Higher English Course Support Notes

Contents

Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the Higher English Course. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering the Course and its Units. They should be read in conjunction with the *Course Specification*, the *Course Assessment Specification* and the Unit Specifications for the Units in the Course.

General guidance on the Course

Aims

The Course offers learners opportunities to develop and extend a wide range of skills. In particular, the Course aims to enable learners to develop the ability to:

♦ listen, talk, read and write, as appropriate to purpose, audience and context
♦ understand, analyse and evaluate texts, including Scottish texts, as appropriate to purpose and audience in the contexts of literature, language and media
♦ create and produce texts, as appropriate to purpose, audience and context
♦ apply knowledge and understanding of language

Progression into this Course

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

♦ English (National 5) or relevant component Units
♦ English Standard Grade — Credit level
♦ English Intermediate 2 or relevant component Units

Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Course

This section provides further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding involved in the Course.

Note: 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 Course enables learners to communicate, be critical thinkers, develop cultural awareness, and be creative. The following summarises the skills, knowledge and understanding from the mandatory content of the Course:

♦ listening, talking, reading and writing skills, as appropriate to purpose and audience
♦ understanding, analysing and evaluating detailed and complex texts, as appropriate to purpose and audience in the contexts of literature, language and media — texts studied must include Scottish texts
♦ creating and producing detailed and complex texts, as appropriate to purpose and audience in a wide range of contexts
♦ knowledge and understanding of language

Progression from this Course

Progression from Higher English includes opportunities for vertical and lateral progression to:

♦ Advanced Higher English
♦ other appropriate subject qualifications at SCQF level 6
♦ National Certificates
♦ further and higher education
♦ employment

Hierarchies

Hierarchy is the term used to describe Courses and Units which form a structured sequence 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.

In the case of the Higher English Course, there are some important issues to address. The Higher English Course fits into a hierarchy with the English (National 5) Course at the level below, and there are therefore no structural differences between the two. They are of course different in level of demand.

The Higher English Course has a two-Unit structure, comprising two core Units and an external assessment.

English: structure of Courses at levels 3–6

National 3	National 4	National 5	Higher
Understanding Language	Analysis and Evaluation	Analysis and Evaluation	Analysis and Evaluation
Using Language	Creation and Production	Creation and Production	Creation and Production
Literacy	Literacy		
	Added Value Unit	Course assessment	Course assessment

This means that, while Higher English and English (National 5) are in hierarchy, careful planning will be required in respect of the following issues:

♦ groups where there are learners following courses which lead to both English (National 5) and Higher English qualifications
♦ where learners start a Higher English Course and are then better suited to English (National 5)
♦ where learners start an English (National 5) Course and are then better suited to Higher English

Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment

Learners should be given the opportunity to build on prior learning and to increase their knowledge about English.

Learning about Scotland and Scottish culture will enrich the learners' learning experience and help them to develop the skills for learning, life and work they will need to prepare them for taking their place in a diverse, inclusive and participative Scotland and beyond. Where there are opportunities to contextualise approaches to learning and teaching to Scottish contexts, teachers and lecturers should consider this. Sensitivity to learners' beliefs should be shown in the selection of texts.

There are opportunities to combine the learning and teaching of the Unit *English: Analysis and Evaluation* with the Unit *English: Creation and Production*.

The following examples illustrate ways to develop the skills in this Course.

Approaches to literature
Critical reading and listening activities will engage the learner in a wide variety of written, visual and spoken texts, including some of their own choice. Learners' responses to texts, both spoken and written, may take the form of written or spoken responses, often to questions, but may also involve use of the following: diagrammatic representation; underlining and text marking; devising their own questions prompted by analysis and evaluation of texts.

Learners can learn about a range of genre features through both critical and imaginative exercises that allow them to analyse, evaluate and demonstrate a grasp of relevant literary forms.

Learners may also work independently and collaboratively to create learning materials which involve reading and critical analysis of a literary text and enable further extended critical response. They may create notes, learning games, quizzes, and posters to capture knowledge and develop analysis.

Approaches to language
In the study of non-fiction texts, eg newspaper, TV and internet journalism, persuasive written and spoken texts, learners can:

♦ develop independent, analytical evaluation skills by: examining the relationship of title to text; looking at/listening for evidence of the point of view and tone adopted; underlining/picking out words that convey and imply the relationship with the reader/listener
♦ demonstrate their knowledge of relevant genre features through production of pieces of genre writing
♦ use group discussion to focus on such topics as: the language of persuasion, the language of broadsheet journalism, the language of radio discussion programmes

Approaches to media
Learners can:

♦ focus on aspects of media such as: representation, genre, audience, language and narrative; in advertising, TV fiction, feature film; and on techniques such as editing, symbolism, perspective
♦ develop knowledge and understanding of key features of multi-modal texts, eg webpages, blogs, news
♦ look at how different news providers cover the same story, for example *The Independent*, BBC early evening news and an online news provider like MSNBC, looking at: language; audience; editorial voice; audience
♦ investigate authorship of online writing to assess authority and authenticity of the source

A range of literary, linguistic and media contexts can be used to develop the learners' talking and listening skills. Learners' group and solo talking skills can be addressed through a fiction, non-fiction and/or media study where learners can be engaged in the critical listening of texts. Learners should be afforded opportunities to discuss reactions to texts and then create learning resources based on them.

Learners' talking and listening skills can be developed through group discussion activities, topics or literary studies (debates, hot seating, interviewing characters) and should develop learners' questioning, summarising and rebuttal skills.

Learners should peer-assess critical responses using active learning techniques.

Combining assessment across Units

The Units, with the additional time for external assessment, constitute the Course. It is envisaged that usually the Course should be taught not as a sequence of Units but that Unit Outcomes should be addressed in an integrated programme of study.

Integrating talking and listening
Group and individual talking skills can be addressed through a fiction, non-fiction or media study where learners can be engaged in the critical listening of a text.

Talking and listening skills can be developed through group and class discussion activities, topics or literary studies (debates, hot-seating, interviewing characters). Learners may need guidance to develop questioning skills and techniques, eg presentation, elaboration, summarising and rebuttal.

Learners may script and produce their own regular podcasts to highlight their learning. As well as encouraging the development of talking and listening skills, this may act as a log of their learning journey.

Learners may explore the necessity of careful listening by exploring how comedy depends on careful listening.

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.

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

Question paper
Question paper 1: reading for understanding, analysis and evaluation
Preparation for this part of the assessment should focus on the development of higher order reading skills. Many of these should proceed from learning in the Units. There is value to learners in: using advance organisers; developing strategies for using their own words; learning how to summarise parts of texts; bringing their own questions to the text.

Question paper 2: critical reading
Section 1: Scottish texts: The format of the task on Scottish texts will involve a limited number of questions which open out from a specific focus on aspects of an extract to wider discussion. Preparation for this part of the assessment should involve a focused study on theme, characters, setting, and use of language (as appropriate to genre). Learners should develop an understanding of how an extract of a writer's work can be extrapolated to a wider discussion on theme and technique.

Section 2: critical essay: Preparation for this will focus on the three main areas: the key aspects of the texts studied; how to extract meaning from a question; and how to plan the writing of a critical essay in response.

Portfolio
Preparation for this part of the assessment should focus on the development of content, style and accuracy in the written word, and should build on the skills gained in the *Creation and Production* Unit. Learners will benefit from a focused discussion of genre, and the contrasting styles and structures of discursive and creative writing.

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

Learners are expected to develop broad generic skills as an integral part of their learning experience. The *Course Specification* lists the skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work that learners should develop through this Course. These are based on SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work* and must be built into the Course where there are appropriate opportunities. The level of these skills will be appropriate to the level of the Course.

1   Literacy
1.1 Reading
1.2 Writing
1.3 Listening and talking

5   Thinking skills
5.3 Applying
5.4 Analysing and evaluating

The table below provides some suggested opportunities of how these skills can be further developed within the Course.

Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work	Approaches for learning and teaching
1. Literacy	1.1 Reading This may be usefully developed by activities that: ♦ involve fiction and non-fiction texts ♦ use discussion to help learners engage with texts and identify the ideas within texts Activities to support them in identifying the ideas within texts include: ♦ asking and answering questions ♦ comparing and contrasting ♦ sorting and sequencing ♦ summarising clarifying and predicting ♦ text completion Learners will also benefit from activities focusing on the audience and purpose of texts. 1.2 Writing Learners may be encouraged to plan their writing by: ♦ creating mind maps ♦ peer discussion where they consider the genre, audience and purpose for their writing

	Learners' writing will benefit from: ♦ discussing structure and layout ♦ building up sentences, by linking ♦ planning paragraphs ♦ use of topic and concluding sentences ♦ developing vocabulary ♦ developing technical skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling ♦ using plans for writing 1.3 Listening and talking Wherever appropriate, learners should be encouraged to use language skills in real language situations. In such situations, particularly drawn from life and work, activities may involve: ♦ asking and answering questions ♦ listening for and making comparisons/contrasts ♦ summarising, clarifying and predicting
5. Thinking skills	5.3 Applying In order to do this in a supported way at this level, learners should be given the chance to work on language tasks which are carefully stepped and, sequenced, allowing them to work from what they know and to apply it to different situations. 5.4 Analysing and evaluating A range of kinds of texts is vital in developing analysing and evaluating skills in listening and reading in order to develop learners' awareness of such aspects as: ♦ gist and effect on audience ♦ distinguishing fact and opinion ♦ discussing bias, balance and point of view

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 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.

Appendix 1: Reference documents

The following reference documents will provide useful information and background.

♦ Assessment Arrangements (for disabled learners and/or those with additional support needs) — various publications are available on SQA's website at: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa//14977.html
♦ Association for Scottish Literary Studies
♦ *Building the Curriculum 3: A framework for Learning and Teaching*
♦ *Building the Curriculum 4: Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work*
♦ *Building the Curriculum 5: A framework for assessment*
♦ Course Specifications
♦ Design Principles for National Courses
♦ *Guide to Assessment* (June 2008)
♦ Principles and practice papers for curriculum areas
♦ *SCQF Handbook: User Guide* (published 2009) and SCQF level descriptors (reviewed during 2011 to 2012): www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/4595.html
♦ *SQA Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*
♦ SQA e-assessment web page: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/5606.html

Administrative information

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History of changes to Course Support Notes

Course details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
	1.1	'Sensitivity to learner's beliefs' statement added. 'Oral/aural' changed to 'spoken' throughout the document'.	Qualifications Development Manager	June 2014

Unit Support Notes — English: Analysis and Evaluation (Higher)

Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the *English: Analysis and Evaluation* (Higher) Unit. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering this Unit. They should be read in conjunction with:

♦ the *Unit Specification*
♦ the *Course Specification*
♦ the *Course Assessment Specification*
♦ the *Course Support Notes*
♦ appropriate assessment support materials

If the *Unit Support Notes* have been developed for a Unit which is not part of a Course, then it is only necessary to read them in conjunction with the *Unit Specification*.

General guidance on the Unit

Aims

The general aim of this Unit is to provide learners with the opportunity to develop and extend reading and listening skills. Learners develop the skills needed to understand, analyse and evaluate a wide range of detailed and complex texts in the contexts of literature, language and media.

Learners who complete this Unit will be able to:

1   Understand, analyse and evaluate detailed and complex written texts
2   Understand, analyse and evaluate detailed and complex spoken language

Progression into this Unit

Entry is at the discretion of the centre and learners would normally be expected to have attained one of the following:

♦   National 5 English Course
♦   English Standard Grade — Credit level
♦   English Intermediate 2 or relevant component Units
♦   other relevant prior learning and experience

Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Unit

Information about skills, knowledge and understanding is given in the Higher English *Course Support Notes.*

If this Unit is being delivered on a free-standing basis, teachers and lecturers are free to select the skills, knowledge, understanding and contexts which are most appropriate for delivery in their centres.

Progression from this Unit

Progression from this Unit may lead to:

♦   other Higher English Units
♦   further study

Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment

The following examples illustrate ways to develop the skills in this Unit:

Approaches to developing as independent readers
Learners can:

♦ develop skills in note-making and annotating texts independently; for this it will be helpful to use structured methodology, modelled by the teacher, to engage with a range of texts, using critical terminology, mind-maps, diagrammatic representations and conceptual frameworks for tracking key features of a text
♦ be exposed to a range of texts to allow them to acquire the knowledge of genre features which they can bring to work on subsequent texts of their own

Tasks may be embedded in teaching and learning that encourage learners to understand key ideas and use analytical vocabulary in order to analyse literary techniques (word choice, syntax, imagery etc) and to examine the writer's purpose.

Learners may:

♦ be shown how to begin to develop a bank of reading materials drawn from various sources — these can be analysed and discussed, building from the basic model of the book report
♦ experience a variety of reading materials including novels, short stories, non-fiction (essays, travel writing, journalism, blogs, etc)

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 *Unit Support Notes* is designed to sit alongside these duties but is specific to the delivery and assessment of the Unit.

Alternative approaches to Unit assessment to take account of the specific needs of learners can be used. However, the centre must be satisfied that the integrity of the assessment is maintained and that the alternative approach to assessment will, in fact, generate the necessary evidence of achievement.

Appendix 1: Reference documents

The following reference documents will provide useful information and background.

♦ Assessment Arrangements (for disabled learners and/or those with additional support needs) — various publications on SQA's website: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa//14977.html
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♦ *Research Report 4 — Less is More: Good Practice in Reducing Assessment Time*
♦ Course*work Authenticity — a Guide for Teachers and Lecturers*
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Administrative information

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History of changes to Unit Support Notes

Unit details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
	1.1	Mandatory statement about Scottish texts removed.	Qualifications Development Manager	June 2014

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Unit Support Notes — English: Creation and Production (Higher)

Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the *English: Creation and Production* (Higher) Unit. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering this Unit. They should be read in conjunction with:

♦ the *Unit Specification*
♦ the *Course Specification*
♦ the *Course Assessment Specification*
♦ the *Course Support Notes*
♦ appropriate assessment support materials

If the *Unit Support Notes* have been developed for a Unit which is not part of a Course, then it is only necessary to read them in conjunction with the *Unit Specification*.

General guidance on the Unit

Aims

The general aim of this Unit is to provide learners with the opportunity to develop and extend writing and talking skills in a wide range of contexts. Learners develop the skills needed to create and produce detailed and complex language in both written and spoken forms.

Learners who complete this Unit will be able to:

1   Create and produce detailed and complex written texts
2   Participate actively in detailed and complex spoken activities

Progression into this Unit

Entry is at the discretion of the centre and learners would normally be expected to have attained one of the following:

♦ National 5 English Course
♦ English Standard Grade — Credit level
♦ English Intermediate 2 Course or relevant component Units
♦ other relevant prior learning and experience

Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Unit

Information about skills, knowledge and understanding is given in the Higher English *Course Support Notes*.

If this Unit is being delivered on a free-standing basis, teachers and lecturers are free to select the skills, knowledge, understanding and contexts which are most appropriate for delivery in their centres.

Progression from this Unit

Progression from this Unit may lead to:

♦ other Higher English Units
♦ further study

Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment

Approaches to developing and encouraging learners to engage in independent study in relation to their own writing programme

Learners should be encouraged to display an understanding and appreciation of a selection of genre forms and features.

Planning, writing and editing texts may be developed as a set of integrated skills and provide evidence that the learner has employed, manipulated or transformed literary conventions for a particular purpose, eg monologue, drama script, short story, discursive or persuasive extended writing.

Developing writing strategies for the range of written genres
Learners should be involved in tasks that develop knowledge and understanding of the genre features of a range of texts, eg persuasive, discursive, creative, and reflective.

By engaging with the stylistic features of each genre, learners may experiment with a range of styles, demonstrating their ability to produce their best work, which could include dramatic monologue, short story, film script, a discursive debate, a persuasive piece, a journalistic report, an extended reflection of an experience or concept.

Learners could create a working folio in which evidence of the trialling of various writing types is stored.

Learners should be encouraged to collect examples of writing they enjoy and find entertaining and to discuss writing.

Learners should develop an understanding of how language is used to create particular effects as they attempt the following: writing a trial piece to show understanding of the conventions of the short story (linked to texts used elsewhere in the Course/in the *Analysis and Evaluation* Unit); the creation of a dramatic monologue; personal reflective writing piece/autobiographical writing; TV news report, travel writing, advertising.

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 *Unit Support Notes* is designed to sit alongside these duties but is specific to the delivery and assessment of the Unit.

Alternative approaches to Unit assessment to take account of the specific needs of learners can be used. However, the centre must be satisfied that the integrity of the assessment is maintained and that the alternative approach to assessment will, in fact, generate the necessary evidence of achievement.

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♦ SQA e-assessment web page: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/5606.html

Administrative information

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History of changes to Unit Support Notes

Unit details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
	1.1	Throughout the document 'oral/aural' changed to 'spoken'. 'Take part in detailed and complex spoken interactions' changed to 'Participate actively in detailed and complex spoken activities'.	Qualifications Development Manager	June 2014

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