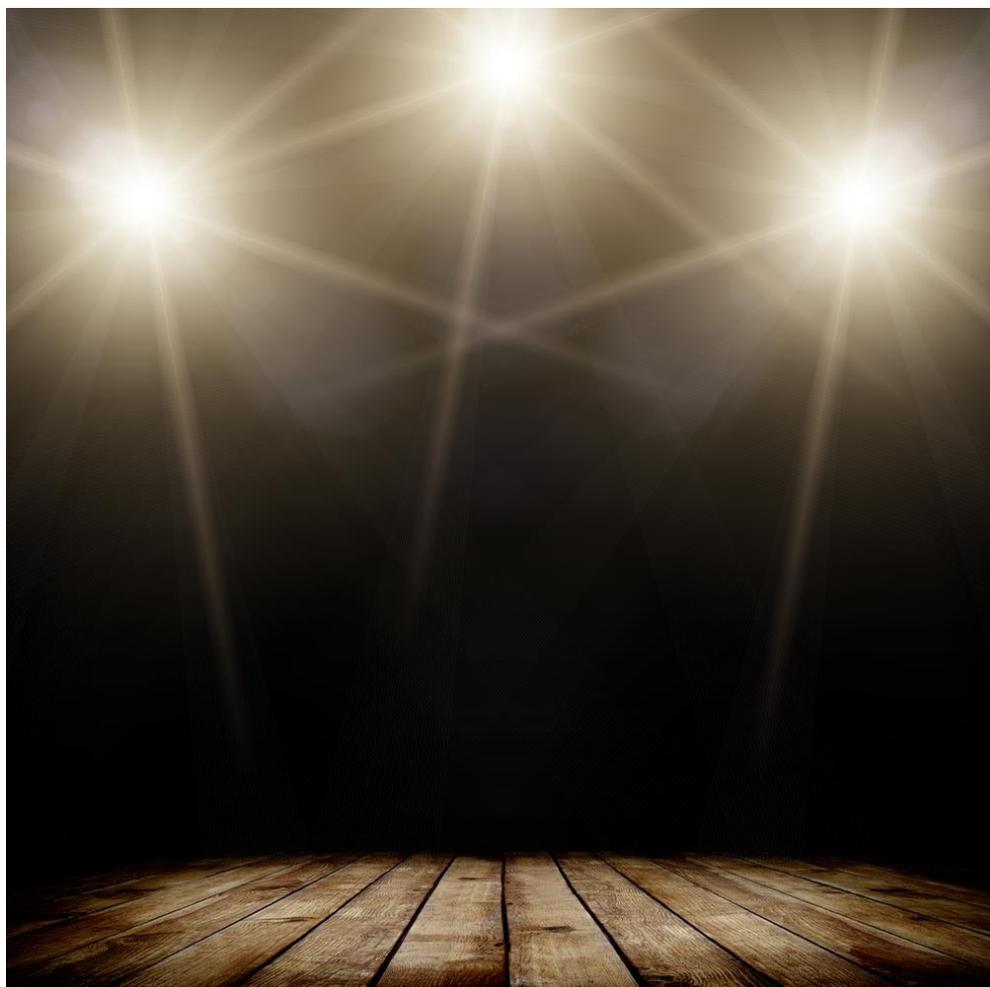


# Advanced Higher Drama Course/Unit Support Notes



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Please refer to the note of changes at the end of this document for details of changes from previous version (where applicable).

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# Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the Advanced Higher Drama Course. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering the Course and its Units.

These support notes cover both the Advanced Higher Course and the Units in it.

The Advanced Higher Course/Unit Support Notes should be read in conjunction with the relevant:

## **Mandatory Information:**

- ◆ Course Specification
- ◆ Course Assessment Specification
- ◆ Unit Specifications

## **Assessment Support:**

- ◆ Guidance on the use of past paper questions
- ◆ Coursework Information:
  - General assessment information
  - Coursework Assessment Task\*
- ◆ Unit Assessment Support\*

\*These documents are for assessors and are confidential. Assessors may access these through the SQA Co-ordinator in their centres.

## **Related information**

Advanced Higher Course Comparison

## **Further information on the Course and Units for Advanced Higher Drama**

This information begins on page 14 and both teachers and learners may find it helpful.

# General guidance on the Course/Units

## Aims

This Course should encourage learners to be inspired and challenged through a range of learning experiences, which will develop important skills that focus on the creative exploration of the art of theatre, its forms and its practices — as well as practical aspects of theatre. It also provides opportunities to develop transferable skills for learning, life and work.

The Advanced Higher Drama Course allows learners to explore both the practical and analytical aspects of the subject. It provides opportunities for learners to develop skills through practical aspects of theatre, the creative exploration of the art of theatre and its forms and practices.

The aims of the Course are to enable learners to:

- ◆ develop autonomy and independent thinking skills
- ◆ develop skills in performing within their chosen area of acting, directing or design
- ◆ develop individual creativity when applying skills in problem solving, analysis and evaluation
- ◆ analyse current theatre performance
- ◆ develop analytical skills in the interpretation of texts
- ◆ develop knowledge and understanding of theatre practice and key practitioners
- ◆ develop knowledge and understanding of the social and cultural influences on drama

The Course will also give learners the opportunity to develop their skills in listening and talking, personal learning, working with others, analysing, evaluating and creating.

## Progression

In order to do this Course, learners should have achieved the Higher Drama Course.

Learners who have achieved this Advanced Higher Course may progress to further study, employment and/or training. Opportunities for progression include:

- ◆ Progression to other SQA qualifications:
  - progression to other qualifications at the same level of the Course, for example Professional Development Awards (PDAs)
- ◆ Progression to further/higher education:

- For many learners a key transition point will be to further or higher education, for example to Higher National Certificates (HNCs)/Higher National Diplomas (HNDs), eg Acting and Performance, Technical Theatre, or any other relevant courses as well as Theatre Studies degree programmes
- Advanced Higher Courses provide good preparation for learners progressing to further and higher education as learners doing Advanced Higher Courses must be able to work with more independence and less supervision. This eases their transition to further/higher education. Advanced Higher Courses may also allow ‘advanced standing’ or partial credit towards the first year of study of a degree programme.
- Advanced Higher Courses are challenging and testing qualifications. Learners who have achieved multiple Advanced Higher Courses are regarded as having a proven level of ability, which attests to their readiness for higher education in HEIs in other parts of the UK as well as in Scotland.

This Advanced Higher is part of the Scottish Baccalaureate in Expressive Arts.

The Scottish Baccalaureates consist of coherent groups of subjects at Higher and Advanced Higher level. Each award consists of two Advanced Highers, one Higher and an Interdisciplinary Assignment which adds breadth and value and helps learners to develop generic skills, attitudes and confidence that will help them make the transition into higher education or employment.

## Hierarchies

**Hierarchy** is the term used to describe Courses and Units which form a structured progression involving two or more SCQF levels.

It is important that any content in a Course and/or Unit at one particular SCQF level is not repeated if a learner progresses to the next level of the hierarchy. The skills and knowledge should be able to be applied to new content and contexts to enrich the learning experience. This is for centres to manage.

The Units in the Drama Courses from National 3 to Advanced Higher level are designed in a hierarchy.

Learners may be able to achieve and be certificated for an individual Unit at the level above the level of the Course they are completing. This could be achieved for example, by learners within the class group completing similar activities and their work being differentiated and benchmarked against the assessment standards and evidence requirements at different SCQF levels.

Centres should be aware that although the mandatory knowledge and skill set is similar across the hierarchical Units, there are differences in the:

- ◆ depth of underpinning knowledge and understanding complexity of applied skills
- ◆ complexity and sophistication of the texts studied and of the skills required
- ◆ way in which learners will learn: namely, they will take more responsibility for their learning at Advanced Higher and work more autonomously

Additional information and guidance on possible approaches and strategies are included in the 'Approaches to learning and teaching' section. This section also provides useful suggestions for teachers/lecturers dealing with learners working at different levels in the one class.

Centres should take care to ensure that learners progressing from one level to the next are exposed to different contexts for learning and assessment to avoid repetition.

## **Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Course**

This section provides further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding that could be included in the Course.

Teachers and lecturers should refer to the *Course Assessment Specification* for mandatory information about the skills, knowledge and understanding to be covered in this Course.

The development of subject specific and generic skills is central to the Course. Learners should be made aware of the skills they are developing and of the transferability of them. It is the transferability that will help learners with further study and enhance their personal effectiveness.

The course provides opportunities for learners to be inspired and challenged through a creative exploration of the art of theatre and the way it has been shaped by key practitioners.

It provides opportunities for learners to explore both the practical and analytical aspects of the subject. It focuses on the learner's chosen area selected from acting, directing and design. Learners will investigate how theatre practice has been shaped by key practitioners. Through their exploration they will consider the social and cultural influences on drama. They will expand and develop their own skills within their chosen area of acting, directing or design. Learners will also develop their skills in devising and interpreting text. Further, they will explore means of using theatre and performance skills to communicate effectively with an audience and investigate how key practitioners have influenced theatre today. Learners will also develop problem solving and critical thinking skills as they

analyse theatre practice and interpret text. They will also learn to analyse their performance and the performances of others.

The skills, knowledge and understanding outlined in the *Course Specification* will be developed throughout the Course. Some Units may offer more opportunities than others for the following development of skills, knowledge and understanding:

- ◆ interpreting the social and cultural contexts of complex drama texts
- ◆ analysing and interpreting the role and craft of the actor, director and designer
- ◆ working independently to produce a theatrical concept
- ◆ applying skills in performing and directing and design
- ◆ creating and presenting their own theatrical concepts
- ◆ investigating how meaning can be communicated to an audience
- ◆ using a range of complex creative problem solving, planning and evaluation skills within the creative process
- ◆ exploring and investigating the influence, theory, and practice of key theatre practitioners
- ◆ analysing and evaluating the impact of key productions by theatre practitioners

# Approaches to learning and teaching

The Advanced Higher Drama Course lends itself to an integrated approach to learning and teaching, with a mix of practical learning and knowledge and understanding, guidance on which can be found in SQA's published Unit assessment support packages.

The need to encourage personalisation and choice is important. Teachers/lecturers could create and use inclusive approaches to teaching and learning. This can be achieved by encouraging the use of a variety of learning and teaching strategies, which suit the needs of all learners.

Innovative ways of using technology can be a valuable resource in creating inclusive learning and teaching approaches and can also assist with developing learners' creativity. Using technology to support the development of personal learning in drama can stimulate individual creativity and can further extend access and opportunity for personalisation and choice to all learners.

In the **Drama Skills Unit**, learners will undertake the dramatic interpretation and analysis of a key theatre practitioner through exploration of methodologies, theatre practices and/or texts in a practical way: individually, they will create and communicate their own theatrical statement. The learners will use a variety of devising and directing concepts to explore how meaning can be communicated to an audience.

Learners may consider aspects such as their previous learning experiences, interests, and links with other subjects in selecting the key practitioner to investigate.

In the **Drama: Production Skills Unit**, learners will research the performance and directorial theories of a key practitioner(s). The emphasis of the exploration will be from the perspective of a chosen production area as either:

- ◆ an actor (acting)

or:

- ◆ a director (directing)

or:

- ◆ a designer (designing lighting/sound/multi-media/set/costume/ make-up/props)

Learners will then, within their chosen production area, develop and apply complex production skills in taking a textual extract to a performance concept. This application will be informed by the work of a selected practitioner(s).

The choice of texts must provide scope for developing complex production skills within their chosen area of production. Some texts may be more suited to some areas of production than others.

The exploration of a text could then be carried forward into the Course assessment — for example an acting piece, or a director's extract, or a designer's concept.

Production analysis will be undertaken during this Unit. This will take the form of an analysis of a performance that the learner has studied. This may be a live or recorded theatrical performance. The choice of production should allow learners to analyse and evaluate production skills at Advanced Higher level.

The analysis may consider a range of areas such as:

- ◆ the genre, theme, social and theatrical context of the performance piece
- ◆ the company performing the performance piece
- ◆ the choice and use of the performance space
- ◆ the director's intentions and authorship
- ◆ the approach to the pretext
- ◆ the status of the actors and the acting styles
- ◆ the design concepts and their effectiveness, eg set, props costume, make-up, lighting, multi-media, sound
- ◆ audience reaction and impact

**Sequencing and integration** of the Outcomes, Units and/or Course is at the discretion of the centre. There is no set way to approach this and any sequencing and/or integration may be dependent on available resources, time and staff expertise. Particular ways of sequencing or integrating learning may suit different learners, and teachers/lecturers should take this into account when considering how to approach the learning and teaching of the Units in this Course.

The following approaches illustrate two possible approaches to integrating and sequencing the learning and teaching of the Units. Please note that other combinations are also possible.

### Approach 1

This model shows the possibility of delivering the Units sequentially. This model may provide learning opportunities for those learners who have had some previous experience of drama. This sequential approach may provide opportunities for the progressive development, reinforcement and consolidation of creative skills, knowledge and understanding through the Course.



or

### Approach 2

This model shows the possibility of delivering the Units concurrently. This approach may benefit learners who already have some practical drama skills, knowledge and understanding from their previous experience. This approach may provide the opportunity for learners to integrate their learning, freeing up more time for a wider range of practical skills development

This model can be integrated and taught in a holistic approach.



It is recommended that the majority of time on the Course should reflect the practical nature of the Course and take into account the individual needs of the learners.

## Developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

The following skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work should be developed in this Course.

<b>1 Literacy</b>	
1.1 Reading	Activities will allow learners to use a range of texts. Learners will research the work of practitioners, interpret texts and analyse them.
1.2 Writing	
1.3 Listening and talking	
Learners will produce a dissertation which will involve gathering and researching information, evaluating and analysing findings, developing and justifying conclusions, presenting the information (as appropriate).	
The starting point of almost every response to stimuli in the drama classroom is to discuss, generate ideas, listen to others' ideas and develop these ideas.	
<b>3 Health and wellbeing</b>	
3.1 Personal learning	Learners will select their theme or issue for their devised drama. They will select their issue for their dissertation. They will take into account their own

	cultural and social experiences as they develop their work.
<b>4 Employability, enterprise and citizenship</b>	
4.3 Working with others	Throughout the Course learners will be working co-operatively with others, in directing their devised drama and in working with texts as actors and directors The development of contributing ideas and negotiating those with others sensitively will allow learners to mature and take ideas forward. Drama lends itself to learners becoming adaptable, having a set goal, working within a set of expectations and a reliance on self and others to complete tasks.
<b>5 Thinking skills</b>	
5.4 Analysing and evaluating  5.5 Creating	Learners will review the decisions they make and consider effectiveness of choices. They will analyse their work and the work of others. Performance analysis will develop their evaluative skills.  Learners will be creative as actors/directors/designers.

It is important that learners are aware of the skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work that they are developing in the Course and the activities they are involved in that provide realistic opportunities to practise and/or improve them.

At Advanced Higher level it is expected that learners will be using a range of higher order thinking skills. They will also develop skills in independent and autonomous learning.

# Approaches to assessment

Assessment in Advanced Higher Courses will generally reflect the investigative nature of Courses at this level, together with high-level problem-solving and critical thinking skills and skills of analysis and synthesis.

This emphasis on higher-order skills, together with the more independent learning approaches that learners will use, distinguishes the added value at Advanced Higher level from the added value at other levels.

A variety of approaches can be used for assessment in Drama. Some examples are provided in the section below. These examples complement information in the earlier sections:

- ◆ Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Course
- ◆ Approaches to learning and teaching

These are general illustrative examples which cover forms of assessment applicable to Drama:

- ◆ observation
- ◆ evaluation
- ◆ questioning
- ◆ personal interviews

## Unit assessment

Assessments must ensure that the evidence generated demonstrates, at the least, the minimum level of competence for each Unit. Assessors preparing assessment methods should be clear about what the evidence will look like. Evidence will be a combination of practical and written, oral and/or recorded evidence.

### **Drama Skills**

Learners may generate the following as evidence for this Unit: logs; diaries; folios; notes from personal interviews; research; presentations; mood boards; essays; annotated scripts; recorded performance; written evaluations; audience evaluations.

The assessor may also keep recorded evidence of discussions, rehearsals, feedback sessions and performances.

### **Drama: Production Skills**

Learners may generate the following as evidence for this Unit: research notes; annotated scripts; mood boards; presentations; recordings; written evaluations; essays; designs; plots; cue sheets; ground plans; annotated photographs; and notes from personal interviews.

The assessor may also keep recorded evidence of discussions, rehearsals, feedback sessions and performances.

## **Combining assessment across Units**

Units will be assessed on a pass/fail basis. All Units are internally assessed against the requirements shown in the Unit Specification. Each Unit can be assessed on an individual Outcome-by-Outcome basis or via the use of combined assessment for some or all Outcomes.

A combined approach to assessment will enrich the assessment process for the learner, avoid duplication of tasks and allow more emphasis on learning and teaching. Evidence could be drawn from a range of activities for a combined assessment. Care must be taken to ensure that combined assessments provide appropriate evidence for all the Outcomes that they claim to assess.

Combining assessment will also give centres more time to manage the assessment process more efficiently. When combining assessments across Units, teachers/lecturers should use e-assessment wherever possible. Learners can easily update portfolios, electronic or written diaries and recording sheets.

## **Preparation for Course assessment**

Each Course has additional time which may be used at the discretion of the teacher or lecturer to enable learners to prepare for Course assessment. This time may be used near the start of the Course and at various points throughout the Course for consolidation and support. It may also be used for preparation for Unit assessment, and, towards the end of the Course, for further integration, revision and preparation and/or gathering evidence for Course assessment.

For this Advanced Higher Course, the assessment methods for Course assessment are a performance, which will be supported by preparation for performance and a project–dissertation. Learners should be given opportunities to practise these methods and prepare for them.

Examples of activities to include within this preparation time include:

- ◆ for the dissertation, selecting topics, gathering and researching information, evaluating and analysing findings, developing and justifying conclusions, presenting the information (as appropriate)
- ◆ for the performance, practising and refining performance skills, rehearsing, personal interviews, model/artefact making
- ◆ theatre visits

At Advanced Higher level it is expected that learners will work with more independence and less supervision and support.

Information about Course assessment is found within the *Course Assessment Specification* and the Coursework documents (Coursework assessment task and General assessment information).

### **Authenticity**

In terms of authenticity, there are a number of techniques and strategies to ensure that learners present work that is their own. Teachers and lecturers should put in place mechanisms to authenticate learner evidence.

In Advanced Higher Courses, because learners will take greater responsibility for their own learning and work more independently, teachers and lecturers need to have measures in place to ensure that work produced is the learner's own work.

For example:

- ◆ regular checkpoint/progress meetings with learners
- ◆ short spot-check personal interviews
- ◆ checklists which record activity/progress
- ◆ photographs, films or audio records

Group work approaches are acceptable as part of the preparation for assessment and also for formal assessment. However, there must be clear evidence for each learner to show that the learner has met the evidence requirements.

For more information, please refer to SQA's [Guide to Assessment](#).

## **Added value**

Advanced Higher Courses include assessment of added value, which is assessed in the Course assessment.

Information given in the *Course Specification* and the *Course Assessment Specification* about the assessment of added value is mandatory.

In Advanced Higher Courses, added value involves the assessment of higher order skills such as high-level and more sophisticated investigation and research skills, critical thinking skills and skills of analysis and synthesis. Learners may be required to analyse and reflect upon their assessment activity by commenting on it and/or drawing conclusions with commentary/justification. These skills contribute to the uniqueness of Advanced Higher Courses and to the overall higher level of performance expected at this level.

In this Course, added value will be assessed by means of a practical assessment, which will be supported by preparation for performance, and a project–dissertation.

# Equality and inclusion

It is recognised that centres have their own duties under equality and other legislation and policy initiatives. The guidance given in these *Course/Unit Support Notes* is designed to sit alongside these duties but is specific to the delivery and assessment of the Course.

It is important that centres are aware of and understand SQA's assessment arrangements for disabled learners, and those with additional support needs, when making requests for adjustments to published assessment arrangements. Centres will find more guidance on this in the series of publications on Assessment Arrangements on SQA's website: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html).

The greater flexibility and choice in Advanced Higher Courses provide opportunities to meet a range of learners' needs and may remove the need for learners to have assessment arrangements. However, where a disabled learner needs a reasonable adjustment/assessment arrangements to be made, you should refer to the guidance given in the above link.

# Further information on the Course and Units

## Skills, knowledge and understanding

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.uk/scqf](http://www.sqa.org.uk/scqf)).

The below illustrations are intended to help teachers/lecturers and learners to understand the skills, knowledge and understanding of Drama at Advanced Higher. These should be used to support and aiding understanding. They are not prescriptive.

## Interpreting the social and cultural contexts of complex drama texts

In Drama: Production Skills, learners could consider social events and issues surrounding their explored text. Learners could look at the aspects of culture and style from these contexts that are significant influences on the text. Learners could consider such contexts surrounding their analysed contemporary performance.

In Drama Skills, when devising work, learners could consider their own social and cultural contexts. When responding to texts and pretexts that they have sourced, learners could interpret context in creative and personal ways.

In both Units, the performances by their identified practitioners could be examples of texts to be interpreted according to social and cultural contexts.

## Analysing and interpreting the role and craft of the actor, director and designer

In Drama: Production Skills, learners could analyse the interpretation of these roles in a contemporary production. Learners could analyse one of these roles as an actor/director/designer and following a production process, and then evaluating.

In Drama Skills, learners could analyse and interpret the roles and crafts of actors/directors/designers in the devising process.

In both Units, learners could analyse and interpret how practitioners have viewed the different roles and crafts of actors, directors and designers.

## **Working independently to produce a theatrical concept**

In Drama: Production Skills, learners could develop their individual theatrical concept for acting or directing an extract, or designing using set design and one other design area. Learners could develop their own unique theatrical concept in response to their research on the chosen text, their own social context, and work on a key practitioner.

In Drama Skills, learners could produce a distinct concept for their devised material within a wider collaborative piece or conceive of a self-contained drama. Experimentation with form, style and structure could be based on prior knowledge and experience in seeing live theatre, and learners should be encouraged to follow their own independent lines of inquiry toward arriving at their theatrical concept, inspired by the work of a key practitioner(s).

In both Units, independence of thought is crucial to this level of study. Learners could develop such independence through effective creative processes established in prior learning or exemplified by teachers/lecturers. Logging, diarising and other forms of developing a creative workbook could help learners.

## **Applying skills in performing and directing and design**

In Drama: Production Skills, learners have many options for applying skills: acting or directing skills, through a performance of an extract; design skills, through a process of developing their concepts into a series of artefacts and designs; or directors could apply their skills through workshopping an extract with actors.

In Drama Skills, learners could apply their devising and directing skills in the process leading to the presentation, in which they could also apply their acting skills if they choose to do so.

In both Units, the practical nature of drama will allow learners to achieve higher-order thinking through applying skills when creating dramatic work. Prior experience in the key skill areas of acting, directing and design will be enriched in response to the work of practitioners and the analysis of live theatre.

## **Creating and presenting their own theatrical concepts**

In Drama: Production Skills, in response to text and the work of the chosen practitioner(s), learners create their original concepts for performance and present these in an appropriate mode. For acting this is a performance, whereas directors and designers may choose to present their ideas in an appropriate format.

In Drama Skills, creating an original drama requires learners to draw on their prior experiences in devising, their response to the methodologies of their chosen practitioner(s) and to reflect on their own context. A suitable audience is crucial in gaining valuable feedback; learners may choose to gain audience response in any appropriate format.

In both Units, applying skills as an actor, director and designer runs alongside the process of creating and presenting dramatic work. The skills of all three roles are focused on effectively creating and presenting their own concepts, and the impact they have on a live audience.

## **Investigating how meaning can be communicated to an audience**

In Drama: Production Skills, learners could investigate how their practitioner(s) have approached communicating meaning. Research could be used to explore developments made by practitioners. Learners could benefit from investigating the discoveries that practitioners made through mistakes and changes in direction. Being part of a live theatre audience could allow learners to understand and appreciate how meaning can be communicated to an audience.

In Drama Skills, learners could investigate how meaning can be communicated through language, form, structure and style due to the freedom of the devising process. Learners could follow their line of investigation in many ways allowing for personalisation and choice. At this level, learners should respond to the methods of communicating meaning established by a practitioner. Learners could make use of audience feedback to investigate their own communication of meaning.

In both Units, reflection and self-evaluation could be used to investigate how learners succeeded in communicating to audiences. Learners should look at a broad scope of different means of communication, which might include aspects of genre, style, theatrical devices and so on.

## **Using a range of complex creative problem solving, planning and evaluation skills within the creative process**

In Drama: Production Skills, learners could use the creative process of the actor, director or designer to demonstrate their problem solving skills. Each role has different challenges to solve.

As actors, learners need to deliver an effective performance of a character. They could plan their research into the text, rehearsals and characterisation exercises. Actors could experiment with external characterisation and evaluate through a log.

As directors, learners need to conceive of how the actors, elements of the staging, design and audience, and so on, will combine in a coherent communication of meaning. They could plan their research into the text, rehearsals and experiment with style and space, and evaluate through a log.

As designers, learners need to deliver an effective design solution for the space which is functional for actors, but also communicates complex meanings. They could plan their research into the text, produce sketches, source design research, consider a contemporary audience and draft designs with explanations for a

presentation. Designers or directors may choose to evaluate their work within their presentation of concepts.

In Drama Skills, learners could choose a broad range of approaches to demonstrate their problem solving through creating original material. Learners could plan early devising through sourcing text, image, music and objects, generating material through games, exercises and improvisation, and go on to plan their process of drawing material into a coherent piece of drama that communicates meaning. In directing their material, learners may choose many approaches to solving problems of staging and communicating, evaluating through a log.

In both Units, the solutions created by learners are focused on achieving a quality performance. Learners are expected to create impact, reflect on their own contexts and respond to the methods, theories and practice of their practitioners. In this way the Units of the Course allow learners to utilise relevant prior learning.

### **Exploring and investigating the influence, theory, and practice of key theatre practitioners**

In Drama: Production Skills, learners could investigate the key practitioner(s) through exploring what critics have written, as well as multimedia materials on the practitioner's dramatic work, such as videos and photography. A combination of primary and secondary sources could be explored by the learner to discover the theory of the practitioner(s) and how they have engaged in discourse on the practice of performance.

In Drama Skills, learners could investigate the work of practitioners through workshops with their teacher/lecturer. Learners could explore practitioners through using their methods in the creative process, or experiment and adapt these methods.

In both Units, learners are not expected to mimic the typical style and methodology of either practitioner. The exploration and investigation of practitioners is to raise the challenge of the drama work created.

### **Analysing and evaluating the impact of key productions by theatre practitioners**

In both Units, learners could analyse key productions through exploring critical accounts of past productions, video, photography and other media. When evaluating the impact of such work, critical accounts, biographies, interviews and other sources could be explored to inform the judgements of learners. Impact could be interpreted by learners in many ways: some learners may explore the impact of productions on social and theatrical contexts; others may consider audience and critical responses and so on.

# Approaches to learning and teaching

## Sequencing and timing

Sequencing and integration of the learning and teaching and assessment of the Units is at the discretion of the centre.

## Key practitioners

For the purpose of these Units, a key practitioner is someone who creates theatrical performances and who generates a theoretical discourse. Here are some examples:

- ◆ Antonin Artaud
- ◆ Steven Berkoff
- ◆ Augusto Boal
- ◆ Bertolt Brecht
- ◆ Peter Brook
- ◆ Edward Gordon Craig
- ◆ Tim Etchells
- ◆ Vicky Featherstone
- ◆ David Greig
- ◆ Joan Littlewood
- ◆ John McGrath
- ◆ Ariane Mnouchkine
- ◆ Konstantin Stanislavski
- ◆ Peter Stein
- ◆ John Tiffany
- ◆ Helene Weigel

Learners must study the work of two practitioners across the two Units of the Course. This can be one in each Unit or a combination in both Units.

## Possible approaches to learning and teaching — Drama Skills

This Unit will focus on learners developing their knowledge and skills in devising and directing in drama through the exploration of a key practitioner. Learners will undertake the dramatic interpretation and analysis of methodologies, theatre practices and/or texts of a key theatre practitioner in a practical way to individually create their own theatrical statement. The learners will use a variety of acting, directing and design concepts to explore how meaning can be communicated to an audience through practical realisation of their own interpretation of theatrical concepts in a devised drama.

Learners could respond to the social and cultural influences of their chosen practitioner by discussing/researching an area of their theories and/or practice.

The result of this research could be presented back in a variety of ways using appropriate technologies, a mood board, directly addressing the class, or in other visual way. The information from the presentations could be held centrally as an information resource and for assessors to use for assessing learners' work.

Following the presentations, it would be expected that several ideas would emerge. These ideas would be deliberated and discussed. Practical activities could also be used to explore and develop the ideas.

Learners could then decide on the relevant form, structure, genre, style and techniques they need to incorporate in order to communicate their chosen theatrical statement.

A final concept can then be pursued. Learners can select from text, dramatic techniques, acting techniques, style, eg realism, Brechtian, and media and/or appropriate technologies to arrive at their theatrical statement.

After the presentation of the devised piece, the learners will reflect on their work. This could take the form of a written response to questions or a discussion with the assessor and members of their group (this could be videoed or audio recorded or notes taken by the assessor).

It would be expected that assessors would develop learners' understanding of the process of creating a devised drama/theatrical statement, which could be identified as:

- ◆ responding to dramatic techniques and/or text by presenting ideas
- ◆ exploration of techniques informed by practices and methodologies of a chosen practitioner
- ◆ identifying appropriate ideas associated with the chosen practitioner
- ◆ decision on performance style and genre
- ◆ decision on appropriate form and structure
- ◆ researching aspects of chosen practitioner
- ◆ ideas for situations and setting
- ◆ selecting and rejecting ideas
- ◆ rehearsal strategies including opportunities for evaluation
- ◆ using acting techniques and style to create characters for presentation
- ◆ using voice and movement skills to portray character
- ◆ ideas for design and technical aspects (this will enhance learners' knowledge for the *Drama: Production Skills* (Advanced Higher) Unit and/or the project and production analysis
- ◆ presentation
- ◆ evaluation and analysis

## **Possible approaches to learning and teaching — Drama: Production Skills**

The main focus of this Unit will be on the directorial theories and performances or theatrical experimentations of a key theatre practitioner. This will be done by undertaking background reading and research and through practical exploration. The learners will be using text and/or looking at notable productions in order to explore the acting/directing or design influences, and the theories and methodologies of their chosen practitioner.

In addition, learners will analyse and evaluate live production (this may be a streaming or recording of a live performance). The learner will identify aspects of the production that reflect the influence of and the theories, methodologies and practice of the chosen key practitioner on that production.

A key practitioner will be chosen and the learner will explore social and theatrical context, background, influences on, theories, and methodologies through a range of activities. Activities might include research, background reading, practical workshops and prepared presentations. Presentation of research may take the form of using available technologies to communicate their knowledge and understanding of aspects of the practitioner's work to an audience of their peers.

Practical exploration may take the form of workshops for example on the acting techniques of Brecht, the directorial style of Stanislavski or Craig's use of screens. The practical exploration should be appropriate to the chosen practitioner and their chosen production area.

In the Drama: Productions Skills Unit, learners will explore one chosen theatre practitioner. The emphasis of the exploration is from the perspective of their chosen production area as either:

- ◆ an actor (acting)
- or:
- ◆ a director (directing)
- or:
- ◆ a designer (designing lighting/sound/multi-media/set/costume/make up/props)

In looking at the work of the practitioner, learners will explore the productions and/or theatrical experimentations created by the practitioner.

These productions/experimentations will be the significant or key productions/experimentations created by the practitioner.

It may be useful to look at the productions/experimentations in chronological order to highlight or chart the development and progress of the theories, methodologies and practices of the chosen practitioner.

Familiarisation with the pretext may take the form of reading, acting, directing scenes from the texts used by the practitioner. For Brecht: *Edward the Second* by

Marlow/*Beggars Opera* by Gay. For Stanislavski: *Seagull* by Chekhov. Edward Gordon Craig: Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

The next step might be in looking at how the practitioner's theories were evident in the productions/experimentations that he/she was involved within various points in their career.

This may involve the use of contextual evidence such as reviews of the production or the writings of another author on the work of the practitioner or indeed the reflective writing of the practitioner.

An exploration of the overview of the legacy of the practitioner to current theatrical practice will prepare the learners in looking for his or her influences within current live production.

How did the practitioner alter or change practice within his/her theatrical context? What are the key areas in which the chosen practitioner continues to have an influence on theatre production today?

Learners will view and analyse a live theatrical event. Learners will analyse how aspects of the production they have seen have or have not been influenced by their chosen practitioner by drawing comparisons with examples of the practitioner's productions/experimentations.

It is understood that not every set of learners can easily access professional live theatrical performance. Recorded versions of live performances may be used.

# Further information on Coursework

The Advanced Higher Drama Course is assessed through two Components:

- ◆ Performance worth 60 marks
- ◆ Project–dissertation worth 40 marks

## Performance

Marks are allocated to preparation for performance (10 marks) and performance (50 marks) as either an actor, a director or a designer.

### Selection of text

Learners could select texts that interest them based on their learning within the Course, and that allow them to explore, create and apply complex performance concepts in their development process. Teachers/lecturers could advise learners about potential texts that would suit their skills and meet their learning needs in terms of appropriate challenge. Teachers/lecturers may also support the choice of text in light of the predominant performance style developed in the Units. When selecting texts, teachers and learners could look to the list of recommended texts to help them judge the level of challenge appropriate for Advanced Higher.

### Actors

Actors will prepare and perform **two** contrasting roles selected from **different** texts. One extract must involve **interaction** with other characters, and the second must be a **monologue**. Learners do not have to perform with actors that are being assessed, and may choose to act alongside actors from outside of their class.

The acting extracts selected should total around **20 minutes**, with the monologue being around **3 minutes**, and the interactive piece being around **17 minutes**. The performance requires an appropriate 'live' audience and learners should be supported in making audience arrangements.

Actors should apply any appropriate process or style in interpreting the text, making sure to respond to textual and sub-textual clues to develop a clear understanding of the chosen character.

### Directors

Directors will prepare a **substantial extract** from their chosen text, developing their concepts for a performance. In plays structured into acts, a director should develop their detailed concepts for a single act. For other plays,

teachers/lecturers may support learners in ensuring they have selected enough material for assessment. This material should be the equivalent of an act.

For their performance assessment, directors will conduct a rehearsal with actors of a **shorter extract** from the above material that they have been developing. This will be approximately **three pages**. On the day of the performance, this shorter extract will be selected by the Visiting Assessor.

The Visiting Assessor will observe as the director uses their allocated **40 minutes** to conduct their rehearsal. There should not be any other spectator than the Visiting Assessor.

Directors should choose any appropriate method to communicate their directorial concepts to their actors, including diagrams, presentation technology, printed resources, artefacts, objects, and pictures. To set the context of the extract, directors may choose to refer to prior rehearsals with the group, if they have taken place, or make use of role cards, synopses and so on. It is important for directors to note that their concepts for their extract should make sense and be coherent within the context of the whole play. In light of this, directors should ensure they understand how their concepts for the selected extract 'fit in'.

During the performance assessment, directors will be expected to communicate with the actors throughout the rehearsal in a positive and engaging way. They could explain in many ways what they aim to achieve from the rehearsal in terms of their directing concepts for this extract. To enable their actors to approach some of their concepts, directors could choose to run an exercise prior to working on the text itself. The director could use any appropriate directing style to arrive at stage action that would be visually engaging, and also clearly establish how the actors will deliver their lines.

## Designers

Designers will design a **set** for their chosen text and choose **two other** related production roles. These three aspects of design will allow the designer to demonstrate their design concepts for their chosen text.

When exploring their chosen text, the designer should consider setting, period, plot, themes and issues, mood and atmosphere and environmental aspects. Designers should consider how each of these is balanced and has priority according to the textual and sub textual demands of the chosen play.

Designers can draw together and communicate their design concepts in a broad range of ways including through plans, drawings, designs, plot sheets, mood boards, tension graphs, cue sheets, artefacts, video, computer aided design and so on. The designer should consider how the range of their ideas maintains coherency across the play and between their three aspects of design. In addition, designers should aim for their design concepts to be presented to a contemporary audience in a specified performance space, such as a local theatre or studio.

While there are many ways for the designer to create an effective communication of their concepts, at the centre will be a scale set model, built to fit within the specified performance space. There are many ways for designers to craft their model pieces, and teachers/lecturers may advise learners as to effective and accurate means of crafting, such as adapting objects, decorating multifunction shapes, using wire and bars for flown items.

In the performance assessment, designers will have 20 minutes to present their work to the Visiting Assessor. The designer is **not** expected to practically demonstrate their set or their two additional production roles in the space. In other words, there will be no requirement for lighting designs to be demonstrated as lighting cues by a learner operating the lighting desk.

## **Preparation for performance**

All learners will create a succinct and relevant account of their process leading up to the performance; the written report of this should be around **700 words**. There are many ways for learners to approach the preparation for performance; teachers and lecturers should advise students to ensure they cover the four key areas below:

### **1 Research**

Learners should outline their research findings on their chosen text(s). Research on the pretext could include reflections on social, historical and theatrical contexts, playwright intentions, predominant performance style, notable productions or any other appropriate discoveries.

### **2 Description of role**

Following their research, learners will outline their acting/directing/design role. They could explore and define their role in many ways.

- ◆ For actors, this may include: details on the characters they will be portraying, as they see them within the textual and sub textual clues of the plays; the purpose or function of the roles within the playwrights' intentions; and/or the specific challenges of style or genre involved with portrayal of these characters.
- ◆ For directors, this may include: details on the roles, relationships and situations, as they see them within the textual and sub textual clues of the play; the tension, politics, comedy or other function of the various key moments of the selected extract within the playwright's intentions; and/or the specific challenges of style, genre and form involved with staging these scenes.
- ◆ For designers, this may include: details on the on-stage setting, mood and atmosphere; the off-stage world as they see them within the textual and sub textual clues of the play; the symbolism, rhythms, textures, and other elements of visual/aural meaning within the playwright's intentions; and/or the specific challenges of style, genre, form and function involved with staging this play.

### **3 Thoughts and ideas**

Actors, directors and designers will explain a range of relevant thoughts and ideas on the interpretation of their defined role for their own production. For each role, learners can explore a range of technical and creative ideas that will: demonstrate accuracy in responding to the demands of the play; while also showing their own creative response in developing a performance for a contemporary audience.

### **4 Development of ideas into a final concept**

All learners will include in their review a concise summary of key aspects of their process in developing these ideas for performance. Learners could explore any appropriate process, according to their chosen style, the demands of the chosen play(s) and their interpretation of their role. Each learner should outline their final performance concepts, with clear justification.

## **Project–dissertation**

Marks are allocated for the learner identifying a performance issue, carrying out appropriate research and communicating their findings in the form of a dissertation. This dissertation should be word processed and should be **2,500 to 3,000** words in length. Learners are expected to acknowledge their sources of evidence, including visual evidence as appropriate.

### **Finding a research area and a performance issue**

The project is an opportunity for learners to research an aspect of drama that interests them. Learners can approach the focus and nature of their project in diverse ways; it is important that they take the lead in identifying this research area. Teachers/lecturers could give key advice to learners in response to their research choices. Learners could undertake work with their teacher/lecturer exploring the assessment criteria of the dissertation to help learners in their choices.

Some learners may elect to add depth to the production role in which they have specialised in the Course, such as researching an area of acting, directing or design. Alternatively, learners may elect to explore a performance issue that combines or moves away from these roles.

For example a learner has specialised in directing during the Course, and has become interested in the difference between textual language and visual elements as an alternative means of communication on stage. In discussion with their teacher/lecturer, they arrive at a research area of 'visual style vs spoken language' and a performance issue of 'analysing the choices of directors to communicate visually more than through spoken language.'

## Analysis of evidence

The dissertation Component is open-ended in that learners can gather a broad range of evidence from all relevant areas of performance and critical theory. At this level, learners are expected to draw evidence from the work of key theatre practitioners in terms of examples from **performances or theatrical experiments**, in addition to evidence from the contributions made to the **critical discourse** on the performance issue identified. In other words, learners could analyse specific examples of significant productions staged by a practitioner, and reflect on how these examples shed light on their chosen issue; learners could then go on to analyse the significance of a practitioner's ideas on the performance issue as they had expressed them in interviews, articles or books and so on. Learners may choose to analyse significant figures from theatre history, or they could be practitioners working currently, or even a combination of both.

Learners may find some appropriate performance material from discoveries made during their own practice, however, the dissertation requires them to identify alternative perspectives to their own and so the learner would need to analyse professional practice and theories. Teachers/lecturers may offer advice on effective methods of noting references.

For example the directing student became a fan of the work of Brecht during the Production Skills Unit. In tutorial discussion, the learner became animated as he talked through his recent analysis of Brecht's varied views on language, playwrights and the importance of visual communication.

## Synthesis through comparing and contrasting evidence

In researching their performance issue learners will gather diverse perspectives and examples that will shed light onto their ideas and understanding. Learners can undertake a synthesis of these alternative perspectives through their linking of knowledge and/or information from within or between sources. In other words, as the learner gathers their research evidence they can combine examples that show common approaches to performance, or perhaps how practitioners have shown contrasting approaches.

Learners can explore their evidence in many ways: contrasts over time, and track changes in style and theory within their research area; conflict between the intentions and theories of practitioners, and the expression of these in practice; shifts in priority within their performance issue in response to contextual pressures and so on.

Teachers/lecturers could use various ongoing assessment methods to ensure that learners do not lean too far toward researching performance theories alone, or even neglect theory completely, in favour of performance analysis.

For example in a further tutorial, the discussion shifted to how the learner had observed a shift toward the visual in two productions that he had seen over the last two years. He left the tutorial determined to do some analysis of these recent plays, and find out the views of these directors on visual style vs spoken language.

## **Expressing an argument**

Over the timespan of the project–dissertation, learners could take a range of critical stances toward their performance issue. Learners could use different methods of ongoing self-evaluation to track how their ideas are influenced in response to their learning. Teachers/lecturers could use periodic discussion, spot-checks and/or other assessment methods to gauge how well learners are developing their own point of view toward their performance issue. As the work develops, learners could make use of teacher discussions to explore a working title for their dissertation, and gain a clearer view of their research and their major argument.

During periods of writing up their work, learners could explore different methods of using persuasive and critical language as appropriate for a dissertation. Teachers/lecturers could support learners in exploring structural, analytical and discursive techniques in drafting their dissertations.

Each learner should maintain their focus on their chosen title so that at regular points in the dissertation they can be sure they are addressing their performance issue. There are many ways that learners could connect and synthesise their researched material so that their various sources of evidence, theory and reflections build into an overarching thesis.

As they undertake their research, learners could make use of research logs or diaries to help them journal their thoughts and opinions about their performance issue. Looking back over such notes and comments, learners could develop their own voice within their dissertation, expressed as a through-line of opinion.

Learners can choose how they wish to express their evaluative comments on their sources: some learners may offer a critique of how effectively a practitioner puts their theories into practice; others may evaluate the impact a performance decision had on the social or theatrical context; while other learners may make value judgements on a significant change in a style or technique over time and so on.

Through discussion, tutorials and other periodic assessments, teachers and lecturers could support learners in developing their through-line of argument toward a conclusion.

For example the directing student has gathered his analysed evidence from a range of theories and performances by Brecht involved in visual style and spoken language. He has found a series of interview evidence from the directors of his two recent productions, one of which has a company manifesto reflecting visual style. He has developed the material into a piece of extended writing where he makes specific points about the shifts in emphasis in style. In one of his final tutorials, his teacher offers constructive questioning on his ideas, and he leaves with a confident idea of how he now views his performance issue, ready to finish his conclusion.

*'To see or not to see': visual style taking centre stage*

## Support

Teachers/lecturers may provide guidance and support as part of the normal teaching and learning process. However, the teacher or lecturer should not adopt a directive role. In the early stages of the project, it would be reasonable to offer assistance through exemplifying areas for research and facilitating learners in arriving at a focus that has sufficient scope for the assessment.

It is reasonable for teachers/lecturers to probe the progress being made, prompt healthy dialogue on the research area and offer examples of appropriate approaches to documenting, generating literature reviews and so on. Teachers/lecturers would be offering reasonable assistance in suggesting literature on theories, processes and practices that would illuminate learner research. Toward the later stages, teachers/lecturers would take on a more consultative role, responding to learner enquiries when asked.

Reasonable assistance could take the form of approving or challenging the titles and/or questions that learners set themselves to draw together their project research; supporting learners in seeing live performance; accessing video and other media; engaging group discussion and responding to reflections made.

Finally, it is reasonable for teachers/lecturers to guide the learner in how to present and reference their work. Teachers/lecturers should put in place processes for monitoring progress and ensuring that the work is the learner's own and that plagiarism has not taken place. For example:

- ◆ regular checkpoint/progress meetings with the learner
- ◆ short spot-check personal interviews
- ◆ checklists which record activity/progress
- ◆ photographs, film or audio evidence

# Project–dissertation examples

Research area	Performance issue	Title	Specific focus
<b>Directing</b>	Directorial techniques used to bring contemporary relevance to classic texts	<i>CATS — The impact of multiple award winner, Dominic Hill, on Glasgow's Citizens Theatre</i>	Analysis of the directorial style of Dominic Hill as Artistic Director of the Citizens Theatre in 2011, referencing David Hayman's <i>King Lear</i> , in his inaugural season, and Brian Ferguson's <i>Hamlet</i> in 2014. Contrasts and comparison drawn between Hill's style and the interpretation of Shakespeare by Stanislavski.
<b>The director and the playwright</b>	The creative output of the RSC under the artistic direction of Gregory Doran.	<i>Putting Shakespeare at the centre of the RSC — Gregory Doran's interpretation of the bard</i>	An analysis of Doran's directorial style with reference to three notable RSC productions, with specific reference to his written work on Shakespeare as well as his direction of the texts.
<b>Theatre technology</b>	Changes in the use of technology affecting how meaning is created and received.	<i>Innovation on a West End scale — The use of technology in the National Theatre's 'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time'</i>	A specific analysis of the innovative use of lighting in the National Theatre's production of <i>The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time</i> , drawing comparisons with the use of light, shadow and colour employed by Craig.
<b>Politics in performance</b>	Scottish political theatre since the 1970s	<i>From Wildcat to 'A Play, A Pie and A Pint' — The Contribution of David MacLennan and Dave Anderson to political theatre in Scotland</i>	Analysis of the popular theatre techniques employed by Anderson and MacLennan through Wildcat Stage Productions (1978–97), drawing comparisons with the range of work commissioned through Glasgow's Oran Mor lunchtime theatre programme (2004–14) by the same creative team. Direct links are identified between the directorial, writing and performance techniques employed by both practitioners and the Epic Theatre of Brecht.

<b>Acting</b>	Analysing the relevancy of Stanislavski's system for actor training	<i>Contemporary actor training in Scotland</i>	By considering Stanislavski's teachings evidenced in his manuals for actor training — <i>An Actor Prepares, Creating a Role, Building a Character</i> and accounts of the rehearsals in the final seasons of the MXAT and analysing the relevancy to the training of actors in The Royal Conservatoire and Queen Margaret University/Napier University BA Acting courses.
<b>Community theatre</b>	How professional theatre makers give voice to local communities without speaking on their behalf	<i>We are here: the community performs</i>	By considering the theories and projects of Welfare State International and Baz Kershaw, gathering specific features of how practitioners enable and facilitate the community in celebrating their identity and giving voice to their concerns. Analysing two community performances from the 21st century to draw out how current practitioners engage with communities to enable them to perform with their own voice.

# Recommended texts

Metamorphosis	Steven Berkoff
Mother Courage	Bertolt Brecht
Woyzeck	Georg Buchner
The Seagull	Anton Chekhov
Top Girls	Caryl Churchill
Les Liaisons Dangereuses	Christopher Hampton
Mary Stuart	David Harrower
A Doll's House	Henrik Ibsen
The Trial	Franz Kafka
Blood and Ice	Liz Lochhead
Medea	Liz Lochhead
Oleanna	David Mamet
Dr Faustus	Christopher Marlowe
All My Sons	Arthur Miller
The James Plays	Rona Munro
God of Carnage	Yasmina Reza
Mrs Warren's Profession	George Bernard Shaw
Pygmalion	George Bernard Shaw
Romeo and Juliet	William Shakespeare
The Tempest	William Shakespeare
As You Like It	William Shakespeare
A Midsummer Night's Dream	William Shakespeare
Hamlet	William Shakespeare
Miss Julie	August Strindberg
Duchess of Malfi	John Webster
A Streetcar Named Desire	Tennessee Williams
The Glass Menagerie	Tennessee Williams
An Ideal Husband	Oscar Wilde

# Appendix 1: Reference documents

The following reference documents will provide useful information and background.

- ◆ Assessment Arrangements (for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs) — various publications are available on SQA's website at: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa//14977.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa//14977.html).
- ◆ Building the Curriculum 4: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work
- ◆ Building the Curriculum 5: A Framework for Assessment
- ◆ [Course Specification](#)
- ◆ [Design Principles for National Courses](#)
- ◆ [Guide to Assessment](#)
- ◆ Principles and practice papers for curriculum areas
- ◆ [SCQF Handbook: User Guide](#) and [SCQF level descriptors](#)
- ◆ [SQA Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work](#)
- ◆ [Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work: Using the Curriculum Tool](#)
- ◆ [Coursework Authenticity: A Guide for Teachers and Lecturers](#)

# Administrative information

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## History of changes to Advanced Higher draft Course/Unit Support Notes

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
2.0	Extensive changes throughout document. Information added to support learning and teaching, and strategies for assessment.	Qualifications Development Manager	May 2015

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