

NextGen: HN grading pack

HNC Acting and Performance (SCQF level 7)

Qualification code: GV8X 47

Valid from: August 2026

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

You must read it alongside the educator guide.

Published: August 2026 (version1.1)

Copyright © Qualifications Scotland 2026

Copyright © Scottish Qualifications Authority 2025

Contents

Approach to grading	1
Whole-qualification grade outcomes	1
Whole-qualification grade descriptors	1
What the whole-qualification grade descriptors do and how they are used	2
Using the grading matrix	4
Meta-skills	5
Learning for Sustainability	5
Grading matrix.....	6
Additional grading guidance	28
Key competency approach.....	28
Grading model.....	30
Worked example of grading model: Candidate A	42
Worked example of grading model: Candidate B	57
Worked example of grading model: Candidate C	69
Administrative information.....	82
History of changes.....	82

Approach to grading

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 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.

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: HNC qualifications are at SCQF level 7. Learners who complete a NextGen: HNC can:

- convey knowledge of the subject's main theories, concepts and principles
- apply skills, knowledge and understanding of the subject in relevant practical and professional contexts
- use a broad range of approaches to address problems and issues in the context of the subject area
- exercise initiative and independence in carrying out activities, and have started to develop their professional practice and behaviours relevant to the context of the qualification
- differentiate between and appropriately apply the knowledge gained through practice, research and other sources

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.

Qualifications Scotland'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
Apply key acting practices in rehearsals	The learner: • understands rehearsal etiquette • works effectively with other actors and directors	The learner: • engages with all aspects of the rehearsal process • develops character throughout the rehearsal process • works highly effectively with other actors and directors • collaborates positively throughout	The learner: • is highly engaged and engaging in the rehearsal process • is prepared to take risks and challenges in the rehearsal process • can reflect with maturity

Criterion 1 sector-specific competence guidance

This criterion should be evidenced in:

- Performance Skills: Acting (outcomes 1 and 2)
- Performance Skills: Voice (outcomes 1 and 2)
- Performance Skills: Movement (outcome 1)
- Performance Skills: Application:
 - stage-based work (outcomes 2 and 4)
 - devised work (outcomes 2, 3 and 4)
 - screen work (outcomes 2, 3 and 4)
- Industry and Audition Skills (outcome 2)

This aligns with and provides evidence for meta-skills in Performance Skills: Application (outcome 6).

Criterion 2 sector-specific competence descriptors

Criterion 2	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Apply key acting practices in performances	The learner: • demonstrates an understanding of character or character, using textual clues • sustains a character or characters • conveys relationships through interaction with other characters	The learner: • demonstrates a clear understanding of a character or characters, using textual clues • sustains a character or characters • conveys believable relationships through credible interaction with other characters	The learner: • demonstrates a fully integrated character or characters • demonstrates a highly convincing connection with a character or characters and textual clues • sustains a fully rounded character or characters • conveys believable relationships through highly credible interaction with other characters

Criterion 2 sector-specific competence guidance

This criterion should be evidenced in:

- Performance Skills: Acting (outcomes 1 and 2)
- Performance Skills: Voice (outcomes 2 and 3)
- Performance Skills: Movement (outcome 2)
- Performance Skills: Application:
 - stage-based work (outcome 5)
 - devised work (outcome 5)
 - screen work (outcome 5)
- Industry and Audition Skills (outcome 2)

Criterion 3 sector-specific competence descriptors

Criterion 3	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Demonstrate vocal techniques in a range of materials	The learner: demonstrates appropriate vocal techniques across a range of materials	The learner: - demonstrates highly effective vocal techniques across a range of materials - conveys clear and credible character and emotions	The learner: - demonstrates versatility, creativity, range and consistency throughout voice work - is highly convincing and credible

Criterion 3 sector-specific competence guidance

This criterion should be evidenced in:

- Performance Skills: Acting (outcomes 1 and 2)
- Performance Skills: Voice (outcomes 2, and 3)
- Performance Skills: Application
 - stage-based work (outcomes 3 and 5)
 - devised work (outcomes 3 and 5 (if appropriate))
 - screen work (outcomes 2, 4 and 5)
- Industry and Audition Skills (outcome 2)

Criterion 4 sector-specific competence descriptors

Criterion 4	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Demonstrate movement techniques in a range of materials	The learner: demonstrates appropriate movement techniques across a range of materials	The learner: - demonstrates highly effective movement techniques across a range of materials - conveys clear and credible character and emotions	The learner: - demonstrates versatility, creativity, range and consistency throughout movement work - is highly convincing and credible

Criterion 4 sector-specific competence guidance

This criterion should be evidenced in:

- Performance Skills: Acting (outcome 1 and 2)
- Performance Skills: Movement (outcomes 1, 2 and 3)
- Performance Skills: Application:
 - stage-based work (outcomes 2, 3 and 5)
 - devised work (outcomes 3 and 5)
 - screen work (outcomes 2, 4 and 5)
- Industry and Audition Skills (outcome 2)

Criterion 1 academic competence descriptors

Criterion 1	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Critical thinking	The learner: adequately analyses, interprets and develops ideas and stimuli	The learner: competently questions, analyses, interprets and evaluates ideas and stimuli	The learner: - can work with complex ideas - shows an open mind as they question, analyse, synthesise, interpret and evaluate

Criterion 1 academic competence guidance

This criterion should be evidenced in:

- Performance Skills: Acting (outcomes 2 and 3)
- Performance Skills: Voice (outcomes 2 and 3)
- Performance Skills: Movement (outcomes 2 and 3)
- Performance Skills: Application:
 - stage-based work (outcome 1)
 - devised work (outcome 1)
 - screen work (outcome 1)
- Industry and Audition Skills (outcome 1)

Criterion 2 academic competence descriptors

Criterion 2	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Research skills	The learner: • demonstrates good and mostly relevant research • makes good use of sources • demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of material • presents their findings in the appropriate format	The learner: • demonstrates very good, relevant and effective research • cites references appropriately • makes very good use of sources • demonstrates a very good knowledge and understanding of material • presents their findings in the appropriate format	The learner: • demonstrates detailed, relevant and highly effective research • cites references appropriately • makes excellent use of sources • demonstrates an excellent knowledge and understanding of material • is accurate and insightful • presents their findings in the appropriate format

Criterion 2 academic competence guidance

This criterion should be evidenced in:

- Performance Skills: Acting (outcomes 1, 2 and 3)
- Performance Skills: Voice (outcomes 1, 2 and 3)
- Performance Skills: Movement (outcomes 1, 2 and 3)
- Performance Skills: Application
 - stage-based work (outcome 1)
 - devised work (outcome 1)
 - screen work (outcome 1)
- Industry and Audition Skills (outcome 1)

Criterion 3 academic competence descriptors

Criterion 3	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Reflective practice	The learner: • can adequately reflect, analyse and evaluate	The learner: • can competently reflect, analyse and evaluate • can incorporate feedback from others	The learner: • is insightful and perceptive • can reflect objectively • can incorporate feedback and develop in a positive way • can analyse and evaluate self as well as others

Criterion 3 academic competence guidance

This criterion should be evidenced in:

- Performance Skills: Voice (outcome 3)
- Performance Skills: Movement (outcome 3)
- Performance Skills: Application:
 - stage-based work (outcome 4)
 - devised work (outcome 4)
 - screen work (outcome 3)
- Industry and Audition Skills (outcome 3)

This aligns with and provides evidence for meta-skills (outcome 6) in Performance Skills: Application.

Criterion 4 academic competence descriptors

Criterion 4	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Presentation skills	The learner: • adequately presents themselves and their ideas • uses appropriate language for the situation and audience	The learner: • competently presents themselves and their ideas • is articulate and genuine	The learner: • confidently presents themselves and their ideas • is highly articulate and engaging • uses positive and open body language

Criterion 4 academic competence guidance

This criterion should be evidenced in:

- Performance Skills: Acting (outcomes 1 and 2)
- Performance Skills: Voice (outcomes 2 and 3)
- Performance Skills: Movement (outcomes 1 and 2)
- Performance Skills: Application:
 - stage-based work (outcome 4)
 - devised work (outcome 4)
 - screen work (outcome 3)
- Industry and Audition Skills (outcome 2)

This aligns with and provides evidence for meta-skills (outcome 6) in Performance Skills: Application.

Criterion 1 professional behaviours descriptors

Criterion 1	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Working with others	The learner: • works effectively with others in classes, workshops, rehearsals and performances	The learner: • works with others in a highly effective manner • is committed, reliable, supportive and helpful	The learner: • works with others in a highly effective and mature manner • is fully committed, reliable, supportive and helpful • has strong emotional intelligence

Criterion 1 professional behaviours guidance

This criterion should be evidenced in:

- Performance Skills: Acting (outcomes 1 and 2)
- Performance Skills: Voice (outcomes 1, 2 and 3)
- Performance Skills: Movement (outcomes 1, 2 and 3)
- Performance Skills: Application:
 - stage-based work (outcomes 2, 4 and 5)
 - devised work (outcomes 2, 4 and 5)
 - screen work (outcomes 2, 3, 4 and 5)

This aligns with and provides evidence for meta-skills (outcome 6) in Performance Skills: Application.

Criterion 2 professional behaviours descriptors

Criterion 2	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Timekeeping and preparation	The learner: • is sometimes late for classes and rehearsals • meets most deadlines • has good attendance	The learner: • is mostly reliable • arrives on time for classes, rehearsals and performances • is mostly prepared • has very good attendance • meets most deadlines	The learner: • is always reliable • always arrives on time for classes, rehearsals and performances • is always prepared • is always ready, with a focused and mature approach • has excellent attendance • meets all deadlines

Criterion 2 professional behaviours guidance

This criterion should be evidenced in:

- Performance Skills: Acting (all outcomes)
- Performance Skills: Voice (all outcomes)
- Performance Skills: Movement (all outcomes)
- Performance Skills: Application (all outcomes)
- Industry and Audition Skills (all outcomes)

This aligns with and provides evidence for meta-skills (outcome 6) in Performance Skills: Application.

Criterion 3 professional behaviours descriptors

Criterion 3	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Industry standards	The learner: demonstrates an understanding of industry requirements and standards	The learner: demonstrates an insightful and accurate understanding of industry requirements and standards	The learner: demonstrates a highly insightful, accurate and in-depth understanding of industry requirements and standards

Criterion 3 professional behaviours guidance

This criterion should be evidenced in:

- Industry and Audition Skills (outcomes 1 and 2)

This aligns with and provides evidence for meta-skills (outcome 6) in Performance Skills: Application.

Criterion 4 professional behaviours descriptors

Criterion 4	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Audition skills	The learner: • presents effective audition skills	The learner: • presents very good audition skills	The learner: • presents excellent audition skills and a connection with the audition panel

Criterion 4 professional behaviours guidance

This criterion should be evidenced in:

- Industry and Audition Skills (outcome 2)

Develop meta-skills (competence in professional behaviours) descriptors

Criterion	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Develop meta-skills	The learner adequately engages with the process of meta-skills development in the context of the qualification by: • carrying out a 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 a 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 and demonstrate some insight into the impact of their course activities and experiences on their meta-skills development	The learner demonstrates a strong commitment to the process of meta-skills development in the context of the qualification by: • carrying out a self-assessment of meta-skills, giving 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 and demonstrate insight into the impact of their course activities and experiences on their meta-skills development

Develop meta-skills (competence in professional behaviours) guidance

Maps to all units.

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

This guidance details the expectations of learners' engagement with meta-skills, and how we expect them to go about this in the context of their particular qualification.

We are not judging competence in individual meta-skills here, for example the quality of learners' feeling or creativity. Rather, it is the process of development learners go through — planning, developing, and reflecting — that should be evidenced and assessed.

Although a meta-skills outcome is in Performance Skills: Application, evidence of meta-skills development can be gathered from any activity at any time during the course. For meaningful reflection to take place, the process of meta-skills development should happen continually throughout the course. The range of contexts in which this can happen is very wide, and dependent on the sector, as well as individual preferences. Each unit signposts opportunities for meta-skills development.

Additional grading guidance

Key competency approach

Learners work on a range of projects and activities created by their subject teams, including rehearsals, performances, reflection and analysis. These projects and activities are in the five mandatory units, and they provide opportunities for learners to cover all the unit requirements and all the key competencies required for the qualification.

The number and type of projects can vary, and can include the:

- rehearsal and performance skills evidenced throughout Performance Skills: Acting, Performance Skills: Voice, and Performance Skills: Movement
- larger performance projects in Performance Skills: Application
- industry and audition requirements in Industry and Audition Skills

The projects and assessments are listed under each criterion in the grading matrix. You should use this matrix to record grading judgements against each criterion during qualification delivery, before making a final overall grading judgement.

Grading for HNC Acting and Performance is on the successful completion of the full 15 credits. However, grades are based on learners' performances across the 12 mandatory credits:

Delivery of mandatory units, projects and activities



Aligned with key competencies



Draft or 'working towards' judgements made throughout year

Grading matrix



Grade

Grading model

Sector-specific competencies

Criterion 1: apply key acting practices in rehearsals

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting			
Performance Skills: Voice			
Performance Skills: Movement			
Performance Skills: Application project 1			
Performance Skills: Application project 2			
Industry and Audition Skills			

Criterion 2: apply key acting practices in performances

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting			
Performance Skills: Voice			
Performance Skills: Movement			
Performance Skills: Application project 1			
Performance Skills: Application project 2			
Industry and Audition Skills			

Criterion 3: demonstrate vocal techniques in a range of materials

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting			
Performance Skills: Voice			
Performance Skills: Application project 1			
Performance Skills: Application project 2			
Industry and Audition Skills			

Criterion 4: demonstrate movement techniques in a range of materials

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting			
Performance Skills: Movement			
Performance Skills: Application project 1			
Performance Skills: Application project 2			
Industry and Audition Skills			

Sector-specific competencies comments

Academic competencies

Criterion 1: critical thinking

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting			
Performance Skills: Voice			
Performance Skills: Movement			
Performance Skills: Application project 1			
Performance Skills: Application project 2			
Industry and Audition Skills			

Criterion 2: research skills

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting			
Performance Skills: Voice			
Performance Skills: Movement			
Performance Skills: Application project 1			
Performance Skills: Application project 2			
Industry and Audition Skills			

Criterion 3: reflective practice

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Voice			
Performance Skills: Movement			
Performance Skills: Application project 1			
Performance Skills: Application project 2			
Industry and Audition Skills			

Criterion 4: presentation skills

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting			
Performance Skills: Voice			
Performance Skills: Movement			
Performance Skills: Application project 1			
Performance Skills: Application project 2			
Industry and Audition Skills			

Academic competencies comments

Professional behaviours

Criterion 1: working with others

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting			
Performance Skills: Voice			
Performance Skills: Movement			
Performance Skills: Application project 1			
Performance Skills: Application project 2			

Criterion 2: timekeeping and preparation

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting			
Performance Skills: Voice			
Performance Skills: Movement			
Performance Skills: Application project 1			
Performance Skills: Application project 2			
Industry and Audition Skills			

Criterion 3: industry standards

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Industry and Audition Skills			

Criterion 4: audition skills

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Industry and Audition Skills			

Develop meta-skills (competence in professional behaviours)

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting			
Performance Skills: Voice			
Performance Skills: Movement			
Performance Skills: Application project 1			
Performance Skills: Application project 2			
Industry and Audition Skills			

Professional behaviours comments

Final grade:

Worked example of grading model: Candidate A

Sector-specific competencies

Criterion 1: apply key acting practices in rehearsals

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting		X	
Performance Skills: Voice		X	
Performance Skills: Movement	X		
Performance Skills: Application project 1	X		
Performance Skills: Application project 2		X	
Industry and Audition Skills		X	

Criterion 2: apply key acting practices in performances

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting		X	
Performance Skills: Voice		X	
Performance Skills: Movement	X		
Performance Skills: Application project 1	X		
Performance Skills: Application project 2		X	
Industry and Audition Skills		X	

Criterion 3: demonstrate vocal techniques in a range of materials

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting		X	
Performance Skills: Voice		X	
Performance Skills: Application project 1	X		
Performance Skills: Application project 2		X	
Industry and Audition Skills		X	

Criterion 4: demonstrate movement techniques in a range of materials

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting		X	
Performance Skills: Movement	X		
Performance Skills: Application project 1	X		
Performance Skills: Application project 2		X	
Industry and Audition Skills		X	

Sector-specific competences comments

In term one, Candidate A worked steadily to demonstrate appropriate techniques in developing skills. In the devised project they demonstrated an understanding of storyline and characterisation, working effectively with their fellow cast members.

As they moved into term two, their confidence grew, and they became highly effective in working with other actors and directors. They collaborated positively throughout the stage-based project, sustaining character and conveying believable relationships through credible interaction with the other characters. They demonstrated highly effective vocal and movement techniques. They applied these skills to two highly effective audition materials: their self-tape and their audition monologue.

Academic competencies

Criterion 1: critical thinking

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting	X		
Performance Skills: Voice	X		
Performance Skills: Movement	X		
Performance Skills: Application project 1	X		
Performance Skills: Application project 2	X		
Industry and Audition Skills	X		

Criterion 2: research skills

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting	X		
Performance Skills: Voice	X		
Performance Skills: Movement	X		
Performance Skills: Application project 1	X		
Performance Skills: Application project 2	X		
Industry and Audition Skills		X	

Criterion 3: reflective practice

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Voice		X	
Performance Skills: Movement		X	
Performance Skills: Application project 1	X		
Performance Skills: Application project 2		X	
Industry and Audition Skills		X	

Criterion 4: presentation skills

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting	X		
Performance Skills: Voice		X	
Performance Skills: Movement	X		
Performance Skills: Application project 1	X		
Performance Skills: Application project 2	X		
Industry and Audition Skills		X	

Academic competencies comments

Candidate A worked steadily throughout the year. In their devised project they adequately analysed, interpreted and developed ideas and stimuli. When researching for projects and presentations, they demonstrated good and mostly relevant research, making good use of sources and demonstrating sound knowledge and understanding of material. Their findings were always presented in the appropriate format. As they worked through the year, they were able to incorporate feedback and develop in a positive way. They were able to analyse and evaluate self as well as others.

Professional behaviours

Criterion 1: working with others

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting		X	
Performance Skills: Voice		X	
Performance Skills: Movement		X	
Performance Skills: Application project 1	X		
Performance Skills: Application project 2		X	

Criterion 2: timekeeping and preparation

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting		X	
Performance Skills: Voice		X	
Performance Skills: Movement		X	
Performance Skills: Application project 1		X	
Performance Skills: Application project 2		X	
Industry and Audition Skills		X	

Criterion 3: industry standards

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Industry and Audition Skills		X	

Criterion 4: audition skills

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Industry and Audition Skills		X	

Develop meta-skills (competence in professional behaviours)

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting		X	
Performance Skills: Voice		X	
Performance Skills: Movement		X	
Performance Skills: Application project 1		X	
Performance Skills: Application project 2		X	
Industry and Audition Skills		X	

Professional behaviours comments

Candidate A has worked with others in a highly effective manner throughout the year. They are committed, reliable, supportive and helpful. They arrive on time for classes, rehearsals and performances. They are prepared, with very good attendance, and they meet most deadlines. They demonstrate an insightful and accurate understanding of industry requirements and standards. They presented a professional standard self-tape.

Candidate A engaged well with their meta-skills journey. They were reflective during professional discussions, where they recognised their meta-skills development, setting goals accordingly.

Final grade: Merit

Worked example of grading model: Candidate B

Sector-specific competence

Criterion 1: apply key acting practices in rehearsals

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting	X		
Performance Skills: Voice	X		
Performance Skills: Movement	X		
Performance Skills: Application project 1	X		
Performance Skills: Application project 2	X		
Industry and Audition Skills	X		

Criterion 2: apply key acting practices in performances

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting	X		
Performance Skills: Voice	X		
Performance Skills: Movement	X		
Performance Skills: Application project 1	X		
Performance Skills: Application project 2	X		
Industry and Audition Skills	X		

Criterion 3: demonstrate vocal techniques in a range of materials

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting	X		
Performance Skills: Voice	X		
Performance Skills: Application project 1	X		
Performance Skills: Application project 2	X		
Industry and Audition Skills	X		

Criterion 4: demonstrate movement techniques in a range of materials

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting	X		
Performance Skills: Movement	X		
Performance Skills: Application project 1	X		
Performance Skills: Application project 2	X		
Industry and Audition Skills	X		

Sector-specific competences comments

In term one, Candidate B worked effectively and demonstrated appropriate techniques in developing skills. In the devised project, they demonstrated an understanding of storyline and characterisation, working effectively with their fellow cast members. In their second project (screen work), they demonstrated an understanding of character and worked with their screen partner to create the relationship required in the screenplay.

Academic competencies

Criterion 1: critical thinking

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting	X		
Performance Skills: Voice	X		
Performance Skills: Movement	X		
Performance Skills: Application project 1	X		
Performance Skills: Application project 2	X		
Industry and Audition Skills	X		

Criterion 2: research skills

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting		X	
Performance Skills: Voice		X	
Performance Skills: Movement		X	
Performance Skills: Application project 1		X	
Performance Skills: Application project 2		X	
Industry and Audition Skills		X	

Criterion 3: reflective practice

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Voice	X		
Performance Skills: Movement	X		
Performance Skills: Application project 1	X		
Performance Skills: Application project 2	X		
Industry and Audition Skills	X		

Criterion 4: presentation skills

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting		X	
Performance Skills: Voice		X	
Performance Skills: Movement		X	
Performance Skills: Application project 1		X	
Performance Skills: Application project 2		X	
Industry and Audition Skills		X	

Academic competencies comments

Candidate B produces very good folio work: they demonstrate very good, relevant and effective research. They make very good use of sources, demonstrate a very good knowledge and understanding of material, and present their findings in the appropriate format. They can adequately reflect, analyse and evaluate self and others.

Professional behaviours

Criterion 1: working with others

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting	X		
Performance Skills: Voice	X		
Performance Skills: Movement		X	
Performance Skills: Application project 1	X		
Performance Skills: Application project 2	X		

Criterion 2: timekeeping and preparation

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting		X	
Performance Skills: Voice		X	
Performance Skills: Movement		X	
Performance Skills: Application project 1		X	
Performance Skills: Application project 2		X	
Industry and Audition Skills		X	

Criterion 3: industry standards

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Industry and Audition Skills		X	

Criterion 4: audition skills

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Industry and Audition Skills		X	

Develop meta-skills (competence in professional behaviours)

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting	X		
Performance Skills: Voice	X		
Performance Skills: Movement	X		
Performance Skills: Application project 1	X		
Performance Skills: Application project 2	X		
Industry and Audition Skills	X		

Professional behaviours comments

Candidate B has very good timekeeping and attendance. They come prepared and are very reliable.

Candidate B engaged with their meta-skills journey. They accessed the meta-skills profiler and completed the tasks, setting themselves targets and goals for the course.

Final grade: Achieved

Worked example of grading model: Candidate C

Sector-specific competencies

Criterion 1: apply key acting practices in rehearsals

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting			X
Performance Skills: Voice			X
Performance Skills: Movement			X
Performance Skills: Application project 1			X
Performance Skills: Application project 2			X
Industry and Audition Skills			X

Criterion 2: apply key acting practices in performances

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting			X
Performance Skills: Voice			X
Performance Skills: Movement			X
Performance Skills: Application project 1			X
Performance Skills: Application project 2			X
Industry and Audition Skills			X

Criterion 3: demonstrate vocal techniques in a range of materials

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting			X
Performance Skills: Voice			X
Performance Skills: Application project 1			X
Performance Skills: Application project 2			X
Industry and Audition Skills			X

Criterion 4: demonstrate movement techniques in a range of materials

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting			X
Performance Skills: Movement			X
Performance Skills: Application project 1			X
Performance Skills: Application project 2			X
Industry and Audition Skills			X

Sector-specific competencies comments

Candidate C engaged with all aspects of work throughout rehearsals and performances. In rehearsals, they continuously worked to develop their skills. They demonstrated fully integrated and rounded characters. They demonstrated highly convincing connection with characters and textual clues. They were versatile, creative and credible. In their devised project, they performed in a physical theatre piece that was original, exciting and challenging. In their stage-based project, they performed a challenging role with sensitivity and maturity. They brought an energy to their performance and connected with their audience.

Academic competencies

Criterion 1: critical thinking

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting		X	
Performance Skills: Voice		X	
Performance Skills: Movement		X	
Performance Skills: Application project 1		X	
Performance Skills: Application project 2		X	
Industry and Audition Skills		X	

Criterion 2: research skills

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting		X	
Performance Skills: Voice		X	
Performance Skills: Movement		X	
Performance Skills: Application project 1		X	
Performance Skills: Application project 2		X	
Industry and Audition Skills		X	

Criterion 3: reflective practice

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Voice			X
Performance Skills: Movement			X
Performance Skills: Application project 1			X
Performance Skills: Application project 2			X
Industry and Audition Skills			X

Criterion 4: presentation skills

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting		X	
Performance Skills: Voice			X
Performance Skills: Movement		X	
Performance Skills: Application project 1		X	
Performance Skills: Application project 2		X	
Industry and Audition Skills		X	

Academic competencies comments

Candidate C competently reflects, analyses and evaluates. They have a mature and realistic approach to reflection. They can incorporate feedback from others. They are articulate and genuine in their presentation skills.

Professional behaviours

Criterion 1: working with others

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting			X
Performance Skills: Voice			X
Performance Skills: Movement			X
Performance Skills: Application project 1			X
Performance Skills: Application project 2			X

Criterion 2: timekeeping and preparation

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting			X
Performance Skills: Voice			X
Performance Skills: Movement			X
Performance Skills: Application project 1			X
Performance Skills: Application project 2			X
Industry and Audition Skills			X

Criterion 3: industry standards

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Industry and Audition Skills			X

Criterion 4: audition skills

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Industry and Audition Skills			X

Develop meta-skills (competence in professional behaviours)

Project or activities	Achieved	Merit	Distinction
Performance Skills: Acting		X	
Performance Skills: Voice		X	
Performance Skills: Movement		X	
Performance Skills: Application project 1		X	
Performance Skills: Application project 2		X	
Industry and Audition Skills		X	

Professional behaviours comments

Candidate C has excellent timekeeping and attendance. They come prepared and are very reliable. They bring a mature and focused approach to their work in rehearsals, in working with others as a member of a cast, and in performance. They are a joy to have in the rehearsal room.

Candidate C engaged with their meta-skills journey and they were reflective, carrying out self-assessment and giving insightful and reasoned judgements. They set clear and measurable goals.

Final grade: Distinction

Administrative information

Published: August 2026 (version 1.1)

History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date
1.1	Qualification code changed to GV8X 47, previous qualification lapsed. 'Valid from' date on front cover updated to 'August 2026' and 'This qualification is available in a restricted delivery model' line deleted. On 1 February 2026, Qualifications Scotland replaced SQA as the new national awarding body. We have updated the logo and 'SQA' throughout the document to reflect this. What you need to do differently There is no change to learning, teaching and assessment.	August 2026

Please check [our 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](#).

The information in this grading pack may be reproduced in support of Qualifications Scotland qualifications only on a non-commercial basis. If it is reproduced, Qualifications Scotland must be clearly acknowledged as the source. If it is to be reproduced for any other purpose, written permission must be obtained from permissions@qualifications.gov.scot.

Copyright © Qualifications Scotland 2026

Copyright © Scottish Qualifications Authority 2025