Next Generation Higher National Educator Guide

Higher National Diploma in Acting and Performance

Qualification code: GV8Y 48

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

This guide provides information about the Higher National Diploma (HND) 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 HND. You must read it alongside the Grading Pack.

Published: August 2025 (version 1.0)

Contents

Purpose of the qualification

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

HND Acting and Performance gives learners opportunities to advance their performance skills in acting, voice and movement, and to apply these skills in a range of advanced performance experiences.

Structure

Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) are at SCQF level 8 and are made up of 120 SCQF credit points (15 SQA credits). HNDs must incorporate at least 80 credit points (10 SQA credits) at SCQF level 8.

HND 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 Advanced Performance Skills: Acting provides learners with advanced skills required in the acting process, including understanding and practical application of acting practices and methods and characterisation.

The mandatory unit Advanced Performance Skills: Voice provides learners with advanced skills required in understanding vocal apparatus, application and care and advanced vocal techniques.

The mandatory unit Advanced Performance Skills: Movement provides learners with advanced skills required in understanding movement styles, application and care and advanced movement techniques.

The mandatory unit Performance Skills: Advanced Application enables learners to apply the skills of acting, voice and movement in coherent, integrated and credible performances in three contrasting performance projects.

There are two mandatory projects: script-based work for stage and a small group project. Learners select a further project from script-based work for stage, devised work, or screen work.

The mandatory unit Industry and Audition Advanced Skills enables learners to further their understanding of the skills required for entering the performing arts industry and 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 HND 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
J8R3 48	Advanced Performance Skills: Acting	2	16	8
J8R4 48	Advanced Performance Skills: Voice	1	8	8
J8R5 48	Advanced Performance Skills: Movement	1	8	8
J87M 48	Performance Skills: Advanced Application	6	48	8
J87N 48	Industry and Audition Advanced Skills	2	16	8

Optional units

Unit code	Unit title	SQA credits	SCQF credit points	SCQF level
J87P 48	Alternative Performance Practice	1	8	8
J87R 48	Applied Theatre Skills	1	8	8
J87T 47	Production Skills for the Performer	1	8	7
J87V 48	Shakespeare in Practice	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 within 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. Advance knowledge and skills in acting, voice and movement.
2. Integrate acting, voice and movement skills in performance.
3. Work with text and analyse text.
4. Apply innovative and creative approaches to work in rehearsal and performance.
5. Develop ability to respond to direction.
6. Foster an understanding of industry practice.
7. Prepare to audition 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 achieved a Higher National Certificate (HNC) Acting and Performance or a related HNC.

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 HND.

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

HND Acting and Performance offers different articulation pathways to undergraduate degree programmes. Most learners progress to further study, often directly 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 HND 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
Numeracy	Level 5
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
J8R3 48	Advanced Performance Skills: Acting	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	N/A
J8R4 48	Advanced Performance Skills: Voice	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	N/A
J8R5 48	Advanced Performance Skills: Movement	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	N/A
J87M 48	Performance Skills: Advanced Application	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	N/A
J87N 48	Industry and Audition Advanced Skills	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X
J87P 48	Alternative Performance Practice	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	N/A
J87R 48	Applied Theatre Skills	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	N/A
J87T 47	Production Skills for the Performer	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	N/A
J87V 48	Shakespeare in Practice	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
J8R3 48	Advanced Performance Skills: Acting	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
J8R4 48	Advanced Performance Skills: Voice	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
J8R5 48	Advanced Performance Skills: Movement	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
J87M 48	Performance Skills: Advanced Application	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
J87N 48	Industry and Audition Advanced Skills	X	X	X	X	O	X	X
J87P 48	Alternative Performance Practice	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
J87R 48	Applied Theatre Skills	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
J87T 47	Production Skills for the Performer	O	O	X	X	O	X	X
J87V 48	Shakespeare in Practice	X	X	X	X	O	X	X

Table 2: mapping National Occupational Standards (NOS) 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 Advanced Skills unit of HND 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
J87N 48	Industry and Audition Advanced Skills	SKSCMGS1, SKSCMGS2

Table 3: assessment strategy for the qualification

Unit code	Unit title	Assessment method
J8R3 48	Advanced Performance Skills: Acting	- continuous tutor observation of learners as they participate in practical work, including: - warm-ups - acting work - rehearsals - performances - written submission to assess learners' reflective practice
J8R4 48	Advanced Performance Skills: Voice	- continuous tutor observation of learners as they participate in practical work, including: - warm-ups - character work - rehearsals - performances
J8R5 48	Advanced Performance Skills: Movement	- continuous tutor observation of learners as they participate in practical work, including: - warm-ups - character work - rehearsals - performances

Unit code	Unit title	Assessment method
J87M 48	Performance Skills: Advanced Application	- continuous tutor observation of learners as they participate in rehearsals - observation of final performances - a portfolio of evidence for project 1: script-based work for stage - to include learners' research into the play, notes on its style and language, a character study, and rehearsal notes
J87N 48	Industry and Audition Advanced Skills	- a portfolio, to include: - marketing and self-promotion - casting type - social media influences - pay as you earn (PAYE) and tax requirements - an up-to-date CV - a self-tape - written or oral reflection - a live audition - a question-and-answer session, reflecting on the learner's individual audition process
J87P 48	Alternative Performance Practice	- a digital or oral presentation - continuous tutor observation as learners participate in workshops and classes - a practical performance

Unit code	Unit title	Assessment method
J87R 48	Applied Theatre Skills	- a digital or oral presentation - continuous tutor observation as learners participate in practical classes and rehearsals - a practical performance
J87T 47	Production Skills for the Performer	- a portfolio, to include: - descriptions and details of technical theatre roles and stage types - research on a selected technical theatre professional - continuous observation of learners as they carry out their selected production roles
J87V 48	Shakespeare in Practice	- continuous tutor observation as learners participate in practical classes and rehearsals - an annotated script - a practical performance

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 HND 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 plan and examples of meta-skills in [Appendix 1](#).

Learners may choose to keep an ongoing reflective portfolio as a valuable part of their personal development. Learners' portfolios should reflect their understanding of the ways they develop their meta-skills 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	• J8R3 48 • J8R4 48 • J8R5 48 • J87M 48 • J87N 48 • J87P 48 • J87R 48 • J87T 47 • J87V 48	• Advanced Performance Skills: Acting • Advanced Performance Skills: Voice • Advanced Performance Skills: Movement • Performance Skills: Advanced Application • Industry and Audition Advanced Skills • Alternative Performance Practice • Applied Theatre Skills • Production Skills for the Performer • Shakespeare in Practice
Integrity	• J8R3 48 • J8R4 48 • J8R5 48 • J87M 48 • J87N 48 • J87P 48 • J87R 48 • J87T 47 • J87V 48	• Advanced Performance Skills: Acting • Advanced Performance Skills: Voice • Advanced Performance Skills: Movement • Performance Skills: Advanced Application • Industry and Audition Advanced Skills • Alternative Performance Practice • Applied Theatre Skills • Production Skills for the Performer • Shakespeare in Practice

Meta-skill	Unit code	Unit title
Adapting	• J8R3 48 • J8R4 48 • J8R5 48 • J87M 48 • J87N 48 • J87P 48 • J87R 48 • J87T 47 • J87V 48	• Advanced Performance Skills: Acting • Advanced Performance Skills: Voice • Advanced Performance Skills: Movement • Performance Skills: Advanced Application • Industry and Audition Advanced Skills • Alternative Performance Practice • Applied Theatre Skills • Production Skills for the Performer • Shakespeare in Practice
Initiative	• J8R3 48 • J8R4 48 • J8R5 48 • J87M 48 • J87N 48 • J87P 48 • J87R 48 • J87T 47 • J87V 48	• Advanced Performance Skills: Acting • Advanced Performance Skills: Voice • Advanced Performance Skills: Movement • Performance Skills: Advanced Application • Industry and Audition Advanced Skills • Alternative Performance Practice • Applied Theatre Skills • Production Skills for the Performer • Shakespeare in Practice

Social intelligence

Meta-skill	Unit code	Unit title
Communication	• J8R3 48 • J8R4 48 • J8R5 48 • J87M 48 • J87N 48 • J87P 48 • J87R 48 • J87T 47 • J87V 48	• Advanced Performance Skills: Acting • Advanced Performance Skills: Voice • Advanced Performance Skills: Movement • Performance Skills: Advanced Application • Industry and Audition Advanced Skills • Alternative Performance Practice • Applied Theatre Skills • Production Skills for the Performer • Shakespeare in Practice
Feeling	• J8R3 48 • J8R4 48 • J8R5 48 • J87M 48 • J87N 48 • J87P 48 • J87R 48 • J87T 47 • J87V 48	• Advanced Performance Skills: Acting • Advanced Performance Skills: Voice • Advanced Performance Skills: Movement • Performance Skills: Advanced Application • Industry and Audition Advanced Skills • Alternative Performance Practice • Applied Theatre Skills • Production Skills for the Performer • Shakespeare in Practice
Collaborating	• J8R3 48 • J8R4 48 • J8R5 48 • J87M 48 • J87N 48 • J87P 48 • J87R 48 • J87T 47 • J87V 48	• Advanced Performance Skills: Acting • Advanced Performance Skills: Voice • Advanced Performance Skills: Movement • Performance Skills: Advanced Application • Industry and Audition Advanced Skills • Alternative Performance Practice • Applied Theatre Skills • Production Skills for the Performer • Shakespeare in Practice

Innovation

Meta-skill	Unit code	Unit title
Curiosity	• J8R3 48 • J8R4 48 • J8R5 48 • J87M 48 • J87N 48 • J87P 48 • J87R 48 • J87T 47 • J87V 48	• Advanced Performance Skills: Acting • Advanced Performance Skills: Voice • Advanced Performance Skills: Movement • Performance Skills: Advanced Application • Industry and Audition Advanced Skills • Alternative Performance Practice • Applied Theatre Skills • Production Skills for the Performer • Shakespeare in Practice
Creativity	• J8R3 48 • J8R4 48 • J8R5 48 • J87M 48 • J87N 48 • J87P 48 • J87R 48 • J87T 47 • J87V 48	• Advanced Performance Skills: Acting • Advanced Performance Skills: Voice • Advanced Performance Skills: Movement • Performance Skills: Advanced Application • Industry and Audition Advanced Skills • Alternative Performance Practice • Applied Theatre Skills • Production Skills for the Performer • Shakespeare in Practice
Sense-making	• J8R3 48 • J8R4 48 • J8R5 48 • J87M 48 • J87N 48 • J87P 48 • J87R 48 • J87T 47 • J87V 48	• Advanced Performance Skills: Acting • Advanced Performance Skills: Voice • Advanced Performance Skills: Movement • Performance Skills: Advanced Application • Industry and Audition Advanced Skills • Alternative Performance Practice • Applied Theatre Skills • Production Skills for the Performer • Shakespeare in Practice

Meta-skill	Unit code	Unit title
Critical thinking	• J8R3 48 • J8R4 48 • J8R5 48 • J87M 48 • J87N 48 • J87P 48 • J87R 48 • J87T 47 • J87V 48	• Advanced Performance Skills: Acting • Advanced Performance Skills: Voice • Advanced Performance Skills: Movement • Performance Skills: Advanced Application • Industry and Audition Advanced Skills • Alternative Performance Practice • Applied Theatre Skills • Production Skills for the Performer • Shakespeare in Practice

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 Industry and Audition Advanced Skills 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

Through research, learners explore how sustainability works in acting and performance. Learners' research should allow them to identify sustainability issues in their own experiences of live performance and training. They may find the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) and the [Theatre Green Book](#) websites helpful.

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 reflective template 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 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.

Approaches to delivery and assessment

You should deliver the mandatory units Advanced Performance Skills: Acting, Advanced Performance Skills: Voice, and Advanced 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: Advanced Application has three performance projects and if a course runs with three terms, you can deliver one performance project in term one, the second in term two, and the third in term three.

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 Advanced Performance Skills: Acting with:

- Advanced Performance Skills: Voice
- Advanced Performance Skills: Movement
- Performance Skills: Advanced Application
- Industry and Audition Advanced Skills
- Alternative Performance Practice
- Applied Theatre Skills
- Shakespeare in Practice
- Production Skills for the Performer

You can integrate Advanced Performance Skills: Voice with:

- Advanced Performance Skills: Acting
- Advanced Performance Skills: Movement
- Performance Skills: Advanced Application
- Industry and Audition Advanced Skills
- Alternative Performance Practice

- Applied Theatre Skills

- Shakespeare in Practice

- Production Skills for the Performer

You can integrate Advanced Performance Skills: Movement with:

- Advanced Performance Skills: Acting

- Advanced Performance Skills: Voice

- Performance Skills: Advanced Application

- Industry and Audition Advanced Skills

- Alternative Performance Practice

- Applied Theatre Skills

- Shakespeare in Practice

- Production Skills for the Performer

You can integrate Performance Skills: Advanced Application with:

- Advanced Performance Skills: Acting

- Advanced Performance Skills: Voice

- Advanced Performance Skills: Movement

- Applied Theatre Skills

- Shakespeare in Practice

- Production Skills for the Performer

You can integrate Industry and Audition Advanced Skills with:

- Advanced Performance Skills: Acting

- Advanced Performance Skills: Voice

- Advanced Performance Skills: Movement

- Shakespeare in Practice

You can integrate Alternative Performance Practice with:

- Advanced Performance Skills: Acting
- Advanced Performance Skills: Voice
- Advanced Performance Skills: Movement
- Performance Skills: Advanced Application

You can integrate Applied Theatre Skills with:

- Advanced Performance Skills: Acting
- Advanced Performance Skills: Voice
- Advanced Performance Skills: Movement
- Performance Skills: Advanced Application

You can integrate Shakespeare in Practice with:

- Advanced Performance Skills: Acting
- Advanced Performance Skills: Voice
- Advanced Performance Skills: Movement
- Performance Skills: Advanced Application
- Industry and Audition Advanced Skills

You can integrate Production Skills for the Performer with:

- Performance Skills: Advanced Application

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

Advanced Performance Skills: Acting outcome 1 (apply advanced acting practices appropriate to styles requirements) integrates with:

Performance Skills: Advanced Application

Stage:

- outcome 2: apply rehearsal techniques in developing and sustaining a character

Devised:

- outcome 1: develop devised work from source material
- outcome 2: explore a range of techniques in rehearsals
- outcome 3: apply acting, voice and/or movement skills throughout rehearsals

Screen:

- outcome 1: explore screen performance
- 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

Small group:

- outcome 1: create a small group performance project as actor or writer or director
- outcomes 2 and 3: apply rehearsal techniques to prepare for a small group performance

Industry and Audition Advanced Skills

- outcome 3: prepare material for a live audition piece

Alternative Performance Practice

- outcome 2: create and rehearse a performance using an alternative practice

Applied Theatre Skills

- outcome 3: create and rehearse an applied theatre project

Shakespeare in Practice

- outcome 1: analyse Shakespeare's use of language, structure and rhythm in a range of practical texts
- outcome 2: explore Shakespeare's use of language, structure and rhythm in practical contexts
- outcome 3: prepare and rehearse a Shakespeare scene

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

Advanced Performance Skills: Acting outcome 2 (demonstrate advanced acting practices appropriate to styles requirements) integrates with:

Performance Skills: Advanced Application

Stage:

- outcome 5: sustain a character in a live performance to an audience

Industry and Audition Advanced Skills

- outcome 4: perform material for a live audition piece

Alternative Performance Practice

- outcome 3: perform in an alternative performance

Applied Theatre Skills

- outcome 4: participate in or perform an applied theatre project

Shakespeare in Practice

- outcome 4: present a Shakespeare scene to an audience

Example of integrating outcomes — Advanced Performance Skills: Acting outcome 3 with other units

Advanced Performance Skills: Acting outcome 3 (apply critical reflection and knowledge, highlighting awareness of skillset and practices) integrates with:

Performance Skills: Advanced Application

Stage:

- outcomes 2, 3 and 4: professional dialogue

Devised:

- outcomes 2, 3 and 4: professional dialogue

Screen:

- outcomes 3 and 4: professional dialogue

Small group:

- outcome 1: professional dialogue

Industry and Audition Advanced Skills

- outcomes 2 and 5: professional dialogue or written reflection and question-and-answer session

Alternative Performance Practice

- outcome 1: research alternative performance practice

Applied Theatre Skills

- outcome 1: research applied theatre and community drama

Integrating and cross-assessing units

Advanced Performance Skills: Acting outcome 2, Advanced Performance Skills: Voice outcome 2 and Advanced Performance Skills: Movement outcome 2 can integrate with:

- Performance Skills: Advanced Application, as learners apply acting practices to their performance projects for stage, devised, screen and small group work.
- Industry and Audition Advanced Skills, as learners produce a self-tape and prepare for and perform a live audition
- Shakespeare in Practice, as learners prepare and perform a scene from Shakespeare

Performance Skills: Advanced Application has three performance projects, and these provide opportunities to integrate outcomes 2, 3 and 4 during the rehearsal process.

You can integrate and cross-assess the performance projects in Performance Skills: Advanced Application with outcome 2 in Advanced Performance Skills: Acting. The performance projects' rehearsal processes and warm-ups can integrate with Advanced Performance Skills Voice outcome 1 and Advanced Performance Skills: Movement outcome 1. The reflection and professional discussions in the performance projects can integrate with Advanced Performance Skills: Acting outcome 3.

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, we work 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 more than one piece of evidence is needed for a unit. For example, if a unit is about applying performance skills, learners need to produce performance evidence (contributing to rehearsals, developing and sustaining a character, applying voice and movement skills, demonstrating effective relationships with the cast and director) and product evidence (participation in a live performance).

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 HND Acting and Performance need suitably qualified staff for each of the subject components. Delivery staff must have an SCQF level 9 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 HND 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

HND 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 Diploma (HND) 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.

Before starting this course, you should have successfully completed the Higher National Certificate (HNC) Acting and Performance or a related course.

During the course, you develop advanced skills in acting, voice and movement and you apply these skills in three performance projects. You learn about industry practice, and you develop audition skills to help you gain employment.

You also develop the meta-skills of self-management, social intelligence and motivation 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 HND Acting and Performance, you may apply 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:

  - through devising, rehearsing, and performing on stage and/or screen

- feeling:

  - having empathy with fellow cast members

  - having empathy with characters

  - having empathy with the story

  - being inclusive 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-reflecting

- sense-making:

  - researching
  - analysing texts

- creativity:

  - in devising, rehearsing, and developing character and storylines

- curiosity:

  - 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 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 Deveare Smith

- Hanif Kureishi

- Harold Pinter

- Elfride Jelinek

- Timberlake Wertenbaker

- Howard Brenton

- Yael Ferber

- Sarah Kane

Devising

- Complicité

- Bogart and Landau (Viewpoints)

- Frantic Assembly

- Tim Etchells (Forced Entertainment)

- Tadashi Suzuki

- Shared Experience

- Pina Bush

- 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

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 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.