



National
Qualifications

Drama

Project-dissertation

General assessment information

This pack contains general assessment information for centres preparing candidates for the project Component of Advanced Higher Drama Course assessment.

It must be read in conjunction with the specific assessment task for this Component of Course assessment which may only be downloaded from SQA's designated secure website by authorised personnel.

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Introduction

This is the general assessment information for the Advanced Higher Drama project-dissertation.

This Component is worth 40 marks out of a total of 100 marks. This is 40% of the overall marks for the Course assessment. The Course will be graded A-D.

Marks for all Course Components are added up to give a total Course assessment mark which is then used as the basis for grading decisions.

This is one of two Components of Course assessment. The other Component is a performance worth 60 marks.

This document describes the general requirements for the assessment of the project Component for this Course. It gives general information and instructions for assessors.

It must be read in conjunction with the assessment task for this Component of Course assessment.

Equality and inclusion

This Course assessment has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to assessment. Assessments have been designed to promote equal opportunities while maintaining the integrity of the qualification.

For guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs, please follow the link to the Assessment Arrangements web page: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html

Guidance on inclusive approaches to delivery and assessment in this Course is provided in the *Course/Unit Support Notes*.

What this assessment covers

This assessment contributes 40% of the total marks for the Course.

The assessment will assess the skills, knowledge and understanding specified for the project in the *Course Assessment Specification*. These are:

- ◆ demonstrating a depth of knowledge and understanding of key practitioners and their influence on current practice
- ◆ demonstrating a depth of knowledge and understanding of performance issues

Assessment

Purpose

The purpose of this assessment is to generate evidence for the added value of this Course by means of a project.

In this Course assessment, added value will focus on the following:

- ◆ challenge – requiring greater depth or extension of knowledge and/or skills
- ◆ application – requiring application of knowledge and/or skills in practical or theoretical contexts as appropriate

The assessor will support the candidate to choose the focus, theme and genre for his/her project.

Assessment overview

In the project, the candidate is asked to identify a performance issue, carry out appropriate research and communicate their findings in the form of a dissertation: word processed; 2,500 to 3,000 words in length; acknowledging sources; and including visual evidence as appropriate.

Throughout the project, candidates will draw on and add depth to their skills, knowledge and understanding developed in the Units of the Course. The project will offer candidates personalisation and choice – they will research an aspect of drama that interests them. Through this independent research, the project will allow candidates to demonstrate a depth of knowledge and understanding of key theatre practitioners – and their influence on current practice – and demonstrate a depth of knowledge and understanding of performance theories, processes and practices, within the context of their identified issue.

At Advanced Higher level, candidates must take the lead in articulating the focus and nature of their project. Centres should ensure that the choices made by candidates fall within the scope of the Advanced Higher Drama project marking instructions, as described in the assessment task, and that these will allow for assessment of the full range of skills, knowledge and understanding of the Course assessment. In this way, professional discretion is required by assessors when giving advice to candidates in response to their research choices. Candidates may elect to add depth to the production role in which they have specialised in the Course, such as identifying a performance issue in acting, directing or design. Alternatively, candidates may elect to research a performance issue that combines or moves away from these roles. Candidates may find some appropriate performance material from discoveries made during their own practice, however, the Advanced Higher Drama project requires candidates to identify alternative perspectives to their own and to synthesise the evidence from all of their sources to produce a coherent line of argument.

Assessors should provide reasonable guidance on the types of issue which will enable candidates to meet all the requirements of this assessment. They may also guide candidates as to the likely availability and accessibility of resources for their chosen issue.

Candidates should work on their research with minimum support from the assessor.

Assessment conditions

Assessors must exercise their professional responsibility in ensuring that evidence submitted by a candidate is the candidate's own work.

This project will be set by centres within SQA guidelines and conducted under some supervision and control. The evidence for assessment will be produced independently by the candidate in time to meet a submission date set by SQA.

Evidence will be submitted to SQA for external marking.

All marking will be quality assured by SQA.

This assessment will be carried out over a period of time. Candidates should start at an appropriate point in the Course. This will normally be after they have started work on the Units in the Course.

Evidence which meets the requirements of this Component of Course assessment will be 2,500 to 3,000 words. The word count should be submitted with the project. If the word count exceeds 10%, a penalty will be applied.

Reasonable assistance

Coursework in Advanced Higher may involve candidates undertaking a larger amount of autonomous work without close supervision than they have previously undertaken. Teachers may provide guidance and support as part of the normal teaching and learning process. However, teachers should not adopt a directive role or provide specific advice on how to re-phrase, improve responses or provide model answers.

Candidates must undertake the assessment independently, whatever the focus of their research. However, non-directive, reasonable assistance may be provided prior to the formal assessment process taking place. The term 'reasonable assistance' suggests that support for candidates in accessing the format of this assessment is balanced with the need to maintain challenge as appropriate to this level. If candidates require more than what is deemed to be 'reasonable assistance', then they may not be ready for assessment or it may be that they have been entered for the wrong level of qualification.

The project will be conducted under some supervision and control. This means that although candidates may complete part of the work outside the learning

and teaching setting, assessors should put in place processes for monitoring progress and ensuring that the work is the candidate's own and that plagiarism has not taken place.

Assessors should put in place mechanisms to authenticate candidate evidence. For example:

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

Group work approaches as part of the preparation for assessment can be helpful to simulate real-life situations, share tasks and promote team working skills. However, group work is not appropriate once formal work on assessment has started.

Centres should take all reasonable measures to ensure candidates explore their own areas of interest in drama.

In the early stages of the project, it would be reasonable to offer assistance through exemplifying areas for research and facilitating candidates in arriving at a focus that has sufficient scope for the assessment.

As the project proceeds, it is reasonable for assessors 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. Assessors would be offering reasonable assistance in suggesting literature on theories, processes and practices that would illuminate candidate research.

Toward the later stages, assessors would take on a more consultative role, responding to candidate enquiries when asked. Reasonable assistance could take the form of approving or challenging the titles and/or questions that candidates set themselves to draw together their project research; supporting candidates in seeing live performance; accessing video and other media; engaging group discussion and responding to reflections made.

Finally, it is reasonable for assessors to assist through ensuring presentation, referencing and printing standards, and the packaging and labelling of candidate evidence and so on.

At any stage, reasonable assistance does not include:

- ◆ providing the issue for the candidate
- ◆ providing model answers

Evidence to be gathered

The following candidate evidence is required for this assessment:

- ◆ candidate project (2,500 to 3,000 words)

General Marking Instructions

In line with SQA's normal practice, the following General Marking Instructions are addressed to the marker. They will also be helpful for those preparing candidates for Course assessment.

Evidence will be submitted to SQA for external marking.

All marking will be quality assured by SQA.

General Marking principles for the Advanced Higher Drama project-dissertation

This information is provided to help you understand the general principles you must apply when marking candidate responses to this project. These principles must be read in conjunction with the Detailed Marking Instructions, which identify the key features required in candidate responses.

- a) Marks for each candidate response must always be assigned in line with these General Marking Principles and the Detailed Marking Instructions for this assessment.
- b) Marking should always be positive. This means that, for each candidate response, marks are accumulated for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding: they are not deducted from a maximum on the basis of errors or omissions.
- c) Principal Assessors will provide guidance on marking specific candidate responses which are not covered by either the General Marking Principles or the Detailed Marking Instructions.

A. Analysing theory and performance examples that explore a chosen issue

Candidates can be credited in a number of ways up to a maximum of 15 marks.

For analysis marks to be awarded candidates must:

- ◆ describe specific features of performance and aspects of theory relevant to their issue
- ◆ explain and develop these features regarding the issue (through exemplification, and/or contextual evidence)
- ◆ use valid sources such as reference to theory, critical perspectives and performances

B. Synthesising by comparing and contrasting different ways the issue has been explored

Candidates can be credited in a number of ways up to a maximum of 15 marks.

Synthesis involves the linking of knowledge and/or information from within or between sources.

For synthesis marks to be awarded candidates must:

- ◆ organise their material so as to draw out contrasts and comparisons
- ◆ show a breadth of research (this can be from historical as well as current work, across different forms and styles, between early and late work of a practitioner/company and any further manner of showing breadth)
- ◆ show a depth of understanding of their chosen area (combining a series of examples for building or challenging an argument)
- ◆ critically consider the work of a practitioner/company

C. Expressing an argument developed as a through-line of opinion leading up to an evaluative conclusion

Candidates can be credited in a number of ways up to a maximum of 10 marks.

For through-line marks to be awarded candidates must:

- ◆ maintain a focus to their chosen title that connects the researched material into an overarching thesis
- ◆ express and reflect on the research in their own voice, offering evaluative comment on their sources
- ◆ build to a conclusion of how they perceive their area of research

Detailed Marking Instructions for the Advanced Higher Drama project-dissertation

These Detailed Marking Instructions provide guidance on the application of the General Marking Principles. Where the candidate evidence almost matches the level above, the higher available mark from the range should be awarded; where the candidate evidence just meets the standard described, the lower available mark from the range should be awarded.

A. Analysing theory and performance examples that explore a chosen issue	13-15	Comprehensive and detailed examples of features of performance and aspects of theory are effectively used in developing a highly relevant argument; a wide knowledge and depth of understanding supports the analysis, drawing out robust implications; references are deployed coherently with accurate referencing.
	10-12	Detailed examples of features of performance and aspects of theory are effectively used in developing a relevant argument; consistently careful analysis explains and draws out implications; references effectively deployed.
	7-9	Specific examples of features of performance and aspects of theory are effectively used in developing a relevant argument; mostly detailed analysis draws out implications; references given with clarity; any misunderstanding/errors are in areas not central to the argument.
	4-6	Specific examples of features of performance and aspects of theory are used in an attempt to develop an argument and/or present the issue; mostly relevant; some analysis; falls short of drawing out implications; references given; some misunderstandings and/or errors.
	1-3	Some examples of features of performance and/or aspects of theory are used in an attempt to present the issue; can be imbalanced; at times lacking in relevance; some references given; misunderstandings and confused at times.
	0	No specific examples of features of performance and/or aspects of theory; no valid references; no detail.

B. Synthesising by comparing and contrasting different ways the issue has been explored	13-15	The organisation of materials shows a wide knowledge and thorough understanding of the issue; draws out contrasts and comparisons through a broad range of analysed examples leading to a robust argument; practitioner/company work is considered with robust and creative thinking; effective use of primary and secondary sources.
	10-12	The organisation of materials draws out contrasts and comparisons; a broad range of analysed examples leads to a convincing argument; practitioner/company work is consistently drawn together with wider research; primary and secondary sources are deployed to frame interpretations; selection of material shows a depth of understanding of the issue.
	7-9	The materials are organised; contrasts are included with explicit comparison; fairly broad range of analysed examples leads to a sound argument; practitioner/company work effectively compared.
	4-6	The organisation of materials shows some direct comparison and contrasting perspectives on the issue; some breadth, practitioner/company work is included with limited or implied comparison.
	1-3	The organisation of materials shows simplistic comparisons or contrasts; research has limited breadth within the chosen area; practitioner/company is included with limited or implied comparison; low level of understanding leads to a straightforward series of examples.
	0	Poorly organised; no attempt to draw comparisons or contrasts; research focused in a narrow area with no breadth; no practitioner/company work; no understanding of the wider aspects of research area.

C. Expressing an argument developed as a through-line of opinion leading up to an evaluative conclusion	9-10	A coherent and rigorous dissertation focusing firmly on the chosen title; consistently clear and lucid argument develops naturally from a securely structured series of well analysed and synthesised examples; robust discussion of a range of perspectives on the chosen area; a through-line of enquiry is led by a fluent expression of opinion in their own voice; personal thinking drives the exploration of material leading to a comprehensive conclusion.
	7-8	A consistently focused dissertation; clear and lucid argument develops from a well-structured range of analysed material; discussion is discerning and maintains relevance on the chosen area; consistently returns to their own voice to express a fluent opinion; creates a coherent through-line of argument building to a convincing conclusion.
	5-6	A focused dissertation; analysed material applied to develop a relevant argument; mostly clear on the chosen area; regular reflective and evaluative comments show a clear opinion; structure is effective in developing a logical through-line of argument toward a sound conclusion.
	3-4	Dissertation offers a straightforward argument is offered; at times loses clarity through structure or language choices; most material is related to chosen title; some reflective and evaluative comments are made expressing their opinion; arriving at a basic conclusion.
	1-2	Dissertation is simplistic in structure and is lacking in clarity; often fails to directly address chosen title; lacking in discernment between relevant and irrelevant points; makes basic reflective and evaluative comments in their own voice; basic conclusion.
	0	Dissertation lacks focus; structure shows no attempt to relate researched materials to the chosen title; discussion when attempted is inappropriate or confused; conclusion is absent.

Administrative information

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History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date
1.1	Amendments to Detailed Marking Instructions.	September 2016
1.2	Minor rewording of section C in the Detailed Marking Instructions.	October 2017

Security and confidentiality

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