

Next Generation Higher National Unit Specification

Performance Skills: Voice (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: J8NK 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 vocal skills, specifically in:

- vocal anatomy and physiology
- voice skills and techniques

Entry is at your centre's discretion; however, we recommend the unit to learners who have an interest in developing their vocal skills and 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. demonstrate understanding of vocal anatomy and physiology in warm-up
2. demonstrate vocal techniques in a range of materials
3. demonstrate vocal skills in the process of creating character through to performance

Evidence requirements

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

Outcome 1

Learners demonstrate understanding of vocal anatomy and physiology in warm-ups. They must participate in a series of activities demonstrating clear understanding of vocal anatomy and physiology.

To assess learners' competence in the knowledge and skills for this outcome, you observe and assess their participation in regular warm-ups. You assess learners' warm-up techniques in which they evidence their knowledge of the vocal anatomy and physiology.

Outcome 2

Learners demonstrate vocal techniques in a range of materials. They must:

- participate in a minimum of two performances that demonstrate vocal requirements and dynamics for a range of texts and performance spaces
- apply appropriate use of breath, tone, resonance, pitch, articulation and projection

To assess learners' competence in the knowledge and skills for this outcome, you observe and assess their participation in performances in which they demonstrate the knowledge and skills required.

Learners' performances must be filmed as evidence.

Performances can be integrated with another unit, such as Performance Skills: Application.

Outcome 3

Learners demonstrate vocal skills in the process of creating character through to performance. Learners must:

- demonstrate a character's identity by appropriately using voice in terms of fluidity, accuracy, and expressiveness in performance
- apply textual understanding, to ensure appropriate use of the voice in performance of a character from a published play
- critically reflect on their practice, with a view to improvement

The performance should include a minimum of two performers, and last a minimum of 5 minutes.

To assess learners' competence in the knowledge and skills for this outcome, you observe and assess their vocal skills in their performance. You assess their reflective practices during a professional discussion.

Learners' performances must be filmed as evidence.

Knowledge and skills

Knowledge	Skills
<p>Outcome 1</p> <p>Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • anatomy and physiology of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ breath ○ pitch ○ tone ○ resonance ○ articulation ○ projection • the importance of breath, from inhalation to speech production • the importance of vocal warm-ups 	<p>Outcome 1</p> <p>Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • energise and warm up the voice effectively • demonstrate knowledge of vocal anatomy and physiology in an appropriate vocal warm-up
<p>Outcome 2</p> <p>Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • differentiation in vocal technique required for different performance opportunities • vocal requirements and dynamics for different texts and performance spaces • textual clues for vocal delivery • expressiveness, fluency and accuracy appropriate to texts 	<p>Outcome 2</p> <p>Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate vocal techniques and development across a range of materials • demonstrate appropriate use of breath, tone, articulation, pitch and projection for different performance requirements • demonstrate an awareness of their own vocal qualities and areas for development

Knowledge	Skills
<p>Outcome 3</p> <p>Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the application of vocal techniques to communicate mood, style and atmosphere • character intention and circumstances • expressiveness, fluency and accuracy appropriate to character • methods of reflective practice 	<p>Outcome 3</p> <p>Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communicate an effective presentation • communicate effective characterisation • convey character for performance requirements, demonstrating appropriate use of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ breath ○ tone ○ articulation ○ pitch ○ projection • rehearse and take direction • critically reflect on practice for 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: Acting
- 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: Acting at SCQF level 7, Performance Skills: Movement at SCQF level 7, and Performance Skills: Application at SCQF level 7.

Demonstrate understanding of vocal anatomy and physiology in warm-up (outcome 1)

Learners demonstrate an appropriate vocal warm-up.

The vocal warm-up should cover the journey of the breath through to phonation and include:

- diaphragmatic breathwork and abdominal engagement
- vocal fold warm-up
- warming up the resonators
- pitch, tone and articulation exercises
- energising the voice for stage performance

The warm-up should be appropriate to performance spaces and text requirements.

Demonstrate vocal techniques in a range of materials (outcome 2)

Learners should work on a range of texts to develop and demonstrate the vocal production skills required for a range of performance opportunities. This may include:

- materials for intimate voice
- presentational voice

- audio and podcasting
- a performative vocal for radio drama, stage and screen

You can deliver this outcome as a portfolio of different practices, or integrate performance projects or opportunities from other units and optional units.

Demonstrate vocal skills in the process of creating character through to performance (outcome 3)

Learners should demonstrate a vocal characterisation from a published play. You may wish to integrate this outcome with Performance skills: Acting at SCQF level 7 or with the script-based work for stage in Performance Skills: Application at SCQF level 7. You should encourage learners to document their character research, practice, and studies to justify their vocal choices and characterisation. Learners should pay attention to:

- background
- social and environmental influences
- circumstances
- mental and emotional journey
- inner and/or outer conflicts
- language
- register
- pace
- varying rhythms of text

You should encourage learners to critically reflect on character development and record feedback in rehearsals. They can do this in an online blog, logbook, journal or online portfolio where they can upload their evidence. Learners should document their practice critically, reflecting on their growth, practice, research and development; and on how they process and apply their performance concepts and techniques.

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. Evidence can be collated in a portfolio.

Apply understanding of the actor's core techniques in warm-ups (outcome 1)

Learners evidence their understanding of vocal and physical anatomy for the actor through participation in regular warm-ups. You observe and assess as they demonstrate vocal requirements in a warm-up in which they explain the journey of the voice as they proceed through the warm-up.

Assessment should ensure that learners are secure with their understanding of vocal anatomy and physiology. Practical activities might include:

- slide presentations followed by a question-and-answer session
- flipped lectures and/or demonstrations
- a written test
- professional dialogue
- oral questions

You should record practical activities and/or oral questions for evidence.

You can assess outcomes using assessors' checklists.

Demonstrate vocal techniques in a range of materials (outcome 2)

Learners demonstrate their vocal techniques in two performance projects. These could be in stage work, radio drama, screen work, audio work or any other appropriate medium. They should demonstrate:

- use of breath
- tone
- articulation
- pitch and projection for different performance requirements
- expressiveness
- fluency
- accuracy appropriate to texts

You observe and assess their performances.

Learners' performances must be filmed as evidence.

Demonstrate vocal skills in the process of creating character through to performance (outcome 3)

Learners demonstrate a vocal characterisation from a published play. They should demonstrate expressiveness, fluency and accuracy appropriate to a character. They should apply appropriate vocal techniques, as stated in the 'Knowledge and skills' section. You observe and assess their performances.

Learners' performances must be filmed as evidence.

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: Voice (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 vocal skills. It provides opportunities for you to develop vocal techniques to allow you to perform in a range of materials.

Entry is at your centre's discretion; however, we recommend that you have completed one or more of the following (before you start the unit):

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

During the unit, you:

- learn about vocal anatomy
- learn about the importance of physical health to the actor, to ensure you can warm up and prepare the voice for rehearsal and performance requirements
- explore and perform a range of roles and characters
- engage creatively in practical exercises, rehearsals and performance opportunities

You may be assessed by:

- observation in class, rehearsals and performances
- slide presentations followed by question-and-answer sessions
- a written test
- professional dialogue
- oral questions
- a portfolio of evidence

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
 - 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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