Next Generation Higher National Unit Grading Pack

Higher National Diploma Radio and Podcasting

Qualification code: GV7Y 48

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

This grading pack provides information about the process of grading the Higher National Diploma (HND). It is for lecturers and assessors, and contains all the mandatory information you need to grade the HND.

You must read it alongside the Educator Guide.

Contents

Approach to grading

Grading in Next Generation: Higher National (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 to assess and judge their performance across the key aspects of the HND. 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.

What the whole-qualification grade descriptors do and how they are used

The whole-qualification grade descriptors outline the skills, knowledge and understanding a learner needs to show across the whole qualification to achieve that specific grade. They align with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level descriptors.

NextGen: HND qualifications are at SCQF level 8. Learners who complete a NextGen: HND can:

- convey an insightful understanding of the subject's core theories, concepts and principles, along with its scope and defining features
- apply skills, knowledge and understanding of the subject in relevant practical and professional contexts, showing some specialist knowledge and using a range of relevant techniques and materials
- describe and explain significant topical issues and specific areas of interest
- exercise autonomy and initiative in carrying out activities, and have developed their professional practice and behaviours relevant to the context of the qualification
- formulate and critically evaluate evidence-based responses to issues in the context of the subject area, appropriately applying research and academic processes

Please use this information, as well as the whole-qualification grade descriptors, to help you understand the standard at which learners should be assessed and graded.

Higher education institutes (HEIs) can use the grade descriptors to set admissions requirements, and employers can use them to help make decisions during a recruitment process.

SQA's quality assurance teams use the grade descriptors and the grading matrix to ensure that grades awarded in a particular NextGen: HN Qualification are at a consistent national standard, regardless of the setting in which they are achieved.

Successful learners receive their grade, along with the grade descriptor, on their certificate.

Using the grading matrix

You must use the grading matrix to judge the learner's whole-qualification grade. You can use the grading matrix at any time, but you only make a whole-qualification grading judgement when you are confident the learner has met all the evidence requirements of all the required units.

The criteria in the grading matrix reflect the knowledge, skills and qualities HEIs and employers can expect of a learner who has completed the qualification. These criteria align with the overall purpose of the qualification, and remain the same for its duration.

Each criterion has sector-specific descriptors of a typical learner's performance standard, aligned to the whole-qualification grade outcomes of Achieved, Achieved with Merit and Achieved with Distinction. These descriptors describe the standard a learner of that whole-qualification grade is expected to show.

The guidance accompanying each criterion can include, but is not limited to, information on:

- relevant types of assessment that may produce useful or meaningful evidence for judging that criterion
- mapping to content that is particularly relevant to that criterion
- mapping to meta-skills

This guidance may be updated over time.

When you make your final grading judgement, you must use a 'best fit' approach based on the learner's achievement across the grading matrix. This may be straightforward — for example, if the learner's evidence shows a consistent standard across the grading matrix criteria. If it is not straightforward, you must make a 'best fit' judgement — for example, if a learner shows a mix of standards across the grading matrix criteria, with no clear pattern. The criteria may not always have equal value. You can decide some are more important to the final grade than others.

Meta-skills

Meta-skills are a key part of NextGen: HN Qualifications and learners can develop them throughout the qualification. A learner's engagement with developing their own meta-skills contributes to their qualification grade. You do not assess or grade competence or progress in individual meta-skills — for example, by judging the quality of a learner's feeling or creativity. Instead, you look at the process of development learners go through. This means learners need to provide evidence of planning, developing and reflecting on their meta-skills.

If qualification content also contributes to meta-skills development, it contributes to a learner's whole-qualification grading through the grading matrix approach.

Learning for Sustainability

Learning for Sustainability does not contribute to a learner's qualification grade.

The exception is where Learning for Sustainability content is part of the qualification content. In this case, the Learning for Sustainability content contributes to a learner's whole-qualification grade, through the grading matrix.

Grading matrix

Criterion 1 sector-specific competence descriptors

Criterion 1	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Roles and responsibilities	The learner demonstrates an acceptable understanding of the roles and responsibilities.	The learner demonstrates a competent understanding of the roles and responsibilities.	The learner demonstrates an in-depth understanding of the roles and responsibilities.

Criterion 1 sector-specific competence guidance

Maps to:

- Working in the Radio and Audio Industry
  - Outcome 3
- Radio and Podcast Production
  - Outcomes 1, 2 and 3

Criterion 2 sector-specific competence descriptors

Criterion 2	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Range of equipment and software packages	The learner: • demonstrates an adequate understanding and use of equipment and software by taking on a limited number of roles • adequately problem solves and deploys appropriate creative techniques that contribute to a final product that meets the needs of the programme	The learner: • demonstrates a competent understanding and use of equipment and software by taking on several roles • competently problem solves and deploys appropriate creative techniques that contribute to a final product that meets the needs of the programme	The learner: • demonstrates an in-depth understanding and use of equipment and software by taking on a variety of roles • accurately and insightfully problem solves and deploys appropriate creative techniques that contribute to a final product that meets the needs of the programme

Criterion 2 sector-specific competence guidance

Maps to:

- Content Creation

  o Outcomes 3 and 4

- Working in the Radio and Audio Industry

  o Outcomes 1 and 2

Criterion 3 sector-specific competence descriptors

Criterion 3	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Content development (conventions, structure, programme types and formats)	The learner demonstrates an adequate understanding of developing structure and content required to engage the target audience.	The learner demonstrates a competent understanding of developing structure and content required to engage the target audience.	The learner demonstrates an in-depth understanding of developing structure and content required to engage the target audience.

Criterion 3 sector-specific competence guidance

Maps to:

- Content Creation
  - Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Criterion 4 sector-specific competence descriptors

Criterion 4	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Promotional techniques (social media and demo)	The learner demonstrates an adequate understanding of audiences and deploys some appropriate strategies and content required to reach and engage them.	The learner demonstrates a competent understanding of audiences and deploys appropriate strategies and content required to reach and engage them.	The learner demonstrates an in-depth understanding of audiences and deploys insightful strategies and content required to reach and engage them.

Criterion 4 sector-specific competence guidance

Maps to:

- Content Creation
  - Outcomes 1 and 2
- Working in the Radio and Audio Industry
  - Outcomes 1 and 2
- Radio and Podcast Production
  - Outcomes 2 and 3

Criterion 5 sector-specific competences descriptors

Criterion 5	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Professional standards and relevant legislation, including broadcasting regulations (Ofcom) and copyright licensing (Phonographic Performance Limited (PPL) and the Performing Rights Society (PRS))	The learner demonstrates an adequate understanding of professional standards required to meet current legislation.	The learner demonstrates a competent understanding of professional standards required to meet current legislation.	The learner demonstrates an in-depth understanding of professional standards required to meet current legislation.

Criterion 5 sector-specific competences guidance

Maps to:

- Working in the Radio and Audio Industry
    - Outcome 3
- Radio and Podcast Production
    - Outcome 2

Criterion 1 academic competence descriptors

Criterion 1	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Research	The learner: • adequately defines research tasks • locates and selects a variety of sources • organises and evaluates the reliability and relevance of the data • presents the findings in the appropriate format for the production • maintains records of the sources of information but not consistently and lacks some detail	The learner: • competently defines research tasks • locates and selects a variety of sources • organises and evaluates the reliability and relevance of the data • presents the findings in the appropriate format for the production • maintains accurate and detailed records of the sources of information most of the time	The learner: • accurately and insightfully defines research tasks • locates and selects a variety of sources • organises and evaluates the reliability and relevance of the data • presents the findings in the appropriate format for the production • maintains accurate and detailed records of the sources of information

Criterion 1 academic competence guidance

Maps to:

• Content Creation

  o Outcome 4

• Working in the Radio and Audio Industry

  o Outcome 2

Criterion 2 academic competence descriptors

Criterion 2	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Critical thinking	The learner adequately analyses, interprets or conceptually develops ideas in relation to the brief and throughout the production process.	The learner competently analyses, interprets or conceptually develops ideas in relation to the brief and throughout the production process.	The learner insightfully and perceptively analyses, interprets or conceptually develops ideas in relation to the brief and throughout the production process.

Criterion 2 academic competence guidance

Maps to:

- Content Creation
  - Outcomes 1, 2, 5 and 6

Criterion 3 academic competence descriptors

Criterion 3	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Presentation skills	The learner pitches or presents ideas adequately using language and techniques appropriate for the intended audience.	The learner pitches or presents ideas competently using language and techniques appropriate for the intended audience.	The learner pitches or presents ideas confidently using language and techniques appropriate for the intended audience.

Criterion 3 academic competence guidance

Maps to:

- Content Creation
  - Outcome 3
- Working in the Radio and Audio Industry
  - Outcomes 1 and 2

Criterion 4 academic competence descriptors

Criterion 4	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Reflective practice	The learner: • demonstrates an adequate ability to critically reflect on their own work and behaviours, taking on board feedback from others • can adequately analyse and evaluate their own learning and use this to support further personal development	The learner: • demonstrates a competent ability to critically reflect on their own work and behaviours, taking on board feedback from others • can competently analyse and evaluate their own learning and use this to support further personal development	The learner: • demonstrates an insightful ability to critically reflect on their own work and behaviours, taking on board feedback from others • can perceptively analyse and evaluate their own learning and use this to support further personal development

Criterion 4 academic competence guidance

Maps to:

• Content Creation

  o Outcomes 5 and 6

• Working in the Radio and Audio Industry

  o Outcome 2

• Radio and Podcast Production

  o Outcome 3

Criterion 5 academic competence descriptors

Criterion 5	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Academic writing	The learner demonstrates an adequate understanding of the specific features and conventions of academic writing.	The learner demonstrates a competent understanding of the specific features and conventions of academic writing.	The learner demonstrates a confident understanding of the specific features and conventions of academic writing.

Criterion 5 guidance

Maps to:

- Communication: Practical Skills
  - Outcome 1 and 2

Criterion 1 competence in professional behaviours descriptors

Criterion 1	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Communication	The learner demonstrates an acceptable level of communication skills and uses appropriate industry terminology adequately.	The learner demonstrates a competent level of communication skills and uses appropriate industry terminology competently.	The learner demonstrates a sophisticated level of communication skills and uses appropriate industry terminology fluently.

Criterion 1 competence in professional behaviours guidance

Maps to:

- Content Creation
  - Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6
- Working in the Radio and Audio Industry
  - Outcome 1 and 2

Criterion 2 competence in professional behaviours descriptors

Criterion 2	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Ethics	The learner demonstrates an adequate understanding of ethical considerations required in the radio and audio industry.	The learner demonstrates a competent understanding of ethical considerations required in the radio and audio industry.	The learner demonstrates an accurate and insightful understanding of ethical considerations required in the radio and audio industry.

Criterion 2 competence in professional behaviours guidance

Maps to:

- Working in the Radio and Audio Industry
  - o Outcome 3

Criterion 3 competence in professional behaviours descriptors

Criterion 3	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Working with others	The learner can demonstrate a professional approach when working with others to achieve a shared goal.	The learner mostly maintains a professional approach when working with others to achieve a shared goal.	The learner always maintains a professional approach when working with others to achieve a shared goal.

Criterion 3 competence in professional behaviours guidance

Maps to:

- Content Creation
  - o Outcomes 3 and 4
- Working in the Radio and Audio Industry
  - o Outcome 2
- Radio and Podcast Production
  - o Outcome 2

Criterion 4 competence in professional behaviours descriptors

Criterion 4	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Problem solving	The learner can adequately define the problem and contribute to generating solutions that sometimes relate to resources and time available.	The learner can competently define the problem and contribute to generating practical solutions that relate to resources and time available.	The learner can accurately define the problem and generate practical solutions that relate to resources and time available.

Criterion 4 competence in professional behaviours guidance

Maps to:

- Content Creation
  - Outcomes 3 and 4
- Radio and Podcast Production
  - Outcomes 2 and 3

Criterion 5 competence in professional behaviours descriptors

Criterion 5	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Initiative	The learner: • adequately reads a situation and understands when and how to propose new plans, solutions or ideas • proposes adequate plans, solutions and ideas that are practical and support the production	The learner: • competently reads a situation and understands when and how to propose new plans, solutions or ideas • proposes competent plans, solutions and ideas that are practical and support the production	The learner: • insightfully reads a situation and understands when and how to propose new plans, solutions or ideas • proposes insightful plans, solutions and ideas that are practical and support the production

Criterion 5 competence in professional behaviours guidance

Maps to:

- Content Creation
  - Outcomes 3 and 4
- Radio and Podcast Production
  - Outcomes 2 and 3

Criterion 6 competence in professional behaviours descriptors

Criterion 6	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Timekeeping	The learner submits work but misses some deadlines and may sometimes arrive late for related production activities.	The learner: • meets the majority of key deadlines • mostly arrives on time for related production activities	The learner: • meets all key deadlines • is reliable and arrives on time for related production activities

Criterion 6 competence in professional behaviours guidance

Maps to:

- Content Creation
  - Outcomes 3 and 4

Criterion 7 competence in professional behaviours descriptors

Criterion 7	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Self-employment and business fundamentals	The learner demonstrates an acceptable interpretation of issues pertaining to employability and enterprise within the radio and audio sector.	The learner demonstrates a competent interpretation of issues pertaining to employability and enterprise within the radio and audio sector.	The learner demonstrates a highly accurate and insightful interpretation of issues pertaining to employability and enterprise within the radio and audio sector.

Criterion 7 competence in professional behaviours guidance

Maps to:

- Content Creation
  - Outcomes 3 and 4
- Working in the Radio and Audio Industry
  - Outcomes 2 and 3

Criterion 8 competence in professional behaviours descriptors

Criterion 8	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Develops meta-skills	The learner adequately engages with the process of meta-skills development in the context of the qualification by: • carrying out self-assessment of meta-skills, giving reasons for ratings or judgements made • setting clear and measurable goals plus action strategies to develop meta-skills in all three categories • using reflective practice strategies to track progress and analyse the links between course activities, experiences and meta-skills development	The learner demonstrates a clear commitment to the process of meta-skills development in the context of the qualification by: • carrying out self-assessment of meta-skills, giving some insightful reasons for ratings or judgements made • setting clear and measurable goals plus action strategies to develop meta-skills in all three categories • using reflective practice strategies to track progress, analyse and demonstrate some insight into the impact of their course activities and experiences on their meta-skills development	The learner demonstrates strong commitment to the process of meta-skills development in the context of the qualification by: • carrying out self-assessment of meta-skills, giving some insightful reasons for ratings or judgements made • setting clear and measurable goals plus action strategies to develop meta-skills in all three categories, and updating these as required • using reflective practice strategies very effectively to track progress, analyse and demonstrate insight into the impact of their course activities and experiences on their meta-skills development

Criterion 8 guidance

You must refer to the meta-skills assessment guidance when grading meta-skills. You can find meta-skills teaching, learning and assessment resources on [SQA's meta-skills web page](#).

You are not grading learners' individual competence in meta-skills, for example the quality of their feeling or creativity. It is the process of development that they go through — their planning, developing, and reflecting — that should be evidenced and assessed.

Additional grading guidance

The Higher National Diploma (HND) Radio and Podcasting is designed to develop learners' understanding of the wider radio and audio industry.

The mandatory units allow learners to develop a range of creative and specialist skills, building professional practice through working on long-running regular radio shows or podcasts. Through all mandatory and optional units, learners develop the workplace skills and experience they need to work in the radio, podcasting or audio industry as an employee or freelancer. They develop academic skills through research, analysis, reflective practice and evaluation.

Selected optional units support learners to develop the skills and knowledge they need to meet industry or local requirements. They also add flexibility to the qualification.

The proposed grading is based on a profiling and key competency model that gives a wider picture of learners' achievements. You grade learners against the following three criteria:

- sector-specific competence:
    - carrying out creative, technical or craft tasks
- academic competence:
    - researching, analysing, reflecting and evaluating
    - critical thinking
- competence in professional behaviours:
    - demonstrating an understanding of industry, roles and etiquette

All evidence gathered throughout the delivery of HND Radio and Podcasting can contribute to the final overall grade.

The purpose of the grading model is to:

- highlight learners' strengths in the specific competencies required in audio production
- give a more accurate picture of learners' achievements in relation to the specific aims of the qualification, reflecting relevant skills, knowledge and professional behaviours
- motivate learners throughout the duration of the academic session
- differentiate learners' levels of achievement for employers and entry to higher education

You should decide the number of projects you deliver locally. We expect that there will be a minimum of five projects, including a long-running or regular radio show or podcast.

Grading is continuous throughout the academic session, rather than end-loaded. Progress can be tracked and reviewed at regular intervals.

Grading is based across all 15 credits delivered in the qualification.

Delivery teams are responsible for agreeing levels for individual learners. You should do this based on learner, peer, lecturer, and industry feedback on the evidence learners generate through carrying out projects and assessments during the full academic session.

The criteria statements in the 'Grading matrix' section support a standardised and simplified approach to grading.

Grading model

HND Radio and Podcasting learner profile: table of competence and grade

Project or role	Sector specific	Academic	Professional behaviours
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
Aggregate score across all projects			

Overall grade:

Worked example of grading model

HND Radio and Podcasting learner profile: table of competence and grade worked example

Project or role	Sector specific	Academic	Professional behaviours
Morning programme	Achieved	Achieved	Achieved
Information programme	Merit	Merit	Merit
Fiction	Merit	Merit	Merit
Non-fiction	Merit	Merit	Merit
Innovative	Achieved	Merit	Merit
Demo	Merit	Merit	Merit
Long-running radio show or podcast	Achieved	Achieved	Achieved
Aggregate score across all projects	**Merit**	**Merit**	**Merit**

Overall grade: Achieved with Merit

Administrative information

Published: August 2025 (version 1.0)

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 guide.

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 visit the NextGen: HN web page.

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