



Next Generation Higher National Educator Guide

Higher National Certificate in Acting and Performance

Qualification code: GV1T 47

**This qualification is available in a restricted
delivery model from academic session 2025**

This guide provides information about the Higher National Certificate (HNC) Acting and Performance to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year. It is for lecturers and assessors, and contains all the mandatory information you need to deliver and assess the HNC. You must read it alongside the Grading Pack.

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Purpose of the qualification

Higher National Certificate (HNC) Acting and Performance provides learners with the knowledge and skills they need to continue their learning journey to a Higher National Diploma (HND) or a degree-level course, or progress to employment in the performing arts industry. Learners develop the professional skills and personal behaviours (meta-skills) that the performing arts industry expects from them.

Structure

Higher National Certificates (HNCs) are at SCQF level 7 and are made up of 120 SCQF credit points (15 SQA credits). HNCs must incorporate at least 80 credit points (10 SQA credits) at SCQF level 7.

HNC Acting and Performance (120 SCQF credit points) meets SQA's Next Generation Higher National (NextGen: HN) Design Principles and consists of five mandatory units (96 SCQF credit points) and three optional units (24 SCQF credit points).

The mandatory unit Performance Skills: Acting, provides learners with the skills required in the acting process, including textual analysis, awareness of the physical health required for acting, and acting skills.

The mandatory unit Performance Skills: Voice provides learners with knowledge of vocal anatomy and physiology, and voice skills and techniques.

The mandatory unit Performance Skills: Movement provides learners with the skills required in movement sequences, and movement skills and techniques.

The mandatory unit Performance Skills: Application enables learners to apply the skills of acting, voice and movement in coherent, integrated and credible performances in two contrasting performance projects. Learners select projects from script-based work for stage, devised work, and screen work.

The mandatory unit Industry and Audition Skills enables learners to develop an understanding of the skills they need to enter the performing arts industry and carry out the audition process.

You can integrate the mandatory units and selected optional units to provide learners with context for their learning.

Throughout all units, learners reflect on their own personal development and their meta-skills development.

Framework

The HNC is made up of mandatory and optional units. Learners must complete all of the mandatory units and 3 SQA credits from the optional units.

Mandatory units

Unit code	Unit title	SQA credits	SCQF credit points	SCQF level
J8NJ 47	Performance Skills: Acting	2	16	7
J8NK 47	Performance Skills: Voice	2	16	7
J8NM 47	Performance Skills: Movement	2	16	7
J79X 47	Performance Skills: Application	5	40	7
J8NN 47	Industry and Audition Skills	1	8	7

Optional units

Unit code	Unit title	SQA credits	SCQF credit points	SCQF level
J7B7 48	Text for Performance	1	8	8
J7B9 48	Acting Methods and Practitioners	1	8	8
J7BA 48	Physical Theatre: Skills for Devising and Performance	1	8	8
J7B6 48	Drama Skills: Leading a Workshop	1	8	8

Aims of the qualification

General aims

1. Foster an enjoyment of the subject while providing academic stimulus and challenge.
2. Develop self-presentation skills.
3. Develop learning and transferable skills, including meta-skills.
4. Enable progression in SCQF.
5. Prepare for progression to further study.
6. Enhance employment prospects.
7. Develop meta-skills that complement technical and professional knowledge and skills.
8. Develop skills, knowledge, understanding and values for Learning for Sustainability.

Specific aims

1. Develop acting, voice and movement knowledge and skills.
2. Integrate acting, voice and movement skills in performance.
3. Work with text to enhance performance and understanding of character.
4. Develop an innovative and creative approach to work in rehearsal and performance.
5. Develop ability to respond to direction.
6. Develop understanding of industry practice.
7. Prepare for auditions for employment and places in higher education.

Who is this qualification for?

This qualification is suitable for learners who have an interest in developing their acting skills and for those who wish to pursue a career in performing arts.

Entry to this qualification is at your centre's discretion. However, we recommend that learners have one or more of the following:

- Two Highers, with the recommendation of one or more in the following subject areas:
 - English
 - Drama

or

- National Qualifications at SCQF level 6
- NPA in Acting and Performance
- NPA in Professional Theatre Performance
- NPA in Musical Theatre

Recognising prior learning

SQA recognises that learners gain knowledge and skills through formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts. Formal learning is learning certificated by a recognised awarding or professional body. Non-formal learning includes learning such as employers' in-house training courses. Informal learning is learning based on experience from a variety of environments that is not formally assessed.

It is unlikely that a learner would have the appropriate prior learning and experience to meet all the requirements of a full HNC.

You can find more information and guidance about the [recognition of prior learning on SQA's website](#).

Articulation and progression

Learners who complete this qualification could go on to:

- other qualifications in acting and performance or related areas
- further study, employment and/or training

HNC Acting and Performance offers different articulation pathways to undergraduate degree programmes. Most learners progress to further study, often directly to HND courses and then to degree programmes in subjects such as:

- Drama
- Acting and Performance
- Theatre and Film
- Musical Theatre
- Drama and Production
- Theatre Studies
- Acting and English
- Stage and Screen Acting
- Drama and Musical Theatre
- Drama, Theatre and Performance

The most natural relationship that the HNC Acting and Performance has is with the undergraduate programmes:

- Queen Margaret's University College
- University of the Highlands and Islands
- Edinburgh Napier University
- University of the West of Scotland
- Royal Conservatoire of Scotland
- University of Glasgow
- The Scottish Institute

Other undergraduate programmes and employment include:

- Rose Bruford
- East 15
- Welsh College of Music and Drama
- Royal Academy of Dramatic Art
- The Guildhall School of Music and Drama
- Central School of Speech and Drama
- Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts (LIPA)
- Leeds Conservatoire
- film and television productions
- theatre companies
- commercial and corporate enterprises

Learners can move into employment in the performing arts industry. The following are examples of some occupational areas (these job roles or titles may not be consistent across the UK):

- actor (stage and screen)
- teacher (after further study and professional qualifications)
- workshop leader
- community arts worker
- arts administrator
- television and radio researcher

Credit transfer arrangements

Centres can make decisions about transferring credit. They can transfer credit if the subject-related content of the units is broadly equivalent. Centres should consider the currency of a learner's achievement before transferring credit.

Recommended Core Skills entry profile

Learners should have the following Core Skills at the stated SCQF levels before starting this qualification. This information can help identify learners who may need additional support.

Core Skill	Recommended SCQF entry profile
Communication	Level 6
Information and communications technology (ICT)	Level 6
Problem solving	Level 6
Working with others	Level 6

How the qualification meets employer and higher education institution needs

This qualification is designed in collaboration with employers, higher education institutions (HEIs), practitioners and professional bodies to meet the sector need.

The following tables show how the qualification can benefit employers and HEIs by equipping learners with the necessary skill set:

- Table 1 shows how units map to the aims of the qualification.
- Table 2 shows how the units map to National Occupational Standards (NOS).
- Table 3 shows the assessment strategy for the qualification.

Table 1: mapping qualification aims to units

General aims

Key: aim is directly relevant to unit (X), aim is optional in this unit (O), aim is not applicable to this unit (N/A)

Unit code	Unit title	Aim 1	Aim 2	Aim 3	Aim 4	Aim 5	Aim 6	Aim 7	Aim 8
J8NJ 47	Performance Skills: Acting	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X
J8NK 47	Performance Skills: Voice	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	N/A
J8NM 47	Performance Skills: Movement	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	N/A
J79X 47	Performance Skills: Application	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O
J8NN 47	Industry and Audition Skills	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	N/A
J7B7 48	Text for Performance	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	N/A
J7B9 48	Acting Methods and Practitioners	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	N/A
J7BA 48	Physical Theatre: Skills for Devising and Performance	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	N/A
J7B6 48	Drama Skills: Leading a Workshop	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	N/A

Specific aims

Key: aim is directly relevant to unit (X), aim is optional in this unit (O), aim is not applicable to this unit (N/A)

Unit code	Unit title	Aim 1	Aim 2	Aim 3	Aim 4	Aim 5	Aim 6	Aim 7
J8NJ 47	Performance Skills: Acting	X	X	X	X	X	O	X
J8NK 47	Performance Skills: Voice	X	X	X	X	X	O	X
J8NM 47	Performance Skills: Movement	X	X	X	X	X	O	X
J79X 47	Performance Skills: Application	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
J8NN 47	Industry and Audition Skills	X	X	X	X	O	X	X
J7B7 48	Text for Performance	O	O	X	X	X	X	X
J7B9 48	Acting Methods and Practitioners	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
J7BA 48	Physical Theatre: Skills for Devising and Performance	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
J7B6 48	Drama Skills: Leading a Workshop	O	O	O	N/A	O	X	X

Table 2: mapping National Occupational Standards (NOS) requirements to units

Screenskills has developed a wide range of NOS for all occupations across the creative industries. These standards define the skills, knowledge and experience required to work in the various sectors of the creative industries. The table shows the relationship between the Industry and Audition Skills unit of HNC Acting and Performance and the relevant NOS. The unit provides underpinning knowledge and skills, however it does not cover all aspects of the NOS.

Unit code	Unit title	NOS codes
J8NN 47	Industry and Audition Skills	SKSCMGS1, SKSCMGS2

Table 3: assessment strategy for the qualification

Unit code	Unit title	Assessment methods
J8NJ 47	Performance Skills: Acting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• continuous tutor observation of learners as they participate in practical work, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ warm-ups○ character work○ rehearsals○ performances• a script analysis• professional discussions to assess learners' reflective practice
J8NK 47	Performance Skills: Voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• continuous tutor observation of learners as they participate in practical work, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ warm-ups (including vocal anatomy and physiology knowledge)○ character work○ rehearsals○ performances• vocal anatomy and physiology• professional discussions to assess learners' reflective practice

Unit code	Unit title	Assessment methods
J8NM 47	Performance Skills: Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continuous tutor observation of learners as they participate in practical work, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ warm-ups ○ character work ○ rehearsals ○ performances • professional discussions to assess learners' reflective practice
J79X 47	Performance Skills: Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continuous tutor observation of learners as they participate in rehearsals • observation of final performances • a portfolio of evidence for each of the two selected performance projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ script-based work for stage: to include learners' research into the play, notes on its style and language, a character study, and rehearsal notes ○ devised work: to record learners' devising journey and research, source materials, storyboards, scenarios, scripts, and any other relevant material ○ screen work: to provide evidence of learners' understanding, research, development, and reflection on screen performance

Unit code	Unit title	Assessment methods
J8NN 47	Industry and Audition Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a portfolio, to include industry knowledge and a CV • a self-tape • a live audition • a question-and-answer session, reflecting on the learner's individual audition process
J7B7 48	Text for Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a digital or oral presentation • continuous tutor observation as learners participate in workshops and classes
J7B9 48	Acting Methods and Practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a digital or oral presentation • continuous tutor observation as learners participate in practical classes and rehearsals • a practical performance
J7BA 48	Physical Theatre: Skills for Devising and Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a digital or oral presentation • continuous tutor observation as learners participate in practical classes and rehearsals • a practical performance

Unit code	Unit title	Assessment methods
J7B6 48	Drama Skills: Leading a Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continuous tutor observation as learners participate in workshops • workshop plans • delivery of a workshop • question-and-answer sessions • professional discussions

Meta-skills

Every NextGen: HN Qualification gives learners the opportunity to develop meta-skills.

Meta-skills are transferable behaviours and abilities that help people to adapt and succeed in life, study and work. There are three categories of meta-skills: self-management, social intelligence and innovation. Each of these is made up of four meta-skills and a number of sub-skills.

- Self-management — focusing, integrity, adapting, initiative
- Social intelligence — communicating, feeling, collaborating, leading
- Innovation — curiosity, creativity, sense-making, critical thinking

From early in the qualification, we want learners to identify and understand the meta-skills they can develop, and to appreciate the personal and professional value of these skills. We want to support learners to continue to articulate, use and build on them long after they have achieved their qualification. In this way, we help learners to develop broad skills profiles, enabling them to thrive in a changing world.

Every NextGen: HN unit signposts opportunities for learners to develop meta-skills, and there is an assessed outcome in one of the mandatory units. When you make your whole-qualification grade decisions, you consider learners' commitment to engaging with meta-skills development.

You do not assess learners on their competence or progress in individual meta-skills. Instead, you assess them on evidence that they have engaged with a personal process of development. Meta-skills development is founded on a clear process of self-assessment, goal setting, action planning and reflective practice.

You can find meta-skills teaching, learning and assessment resources on [SQA's meta-skills web page](#).

Meta-skills in HNC Acting and Performance

Meta-skills are central to learners successfully engaging with and completing assignments and projects. You should encourage learners to plan how they use and develop meta-skills in their coursework and to reflect on their success and future goals.

You can find a meta-skills development log and examples of meta-skills in [Appendix 1](#).

Learners can keep an ongoing reflective portfolio as a valuable part of their personal development. Learners' portfolios should reflect their understanding of their meta-skills development as they work through the units, outcomes, projects and activities.

Your role as a coach, mentor or facilitator is to help learners understand, develop and reflect on their own meta-skills and those central to course activities, assessment projects and their target industry or sector. Employer partners or guest speakers could guide learners by taking on a coaching and mentoring role.

You should introduce learners to the fundamentals of reflective practice. You could use several models of reflective practice. You do not need to use a theoretical perspective. Any reference to these models should support learners' understanding of the nature and value of reflective practice in self-understanding and making change.

Introducing reflective practice can support your learners' personal development and goal setting. Frequent formative peer-to-peer, assessor, client (if appropriate) and group reflection activities can support learners through reflective practice.

Learners can focus on any meta-skills appropriate to them and their context. However, learning and teaching should also facilitate individual development. Learners have individual strengths and areas for development, and they do not have to reach a particular level in relation to meta-skills. Coursework and projects provide the context for development appropriate to the SCQF level. In these contexts, the development process is important. You should create a clear learning plan with each learner to provide evidence of their development.

You can create descriptions of abilities and skills that relate to meta-skills with your learners. These can come from self-profiling, exploring the industry and sector, and discussion with peers and employers. You should consider the meta-skills needed to complete coursework and meet personal goals, to set a context for reflection.

Exploring learning and working styles, personality traits and preferences, personal profiling and self-assessment tools can help learners to develop an understanding of their strengths and areas for development.

You can use case studies and scenario-based activities to demonstrate the value of meta-skills and how to apply them. You can provide opportunities for peer reflection. A group of learners could share experiences and reflections about how to apply meta-skills in the context of their coursework. You could adopt the role of facilitator to draw learners' attention to situations where they applied, or could have applied, meta-skills.

Your discussions with learners could include positive recognition and guidance on future development based on previous performance. As learners progress, you could introduce industry content that requires skills like problem recognition and problem solving, both of which combine multiple meta-skills.

You can deliver the knowledge and skills for practical aspects of projects in sequence. However, learners benefit from learning and teaching that integrates meta-skills with project planning and development. This approach supports learners to engage in reflective practice throughout the project and develops their self-awareness and an appreciation for continuous learning. It also maximises your opportunities to support, coach and mentor learners through their projects.

Opportunities for meta-skills development

Self-management

Meta-skill	Unit code	Unit title
Focusing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J8NJ 47 • J8NK 47 • J8NM 47 • J79X 47 • J8NN 47 • J7B7 48 • J7B9 48 • J7BA 48 • J7B6 48 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Skills: Acting • Performance Skills: Voice • Performance Skills: Movement • Performance Skills: Application • Industry and Audition Skills • Text for Performance • Acting Methods and Practitioners • Physical Theatre: Skills for Devising and Performance • Drama Skills: Leading a Workshop
Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J8NJ 47 • J8NK 47 • J8NM 47 • J79X 47 • J8NN 47 • J7B7 48 • J7B9 48 • J7BA 48 • J7B6 48 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Skills: Acting • Performance Skills: Voice • Performance Skills: Movement • Performance Skills: Application • Industry and Audition Skills • Text for Performance • Acting Methods and Practitioners • Physical Theatre: Skills for Devising and Performance • Drama Skills: Leading a Workshop

Meta-skill	Unit code	Unit title
Adapting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J8NJ 47 • J8NK 47 • J8NM 47 • J79X 47 • J8NN 47 • J7B7 48 • J7B9 48 • J7BA 48 • J7B6 48 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Skills: Acting • Performance Skills: Voice • Performance Skills: Movement • Performance Skills: Application • Industry and Audition Skills • Text for Performance • Acting Methods and Practitioners • Physical Theatre: Skills for Devising and Performance • Drama Skills: Leading a Workshop
Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J8NJ 47 • J8NK 47 • J8NM 47 • J79X 47 • J8NN 47 • J7B7 48 • J7B9 48 • J7BA 48 • J7B6 48 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Skills: Acting • Performance Skills: Voice • Performance Skills: Movement • Performance Skills: Application • Industry and Audition Skills • Text for Performance • Acting Methods and Practitioners • Physical Theatre: Skills for Devising and Performance • Drama Skills: Leading a Workshop

Social intelligence

Meta-skill	Unit code	Unit title
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J8NJ 47 • J8NK 47 • J8NM 47 • J79X 47 • J8NN 47 • J7B7 48 • J7B9 48 • J7BA 48 • J7B6 48 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Skills: Acting • Performance Skills: Voice • Performance Skills: Movement • Performance Skills: Application • Industry and Audition Skills • Text for Performance • Acting Methods and Practitioners • Physical Theatre: Skills for Devising and Performance • Drama Skills: Leading a Workshop
Feeling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J8NJ 47 • J8NK 47 • J8NM 47 • J79X 47 • J8NN 47 • J7B7 48 • J7B9 48 • J7BA 48 • J7B6 48 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Skills: Acting • Performance Skills: Voice • Performance Skills: Movement • Performance Skills: Application • Industry and Audition Skills • Text for Performance • Acting Methods and Practitioners • Physical Theatre: Skills for Devising and Performance • Drama Skills: Leading a Workshop

Meta-skill	Unit code	Unit title
Collaborating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J8NJ 47 • J8NK 47 • J8NM 47 • J79X 47 • J8NN 47 • J7B7 48 • J7B9 48 • J7BA 48 • J7B6 48 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Skills: Acting • Performance Skills: Voice • Performance Skills: Movement • Performance Skills: Application • Industry and Audition Skills • Text for Performance • Acting Methods and Practitioners • Physical Theatre: Skills for Devising and Performance • Drama Skills: Leading a Workshop
Leading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J7B6 48 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drama Skills: Leading a Workshop

Innovation

Meta-skill	Unit code	Unit title
Curiosity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J8NJ 47 • J8NK 47 • J8NM 47 • J79X 47 • J8NN 47 • J7B7 48 • J7B9 48 • J7BA 48 • J7B6 48 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Skills: Acting • Performance Skills: Voice • Performance Skills: Movement • Performance Skills: Application • Industry and Audition Skills • Text for Performance • Acting Methods and Practitioners • Physical Theatre: Skills for Devising and Performance • Drama Skills: Leading a Workshop

Meta-skill	Unit code	Unit title
Creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J8NJ 47 • J8NK 47 • J8NM 47 • J79X 47 • J8NN 47 • J7B7 48 • J7B9 48 • J7BA 48 • J7B6 48 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Skills: Acting • Performance Skills: Voice • Performance Skills: Movement • Performance Skills: Application • Industry and Audition Skills • Text for Performance • Acting Methods and Practitioners • Physical Theatre: Skills for Devising and Performance • Drama Skills: Leading a Workshop
Sense-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J8NJ 47 • J8NK 47 • J8NM 47 • J79X 47 • J8NN 47 • J7B7 48 • J7B9 48 • J7BA 48 • J7B6 48 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Skills: Acting • Performance Skills: Voice • Performance Skills: Movement • Performance Skills: Application • Industry and Audition Skills • Text for Performance • Acting Methods and Practitioners • Physical Theatre: Skills for Devising and Performance • Drama Skills: Leading a Workshop
Critical thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J8NJ 47 • J8NK 47 • J8NM 47 • J79X 47 • J8NN 47 • J7B7 48 • J7B9 48 • J7BA 48 • J7B6 48 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Skills: Acting • Performance Skills: Voice • Performance Skills: Movement • Performance Skills: Application • Industry and Audition Skills • Text for Performance • Acting Methods and Practitioners • Physical Theatre: Skills for Devising and Performance • Drama Skills: Leading a Workshop

Learning for Sustainability

Context

The United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the UK in 2015, has shaped the development of Scottish, national and international sustainability policy. It sets out the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs), which are central to the Scottish Government's [National Performance Framework](#). Learning for Sustainability (LfS) is a commitment to embedding the SDGs in Scottish education.

LfS embraces global citizenship, sustainable development, social justice, human rights, climate change, biodiversity loss, equality and inclusion. Learners develop their capacity to deal with the unpredictable social, economic and environmental challenges facing our rapidly changing world.

LfS combines:

- education for sustainable development (ESD)
- global citizenship
- outdoor learning

ESD is the internationally used term for sustainability education. Although LfS has a broader remit, the terms are largely interchangeable. Colleges and universities tend to use ESD, while schools usually use LfS. Both focus on a broad range of social, economic and environmental themes and approaches across all levels of education. SQA uses LfS as an umbrella term.

Learning for Sustainability in Next Generation Higher National Qualifications

Sustainability is a core component in this qualification.

Learners who complete this qualification should have:

- a general understanding of social, economic and environmental sustainability
- a general understanding of the SDGs
- a deeper understanding of subject-specific sustainability
- the confidence to apply the skills, knowledge, understanding and values they develop in the next stage of their life

Sustainability is embedded as an outcome in the Performance Skills: Acting unit.

Learners who complete this outcome can:

- assess their own knowledge and understanding of sustainability and the SDGs
- review unit content against the SDGs to identify a sustainability-related issue
- apply knowledge and understanding of sustainability and the SDGs to propose improvements

Learners explore how sustainability works in acting and performance. Learners could explore ways to sustain their learning and their future careers as actors, teachers and practitioners by looking after their health and wellbeing.

Throughout the unit, learners take part in regular warm-up activities to improve their physical and vocal stamina. By engaging positively with their learning, they take advantage of quality education and learn to look after their health and wellbeing too.

Learners may find the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals web page](#) helpful.

You should encourage learners to engage with sustainable practices.

You can cover any of the SDGs that are relevant to the subject area.

Find out more about SQA's approach on the [NextGen: HN Learning for Sustainability web page](#). There is an LfS subject-specific infographic available in the resources section. You may find it helpful as a starting point for considering how the SDGs are, or could be, embedded in a qualification, unit or assessment.

Grading

Please see the Grading Pack for this qualification for more information on making grade judgements.

Grading in NextGen: HN Qualifications produces a valid and reliable record of a learner's level of achievement across the breadth of the qualification content.

As well as grading the whole qualification, you assess individual units on a pass or fail basis. Each unit has evidence requirements that learners must achieve before you can consider them for whole-qualification grading.

Whole-qualification grade outcomes

Learners who pass NextGen: HN Qualifications receive one of the following grade outcomes for the qualification as a whole:

- Achieved with Distinction
- Achieved with Merit
- Achieved

To determine a learner's whole-qualification grade, you use the grading matrix provided in the Grading Pack to assess and judge their performance across the key aspects of the HNC. You must align your judgements with the following whole-qualification grade descriptors.

Whole-qualification grade descriptors

Achieved with Distinction

The learner has achieved an excellent standard across the course content, going significantly beyond meeting the qualification requirements. They showed a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of course concepts and principles, and consistently used them to apply skills to complete high-quality work. They engaged significantly with the process of developing their meta-skills in the context of their HN Qualification.

Achieved with Merit

The learner has achieved a very good standard across the course content, going beyond meeting the qualification requirements. They showed a very good knowledge and understanding of course concepts and principles, and consistently used them to apply skills to complete work of a standard above that expected for an Achieved grade. They actively engaged with the process of developing their meta-skills in the context of their HN Qualification.

Achieved

The learner has achieved a good standard across the course content, credibly meeting the qualification requirements. They showed a good knowledge and understanding of course concepts and principles, and used them to apply skills to complete work of the required standard. They engaged with the process of developing their meta-skills in the context of their HN Qualification.

Approaches to delivery and assessment

You should deliver the mandatory units Performance Skills: Acting, Performance Skills: Voice, and Performance Skills: Movement throughout the course, as you can integrate and apply the skills developed in this unit in all other units. The mandatory unit Performance Skills: Application has two performance projects (selected from a choice of three) and if a course runs with two terms, you can deliver one performance project in term one and the second in term two.

Sequencing or integrating units

All units are designed as stand-alone units, but you can also integrate them. The mandatory units provide opportunities for integration not only with each other, but also with the optional units.

You can integrate Performance Skills: Acting with:

- Performance Skills: Voice
- Performance Skills: Movement
- Performance Skills: Application
- Industry and Audition Skills
- Text for Performance
- Acting Methods and Practitioners
- Physical Theatre: Skills for Devising and Performance

You can integrate Performance Skills: Voice with:

- Performance Skills: Acting
- Performance Skills: Application
- Industry and Audition Skills
- Text for Performance
- Acting Methods and Practitioners

You can integrate Performance Skills: Movement with:

- Performance Skills: Acting
- Performance Skills: Application
- Industry and Audition Skills
- Text for Performance
- Acting Methods and Practitioners
- Physical Theatre: Skills for Devising and Performance

You can integrate Performance Skills: Application with:

- Performance Skills: Acting
- Performance Skills: Voice
- Performance Skills: Movement
- Text for Performance
- Acting Methods and Practitioners
- Physical Theatre: Skills for Devising and Performance

You can integrate Industry and Audition Skills with:

- Performance Skills: Acting
- Performance Skills: Voice
- Performance Skills: Movement

You can integrate Text for Performance with:

- Performance Skills: Acting
- Performance Skills: Voice
- Performance Skills: Movement
- Performance Skills: Application
- Acting Methods and Practitioners

You can integrate Acting Methods and Practitioners with:

- Performance Skills: Acting
- Performance Skills: Voice
- Performance Skills: Movement
- Performance Skills: Application
- Text for Performance
- Physical Theatre: Skills for Devising and Performance

You can integrate Physical Theatre: Skills for Devising and Performance with:

- Performance Skills: Acting
- Performance Skills: Movement
- Performance Skills: Application
- Acting Methods and Practitioners

Example of integrating outcomes — Performance Skills: Acting outcome 1 with other units

Performance Skills: Acting outcome 1 (apply key acting practices in rehearsals and performances) integrates with:

Performance Skills: Voice

- outcome 2: demonstrate vocal techniques in a range of materials
- outcome 3: demonstrate vocal skills in the process of creating character through to performance

Performance Skills: Movement

- outcome 2: demonstrate movement techniques in a range of materials
- outcome 3: demonstrate movement skills in the process of creating character through to performance

Performance Skills: Application

Stage:

- outcome 2: apply rehearsal techniques in developing and sustaining a character
- outcome 5: sustain a character in a live performance to an audience

Devised:

- outcome 2: explore a range of techniques in rehearsals
- outcome 3: apply acting, voice and/or movement skills throughout rehearsals
- outcome 5: perform devised work to an audience

Screen:

- outcome 2: develop the key techniques required in screen acting
- outcome 3: work effectively and collaboratively on a television shoot or film shoot
- outcome 4: perform as an actor on a television shoot or film shoot

Industry and Audition Skills

Live:

- outcome 2: prepare for and perform a live audition

Digital:

- outcome 2: prepare a self-tape for a stage or screen digital audition

Text for Performance

- outcome 2: investigate the critical components in selected texts

Acting Methods and Practitioners

- outcome 3: apply a key method of approach to a text or devised work

Physical Theatre: Skills for Devising and Performance

- outcome 2: develop physical theatre skills
- outcome 3: demonstrate physical theatre skills through a devised or text-based performance

Example of integrating outcomes — Performance Skills: Acting outcome 2 with other units

Performance Skills: Acting outcome 2 (show character development in an extract from a published play) integrates with:

Performance Skills: Voice

- outcome 3: demonstrate vocal skills in the process of creating character through to performance

Performance Skills: Movement

- outcome 3: demonstrate movement skills in the process of creating character through to performance

Performance Skills: Application

Stage:

- outcome 5: sustain a character in at least two live performances to an audience

Physical Theatre: Skills for Devising and Performance

- outcome 3: demonstrate physical theatre skills through a devised or text-based performance

Additional guidance on integrated or holistic assessment

Holistic or integrated assessment focuses on assessing a number of outcomes in a unit together, or in some cases, assessing the unit as a whole, rather than by outcome.

When assessing a unit of competence holistically, the assessment activities integrate a number of aspects of the competence. Holistic or integrated assessment can reduce the time spent on assessment and can promote greater equity in the assessment process.

When developing or revising a NextGen: HN Qualification, SQA works with a development team to devise an appropriate assessment strategy that accommodates holistic or integrated assessment. However, the practice of integrating units for the purposes of learning and teaching is a centre-led activity.

Units are designed to facilitate holistic or integrated assessment approaches that prevent large, unwieldy assessments.

Sometimes learners must provide more than one piece of evidence for a unit. HNC Acting and Performance applies the key competency approach to grading. This grading model enables subject teams to judge each learner's performance across the key competences of the qualification, and to decide on an overall qualification grade.

Sector-specific competences

Learners should:

- apply key acting practices in rehearsals
- apply key acting practices in performances
- demonstrate vocal techniques in a range of materials
- demonstrate movement techniques in a range of materials

Academic competences

Learners should demonstrate:

- critical thinking
- research skills
- reflective practice
- presentation skills

Professional behaviours

Learners should:

- work well with others
- demonstrate good timekeeping and preparation
- demonstrate awareness of industry standards
- demonstrate audition skills

Learners participate in activities and projects from the five mandatory units, allowing you to assess learners' processes and outputs.

The mandatory units provide learners with opportunities to participate in rehearsals and performances. These enable assessment of sector-specific competencies and professional behaviours. Learners research, analyse and deliver presentations, allowing assessment of academic competence.

Learners must achieve all mandatory units before you award a grade. You should assess the evidence requirements in each unit through a series of activities. This justifies learners' attainment of the unit and informs the overall qualification grading. Units are resulted as pass or fail.

You must consider evidence of learners' reflective practice. Reflection is at the heart of acting and performance. Ongoing reflection occurs naturally and as part of the rehearsal process. Learners may record their reflections in a variety of ways, such as blogs, vlogs,

and journals. Each learner has their own method and style of reflective practice. Their ongoing reflections contribute to end-of-unit reflections and professional discussions.

Evidence should also include learners' reflections about how their meta-skills have developed, and feedback from their peers, lecturers, and industry experts. It should show learners adapting their development plans based on their reflections and the feedback they receive. The depth of learners' reflection is important, not the number of meta-skills they reference. Learners' planning, developing, and reviewing should be appropriate to the SCQF level of the qualification.

Meta-skills are central to the Next Generation Higher National Qualifications and learners develop meta-skills throughout the qualification. In the project units, evidence of meta-skill development contributes to grading decisions.

Evidence requirements must do what they say: specify requirements for evidence of learner competence in the unit. The evidence must be of sufficient quality for an assessor or verifier to judge that the learner has achieved the unit.

Opportunities for e-assessment

Assessment that is supported by information and communication technology (ICT), such as e-portfolios or social software, may be appropriate for some assessments within this qualification.

Remediation and re-assessment in Next Generation Higher National Qualifications

Remediation

Remediation allows an assessor to clarify learners' responses, either by requiring a written amendment or by oral questioning, where there is a minor shortfall or omission in evidence requirements. In either case, the assessor must formally note such instances, in writing or as a recording, and make them available to the internal and external verifier.

Remediation is not permitted for closed-book assessments.

The size and structure of the larger NextGen: HN units should mean that the assessor or lecturer is close enough to ongoing assessment activity in project-based units to identify the requirement for remediation as it occurs.

Re-assessment

We must give learners who fail the unit a re-assessment opportunity or, in exceptional circumstances, two re-assessment opportunities. Where we have introduced larger units to the framework, we expect instances of re-assessment to be minimal, due to the approach to assessment and remediation. Where re-assessment is required in a project-based unit, a substantially different project must be used.

Resource requirements

Centres delivering HNC Acting and Performance need suitably qualified staff for each of the subject components. Delivery staff must have an SCQF level 8 or above in an acting and performance qualification, or a suitable performance-based subject qualification.

Learners should have access to library resources, including online resources, to allow them to research topics, practices, and theories across the acting and performance subject area.

Access to digital equipment, such as computers, laptops or tablets, helps support learners' digital skills development.

Learners should have access to appropriate rehearsal and performance spaces. Video and filmed evidence requires appropriate equipment.

Information for centres

Equality and inclusion

The units in this HNC are designed to be as fair and as accessible as possible with no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment.

You should consider the needs of individual learners when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled learners and those with additional support needs is available on the [assessment arrangements web page](#).

Internal and external verification

You must make sure all instruments of assessment you use in this qualification are internally verified according to your centre's policies and SQA's guidelines.

SQA carries out external verification to ensure that internal assessment meets the national guidelines for this qualification.

More information on internal and external verification is available in SQA's [Guide to Assessment](#) and in [Next Generation: Higher National Quality Assurance — Guidance for Centres](#).

Glossary

SQA credits: 1 SQA credit equals 8 SCQF credit points.

SQA credit value indicates the contribution the unit makes to an SQA qualification. An SQA credit value of 1 represents approximately 40 hours of learning, teaching and assessment.

SCQF: the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) is Scotland's national framework for describing qualifications. We use SCQF terminology in this guide to refer to credits and levels. [For more information on the SCQF, visit the SCQF website.](#)

SCQF credit points indicate the amount of learning required to complete a qualification. NextGen HNCs and HNDs are worth 120 SCQF credit points.

SCQF levels indicate how hard the qualification is to achieve. The SCQF covers 12 levels of learning. NextGen HNCs are at SCQF level 7 and NextGen HNDs are at SCQF level 8.

Information for learners

HNC Acting and Performance

This information explains:

- what the qualification is about
- what you should know or be able to do before you start
- what you need to do during the qualification
- opportunities for further learning and employment

Qualification information

Higher National Certificate (HNC) Acting and Performance provides you with the knowledge and skills you need to continue your learning journey in acting and performance or gain employment in the performing arts industry.

During the course, you develop knowledge and skills in acting, voice and movement. You learn about the industry, and you develop audition skills to help you gain employment.

You also develop the meta-skills of self-management, social intelligence and innovation naturally as you progress through the course, and you:

- carry out a self-assessment of your own meta-skills baseline
- create a plan for meta-skills development
- participate in activities to develop and demonstrate meta-skills
- use reflective practice to monitor and assess the meta-skills you have improved or developed

You are assessed in a variety of ways, including:

- continuous observation of your work in classes, workshops and rehearsals
- practical performances
- practical presentations
- oral, digital, or written presentations
- question-and-answer sessions
- professional discussions

On completion of HNC Acting and Performance, you may apply to Higher National Diploma (HND) Acting and Performance at SCQF level 8, to degree-level courses, or for work in the performing arts industry.

Appendix 1

Meta-skills development log

You can use the meta-skills development log from the learners resources on our [NextGen: HN — meta-skills web page](#) to carry out a baseline self-assessment, set personal development goals, and outline intended actions.

As learners progress through the qualification, they reflect on their meta-skills and evidence them against the activities and projects that they participate in. These reflections occur naturally as part of the qualification and during guidance, tutorials and feedback sessions. We recommend that learners record their meta-skills reflections on a minimum of three occasions: at the start of the qualification, mid-point, and towards the end. In their reflections, learners don't need to cover every meta-skill. Each learner can focus more on those skills that are most relevant to them individually. Meta-skills can include:

Self-management

- focusing:
 - remaining focused on set, on stage, and throughout rehearsals and performances
- integrity:
 - being a reliable member of cast
 - showing respect for others
 - being punctual and attending rehearsals

- adapting:
 - working with others as part of an ensemble
 - taking direction
 - developing and rehearsing
 - responding to audiences
- initiative:
 - creating ideas
 - developing ideas

Social intelligence

- communicating:
 - communicating through devising, rehearsing, and performing on stage and/or screen
- feeling:
 - showing empathy with fellow cast members
 - showing empathy with characters
 - showing empathy with the story
 - showing inclusivity in practice
- collaborating:
 - working in a team
 - being part of a cast
 - taking direction

- leading:
 - taking responsibility for scene development
 - leading workshops

Innovation

- critical thinking:
 - reviewing and reflecting on work of self and others
 - self-reflection
- sense-making:
 - researching
 - analysing texts
- creativity:
 - being creative in devising, rehearsing, and developing character and storylines
- curiosity:
 - being curious in learning about new materials and stimuli

Actions, activities, strategies or experiences are taken from classes, workshops, rehearsals and performances.

Learners can record reflections in online blogs, logbooks, journals, portfolios, question-and-answer sessions with their tutor, and in professional discussions.

Appendix 2

List of practitioners

Learners can explore the work of the following practitioners in the mandatory and optional units:

20th century key theatre practitioners

- Konstantin Stanislavski
- Bertolt Brecht
- Antonin Artaud
- Peter Brook
- Jerzy Grotowski
- Anton Chekov
- August Wilson
- Joan Littlewood
- Samuel Becket
- Uta Hagen

20th and 21st century key practitioners

- Steven Berkoff
- Sanford Meisner
- Ivo van Hove
- Caryl Churchill
- Marianne Elliott
- Katie Mitchell
- Martin Crimp
- David Grieg
- Simon McBurney and Complicité

- Debbie Tucker-Greene
- Winsome Pinnock
- Anne Devere Smith
- Hanif Kureishi
- Harold Pinter
- Elfride Jelinek
- Timberlake Wertenbaker
- Howard Brenton
- Yael Farber
- Sarah Kane

Devising

- Complicité
- Bogart and Landau (Viewpoints)
- Frantic Assembly
- Tim Etchells (Forced Entertainment)
- Tadashi Suzuki
- Shared Experience
- Pina Bausch
- Eugenio Barba
- Mulgrew and Communicado
- Gecko
- Improbable Theatre

Theatre makers, play makers, and performance artists

- Nic Greene
- Peter McMaster
- Tim Crouch
- Kieran Hurley

- Rob Drummond
- Gary Owens
- Gary McNair
- Rosanna Cade
- Chris Goode
- Arinze Kene
- Marina Abramovich
- Adrian Howells
- Split Britches
- DV8

Immersive theatre

- Punch Drunk
- Complicité
- Rimini Protokoll
- Janet Cardiff and George Bures Muller
- Blast Theory
- Rift
- Out of Joint
- Vanishing Point
- Grid Iron
- Malthouse Theatre

Digital practice and companies

- Merce Cunningham
- Robert Lepage
- Steve Dixon
- Laurie Anderson
- Blast Theory

- Stelarc
- Eduardo Kac

Screen practitioners

20th century film directors

- Charlie Chaplin
- Alfred Hitchcock
- David Lean
- Stanley Kubrick

20th and 21st century film directors

- Martin Scorsese
- Steven Spielberg
- Quentin Tarantino
- Ken Loach
- Mike Leigh
- Wes Anderson
- Jane Campion
- Kathryn Bigelow
- Chloe Zhao
- Sofia Coppola
- Penny Marshall
- Steve McQueen
- Spike Lee
- Ang Lee

Screen actors

- Michael Caine
- Viola Davis
- Meryl Streep
- Katherine Hepburn
- Denzel Washington
- Robert De Niro
- Al Pacino
- Kate Winslet
- Tom Hanks
- Stephen Graham
- James McAvoy
- David Tennant
- Idris Elba
- Jodie Comer
- Frances McDormand
- Ncuti Gatwa.

Please note the above lists are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive.

Appendix 3

Suggested reading resources

- Benedetti, J. (2008), *Stanislavski: An Introduction*, London: Bloomsbury
- Berry, C. (1993), *The Actor and the Text*, London: Virgin Books
- Berry, C. (2000), *Voice and the Actor*, London: Virgin Books
- Britten, B. (2014), *From Stage to Screen*, London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama
- Caine, M. (1997), *Acting in Film: An Actor's Take on Moviemaking*, London: Applause Theatre Book Publishers
- Churcher M. (2011), *A Screen Acting Workshop*, London: Nick Hern Books
- Clatyon, P. (2016), *The Working Actor: The Essential Guide to a Successful Career*, London: Nick Hern Books
- Delgado, M & Rebellato, D. (2020), *Contemporary European Theatre Directors*, 2nd edn, London: Routledge
- Ewan, V. and Green, D. (2015), *Actor Movement: Expression of the Physical Being*, London: Methuen Drama
- Govan, E., Nicholson H. and Normington, K. (2007), *Making a Performance: Devising Histories and Contemporary Practices*, 1st edn, Abingdon: Routledge
- Grady, C. (2014), *Your Life in Theatre: A Self-help Guide for All Stages of Your Career*, London: ChrisGrady.org
- Graham, S. (2014), *The Frantic Assembly Book of Devising Theatre*, 2nd edn, Abingdon: Routledge
- Hodgson, J. (2001), *Mastering Movement: The Life and Work of Rudolf Laban*, London: Methuen Drama
- Lawson, D. (2014), *The Actor and the Camera*, London: Nick Hern Books
- Mitter, S. (1992), *Systems of Rehearsal: Stanislavsky, Brecht, Grotowski, and Brook*, London: Routledge
- Rodenburg, P. (1998), *The Actor Speaks: Voice and the Performer*, London: Methuen Drama

- Tucker, P. (2014), *Secrets of Screen Acting*, 3rd edn, Abingdon: Routledge
- Wooster, R & Conway, P. (2020), *Screen Acting Skills: A Practical Handbook for Students and Tutors*, London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama

Administrative information

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History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date

Please check SQA's website to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of this unit.

If a unit is revised:

- no new centres can be approved to offer the previous version of the unit
- centres should only enter learners for the previous version of the unit if they can complete it before its finish date

For more information on NextGen: HN Qualifications please email nextgen@sqa.org.uk.

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