XSQA

Group Award Specification for:

British Sign Language Award at SCQF level 3

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Contents

1   Introduction

This is the award specification for the *British Sign Language* award at SCQF level 3. It includes a general introduction, the aims of the award, the structure of the award and some general guidance about assessment requirements and recommended entry requirements.

This document was previously known as the arrangements document. The purpose of this document is to:

♦   assist centres to implement, deliver and manage the qualification
♦   provide a guide for new staff involved in offering the qualification
♦   inform course managers, teaching staff, assessors, learners, employers and HEIs of the aims and purpose of the qualification
♦   provide details of the range of learners the qualification is suitable for and progression opportunities

British Sign Language (BSL) — along with the Celtic languages (ie Cornish, Irish, Scottish Gaelic and Welsh) and the Scots language — is one of the distinct minority languages of the United Kingdom, and is recognised by the Scottish and UK Governments. British Sign Language is a visual language with a spatial grammar, and it has a variety of dialects. It is the first language of many deaf people and its use is expected to become more widespread in the aftermath of the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015.

This award allows learners to develop the following language competencies: receptive skills, productive skills, conversation skills and knowledge of sign linguistics.

This award will be relevant to a wide range of learners who are interested in languages and/or have a particular interest in British Sign Language. They will also be relevant to learners who want to develop their knowledge of deafness and the Deaf Community.

The award has been designed to appeal to both hearing and deaf learners. The British Sign Language award at SCQF level 3 will help learners to develop their language skills and enable them to communicate with British Sign Language users in various contexts. Learners will also develop their understanding of how sign languages work, and how they differ from spoken and written languages.

For learners who already use British Sign Language, the award will help them develop their ability to communicate clearly, think critically and to use their own language creatively.

Background

This award originally grew out of discussions between SQA and various stakeholders in relation to the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015 and the development of the British Sign Language National Plan 2017–2023. Following on from these discussions, SQA committed to develop a range of new qualifications in British Sign Language that would be similar to those available in other languages already developed by SQA. SQA recognises that British Sign Language is a language like any other, and learning a new language enables learners to make connections with different people and their cultures, and to play a fuller part as global citizens. The ability to use language lies at the centre of thinking and learning.

It is important to note that sign languages are different from other languages because they are not spoken or written. Like all sign languages, British Sign Language is in the visual-gestural-spatial modality. The ability to understand and use a different language modality gives learners a new set of communicative skills, and provides them with the opportunity to acquire visual and spatial ways of thinking and learning.

The new award was designed and developed by a team of British Sign Language specialists from across the education and research sectors. The team provided advice on the content, structure and level of the new award, ensuring that there was parity with the standards set in the Modern Languages course at SCQF level 3.

The study of any language has a unique contribution to make to the development of cultural awareness, as it provides learners with a means of communicating directly with people from different cultures, enhancing their understanding and enjoyment of other cultures and of their own. The study of British Sign Language in particular, encourages awareness of Deaf culture as part of society, and of deaf and deafblind people as equal citizens. It enables learners to communicate with deaf people in Scotland and the UK, and gives them the grounding for learning another sign language, which may help them to communicate with deaf people abroad.

2 Qualification structure

2.1 Structure

The award at SCQF level 3 is made up of 3 SQA unit credits and comprises 18 SCQF credit points.

British Sign Language Award (SCQF level 3) — GP3L 43

To achieve the award at SCQF level 3, a learner must achieve the following two units:

4 code	2 code	Unit title	SQA credit	SCQF credit points	SCQF level
J1FP	43	British Sign Language: Understanding Language and Linguistics	1.5	9	3
J1FR	43	British Sign Language: Using Language in Context	1.5	9	3

3   Aims of the qualification

The main aim of the British Sign Language award at SCQF level 3 is to develop learners' ability and confidence in using and understanding British Sign Language in a range of contexts.

3.1   General aims of the qualification

The award offers learners opportunities to develop and extend a wide range of knowledge and skills.

Learners will develop:

♦ an understanding of simple British Sign Language
♦ some knowledge of sign linguistics
♦ their understanding of the ways in which language works
♦ the ability to communicate simple information using British Sign Language

3.2   Specific aims of the qualification

This award will enable learners to develop:

♦ an understanding of simple information expressed in British Sign Language
♦ the ability to express information in a simple monologue using British Sign Language
♦ their conversational skills using British Sign Language
♦ the ability to adapt to the regional varieties of British Sign Language
♦ the ability to use appropriate cultural conventions in British Sign Language
♦ their understanding and use of a visual and spatial language modality (ie sign linguistics)

4   Recommended entry to the qualification

Entry to the award is at the discretion of the centre. Centres can decide an appropriate starting level for each learner, based on the learner's existing knowledge and experience of British Sign Language and/or learning across other languages. However, some previous knowledge and interest in British Sign Language may be an advantage.

5 Guidance on approaches to delivery and assessment

Each of the unit specifications that make up this award-provide suggestions regarding the delivery approaches that can be taken by centres. In the units, *British Sign Language: Using Language in Context* and *British Sign Language: Understanding Language and Linguistics*, there are a range of topics that could be covered across the contexts of: society, learning, employability and culture. Centres are encouraged to focus on contexts and topics that most closely reflect those their learners are most likely to use in their day-to-day lives. For example, some learners may be learning British Sign Language for work purposes, while others may want to improve their ability to communicate with friends or family members in social settings.

5.1 Sequencing/integration of units

The units can be delivered in parallel or in sequence.

It may be possible to integrate the assessment of outcomes from different units, so that evidence generated will meet the combined standards through one activity. The activity would need to be carefully designed to ensure it will generate evidence that can be matched across the outcomes. It will also be important for assessors to label evidence clearly to show what standards have been achieved and to ensure that evidence is collected to cover all the standards.

5.2 Recognition of prior learning

SQA recognises that learners gain knowledge and skills through formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts.

In some instances, a learner may have evidence of prior attainment or experience that could be used to contribute towards the achievement of a unit or units. More information and guidance on the *Recognition of Prior Learning* (RPL) may be found on our website **www.sqa.org.uk**.

5.3 Support materials

Assessment support materials are available from the SQA secure website, where further information is provided regarding tasks that refer to film clips and on screen assessment.

5.4 Resource requirements

There are no specific resources necessary to deliver this award, however, access to some form of filming equipment and appropriate software will be necessary to collect learner evidence. There is no set requirement in terms of the type of film equipment used and mobile phones or tablets that could be used, assuming footage can be downloaded onto more appropriate electronic storage. The recordings do not have to be to any prescribed quality standard, but they must be of sufficient clarity for each leaner's signing to be clearly distinguished by the viewer.

6 General information for centres

Equality and inclusion

The unit specifications making up this group award have been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners will be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence. Further advice can be found on our website **www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements**.

Internal and external verification

All instruments of assessment used within this qualification should be internally verified, using the appropriate policy within the centre and the guidelines set by SQA.

External verification will be carried out by SQA to ensure that internal assessment is within the national guidelines for these qualifications.

Further information on internal and external verification can be found in *SQA's Guide to Assessment* (**www.sqa.org.uk/GuideToAssessment**).

7   History of changes

It is anticipated that changes will take place during the life of the qualification and this section will record these changes. This document is the latest version and incorporates the changes summarised below. Centres are advised to check SQA's APS Navigator to confirm they are using the up to date qualification structure.

NOTE: Where a unit is revised by another unit:

♦   No new centres may be approved to offer the unit which has been revised.
♦   Centres should only enter candidates for the unit which has been revised where they are expected to complete the unit before its finish date.

Version number	Description	Date

Acknowledgement

SQA acknowledges the valuable contribution members of the Qualification Design Team made to the development of this qualification.

8   General information for learners

This section will help you decide whether this award is for you by explaining what it covers, what you should know or be able to do before you start, and what you will need to do during the award.

The award is made up of the following units:

The British Sign Language Award at SCQF level 3

J1FP 43   *British Sign Language: Understanding Language and Linguistics*
J1FR 43   *British Sign Language: Using Language in Context*

Your learning centre will be able to decide if this award is suitable for you based on your existing qualifications and experience. It would help if you already had some awareness of British Sign Language but that is not essential. What you will need is a willingness to learn and an enthusiasm for the subject.

In the level 3 award you will learn to:

♦   Watch and understand simple information delivered by someone using British Sign Language
♦   Use British Sign Language to deliver simple communications
♦   Understand some of the technical aspects of using a sign language that differ from a spoken language