SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools (BD2625, June 2005)*.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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DISABLED CANDIDATES AND/OR THOSE WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website

www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements