

Next Generation Higher National Unit Specification

Performance Skills: Acting (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: J8NJ 47

SCQF level: 7 (16 SCQF credit points)

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

This unit specification provides detailed information about the unit 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 unit.

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Unit purpose

This unit enables learners to develop skills in acting, specifically in:

- the acting process
- textual analysis
- their awareness of the physical health required for acting

Entry is at your centre's discretion. We recommend the unit to learners who have completed one or more of the following:

- Acting and Performance at SCQF level 6
- Acting and Theatre Performance at SCQF level 6
- Higher Drama
- Advanced Higher Drama

Learners who complete the unit may progress to further studies and/or seek work in the performing arts industry.

Unit outcomes

Learners who complete this unit can:

1. apply key acting practices in rehearsals and performances
2. show character development in an extract from a published play
3. develop general and subject-specific knowledge, understanding and skills in sustainability and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Evidence requirements

The standard of evidence for the outcomes should be consistent with the SCQF level of the unit.

Outcome 1

Learners apply key acting practices in rehearsals and performances. They must:

- demonstrate their understanding of the key principles of at least two acting practices in class-based workshops and rehearsals, including warm-ups
- apply their skills in the creation of two characters, created from text and/or observation
- demonstrate their understanding of appropriate characterisation, and vocal and physical techniques, by applying these to the performances of their two characters

The character performances should each last a minimum of 2 minutes. They can be longer in length if integrated with another unit, such as Performance Skills: Application and Acting Methods and Practitioners.

To assess learners' competence in the knowledge and skills for this outcome, you observe their participation in ongoing warm-ups, practical workshops, classes and rehearsals. You also observe and assess their two performance pieces.

Learners' performances must be filmed as evidence.

Outcome 2

Learners show character development in an extract from a published play. They must:

- analyse a script, with particular focus on character motivation, the emotional journey, given circumstance, objectives, obstacles and subtext. Learners should demonstrate an understanding of physical and vocal choices in the process of creating character
- demonstrate the creation of a character from text
- apply both physical and vocal skills in the creation of a character for performance
- effectively engage with the text and character

The performance should include a minimum of two performers, and last a minimum of 15 minutes.

To assess learners' competence in the knowledge and skills for this outcome, you assess the script analysis required for the selected extract. You observe and assess their performances.

Learners' performances must be filmed as evidence.

Outcome 3

Learners develop general and subject-specific knowledge, understanding and skills in sustainability and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). They must:

- identify and describe sustainability in the context of the UN SDGs
- explain how they could make one product or process relevant to their qualification more sustainable, and help meet the aims of at least two selected UN SDGs

Knowledge and skills

Knowledge	Skills
<p>Outcome 1</p> <p>Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the key principles of different acting practices and the differences between them• the difference between the styles of acting required for various texts• analysis of a range of texts for style, tone and structure• rehearsal etiquette and required preparation for acting work, including voice and movement	<p>Outcome 1</p> <p>Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• demonstrate understanding of key acting principles across a range of practical exercises• apply understanding of different practitioners' methods in performance opportunities• apply principles and methods in effective performance• communicate an effective understanding of different acting styles in performance• work effectively with other actors and a director in rehearsal• perform a range of characters, using acting skills to differentiate

Knowledge	Skills
<p>Outcome 2</p> <p>Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • script analysis, with particular focus on motivation, the emotional journey, given circumstances, objectives, obstacles, and subtext • methods of developing a character from text • the process of applying physical and vocal skills in the creation of character from text 	<p>Outcome 2</p> <p>Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore character development in a rehearsal process, identifying changes and growth in communication of character • apply appropriate physical and vocal skills in the communication of character • creatively engage with character development processes • rehearse effectively, independently, and with others • effectively engage with text in rehearsal and development • explore a range of physical and vocal choices in the development of character
<p>Outcome 3</p> <p>Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the relationship between sustainability principles and the UN SDGs • two UN SDGs that have relevance to the unit 	<p>Outcome 3</p> <p>Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review the SDGs • review unit content against the SDGs to identify a sustainability-related issue • apply their knowledge and understanding of sustainability and the SDGs to propose improvement

Meta-skills

You must give learners opportunities to develop their meta-skills throughout this unit. We have suggested how to incorporate the most relevant ones into the unit content, but you may find other opportunities.

Self-management

This includes focusing, integrity, adapting and initiative. The most relevant are:

- focusing:
 - remaining focused throughout rehearsals and performances
- integrity:
 - being a reliable member of a cast
 - respecting others
 - being punctual and attending rehearsal
- adapting:
 - working with others as part of an ensemble
 - taking direction
 - developing materials
 - reacting to audiences
- initiative:
 - creating and developing ideas

Social intelligence

This includes communicating, feeling, collaborating and leading. The most relevant are:

- communicating:
 - interacting through devising, performing, and presenting
- feeling:
 - empathy with, and respect for, fellow cast members
 - empathy with characters
 - empathy with a story
 - showing inclusivity in practice
- collaborating:
 - working in a team
 - being part of a cast
 - taking direction

Innovation

This includes curiosity, creativity, sense-making and critical thinking. The most relevant are:

- curiosity:
 - learning about new materials and stimuli
 - understanding characterisation
- creativity:
 - being artistic in devising, rehearsing, and developing character and storylines

- sense-making:
 - researching
 - analysing text
- critical thinking:
 - reviewing and reflecting on work of self and others

Literacies

This unit provides opportunities to develop the following literacies.

Communication

Learners develop communication skills by:

- working with others
- collaborating with a team
- being part of an ensemble
- devising, presenting and performing

Digital

Learners develop digital skills and computer literacy by researching and communicating with others in a group or cast.

Learning for Sustainability

Throughout this unit, you should encourage learners to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of sustainability.

This includes:

- a general understanding of social, economic and environmental sustainability
- a general understanding of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (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

We suggest that the following SDGs are identifiable in the unit:

- good health and well-being (SDG 3)
- quality education (SDG 4)

Delivery of unit

This is a mandatory unit in the Higher National Certificate (HNC) Acting and Performance.

We recommend that you deliver the unit throughout the duration of the HNC Acting and Performance course.

There are opportunities to integrate and cross-assess with the other mandatory units at SCQF level 7:

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

There are also opportunities to integrate and cross-assess with optional units.

Additional guidance

The guidance in this section is not mandatory.

Content and context for this unit

You can integrate these outcomes with Performance Skills: Voice at SCQF level 7, Performance Skills: Movement at SCQF level 7, and Performance Skills: Application at SCQF level 7.

Apply key acting practices in rehearsals and performances (outcome 1)

Learners demonstrate their understanding of the key principles of at least two acting practices in different performance opportunities. Learners must perform in two performance events that show different styles of acting and characters. They should have a practical understanding of how to apply different principles and methods of acting in a series of exercises and performances, along with observational practice.

Learners can integrate acting practices with their stage work, and/or devised work, and/or screen work, as appropriate.

Practice might range from learners developing techniques based in naturalism and realism (for example Konstantin Stanislavski, Michael Chekhov and Uta Hagen), to exploring Bertolt Brecht, Sanford Meisner, Augusto Boal, and the work of companies such as DV8, Frantic Assembly and Complicité.

These techniques could inform learners' stage and screen performance choices, alongside contrasting techniques found in stylised, physical, post-dramatic, contemporary devising, and intersectional theatre practice.

Show character development in an extract from a published play (outcome 2)

Learners demonstrate the creation of a character from text. They must also demonstrate a practical understanding of how to apply both physical and vocal skills in the creation of a character for performance. Learners should carry out textual analysis as part of the outcome, with particular focus on a character's motivation, their emotional journey, given circumstances, objectives, obstacles and subtext.

Develop general and subject-specific knowledge, understanding and skills in sustainability and the UN SDGs (outcome 3)

Learners should explore how they can sustain their learning and their future careers as actors, teachers and practitioners by looking after their health and wellbeing.

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

Learners develop a better understanding of the sustainability principles and SDGs if you embed them throughout the unit, where relevant, rather than teach them as a separate topic. You could identify SDGs as appropriate to the unit and signpost them in unit delivery, or ask learners to come up with their own ideas through class discussions and presentations.

Approaches to assessment

You use your professional judgement when observing learners in class, rehearsals and performances, to ensure all knowledge and skills are evidenced and are consistent with the SCQF level of the unit. Learners can collate evidence in a portfolio.

Apply key acting practices in rehearsals and performances (outcome 1)

Learners perform in two events in which they apply the principles of two acting practices. These events can be stage, devised or screen performances and they should provide learners with the opportunity to evidence the knowledge and skills in the outcome. You observe and assess learners' ongoing work in rehearsals and performances.

Learners' performances must be filmed as evidence.

Show character development in an extract from a published play (outcome 2)

Learners perform in a textual extract in which they evidence the knowledge and skills requirements. You observe and assess their performance. You assess learners' understanding of textual analysis in the evidence of character motivation: their emotional journey, given circumstances, objectives, obstacles and subtext.

Learners' performances must be filmed as evidence.

Develop general and subject-specific knowledge, understanding and skills in sustainability and the UN SDGs (outcome 3)

There is a great deal of flexibility in the types of evidence that could be gathered for this outcome. For instance, evidence could be verbal or written, and examples could include (but are not limited to) a:

- short report
- presentation
- podcast
- professional discussion
- combination of approaches

Equality and inclusion

This unit is designed to be as fair and as accessible as possible with no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment.

You must 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](#).

Information for learners

Performance Skills: Acting (SCQF level 7)

This information explains:

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

Unit information

This unit enables you to develop skills in acting. It provides opportunities for you to develop skills in the acting process and in textual analysis, allowing you to perform in a range of materials.

We recommend the unit if you have completed one or more of the following:

- Acting and Performance at SCQF level 6
- Acting and Theatre Performance at SCQF level 6
- Higher Drama
- Advanced Higher Drama

During the unit, you:

- explore acting principles and styles
- explore texts
- apply your knowledge to developing your skills as an actor
- develop general and subject-specific knowledge, understanding and skills in sustainability and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs)

You may be assessed by:

- observation in class, rehearsals and performances
- slide presentations followed by question-and-answer sessions
- oral questions

When you finish the unit, you wish to progress to further studies and/or seek work in the performing arts industry.

Meta-skills

Throughout this unit, you develop meta-skills that are useful for the performing arts sector.

Meta-skills are transferable behaviours and abilities that help you adapt and succeed in life, study and work. There are three categories of meta-skills: self-management, social intelligence and innovation.

Self-management

This meta-skill includes:

- focusing:
 - remaining focused throughout rehearsals and performances
- integrity:
 - being a reliable member of a cast
 - respecting others
 - being punctual and attending rehearsal

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

Social intelligence

This meta-skill includes:

- communicating:
 - interacting through devising, performing, and presenting
- feeling:
 - empathy with, and respect for, fellow cast members
 - empathy with characters
 - empathy with a story
 - showing inclusivity in practice
- collaborating:
 - working in a team
 - being part of a cast
 - taking direction

Innovation

This meta-skill includes:

- curiosity:
 - learning about new materials and stimuli
 - understanding characterisation
- creativity:
 - being artistic in devising, rehearsing, and developing character and storylines
- sense-making:
 - researching
 - analysing text
- critical thinking:
 - reviewing and reflecting on work of self and others

Learning for Sustainability

Throughout this unit, you develop skills, knowledge and understanding of sustainability.

You learn about social, economic and environmental sustainability principles and how they relate to the performing arts sector. You also develop an understanding of the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#).

Administrative information

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Superclass: LC

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.

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