

Next Generation Higher National Unit Specification

Advanced Performance Skills: Acting (SCQF level 8)

Unit code: J8R3 48

SCQF level: 8 (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 advance and develop their skills in acting; specifically in:

- acting practices
- textual analysis and character development

Entry is at your centre's discretion. We recommend the unit to learners who have completed Higher National Certificate (HNC) Acting and Performance at SCQF level 7.

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 advanced acting practices appropriate to style requirements
2. demonstrate advanced acting practices appropriate to style requirements
3. apply critical reflection and knowledge, highlighting awareness of skillset and practices

Evidence requirements

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

Outcome 1

Learners apply advanced acting practices appropriate to style requirements. They must:

- provide evidence of research relating to their chosen acting practices and methods
- demonstrate their understanding and practically apply advanced acting practices in workshops and rehearsals

To assess learners' competence in the knowledge and skills for the outcome, assess the research they gather for their chosen acting practices and methods. You observe and assess their participation and understanding of knowledge in workshops and rehearsals.

Outcome 2

Learners demonstrate advanced acting practices appropriate to style requirements.

They must:

- demonstrate knowledge of acting methods in relation to text or stimulus, and character development across all practices
- demonstrate their understanding of appropriate characterisation, and vocal and physical techniques, by applying these to 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: Advanced Application or Shakespeare in Practice.

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

Learners' performances must be filmed as evidence.

Outcome 3

Learners apply critical reflection and knowledge, highlighting awareness of skillset and practices. They must produce an extended response that critically analyses and evaluates their own skills development and highlights their strengths, weaknesses and strategies for development in performance practices.

The extended response should be between 1,500 to 2,000 words or equivalent.

To assess learners' competence in the knowledge and skills for this outcome, you assess the extended response.

Knowledge and skills

Knowledge	Skills
<p>Outcome 1</p> <p>Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • key advanced acting practices, as required in rehearsals and performances • key practitioner theories and methods relating to performance style, characterisation, and textual analysis 	<p>Outcome 1</p> <p>Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • research key advanced acting practices effectively • engage creatively with the practice, exploring text or stimulus and characterisation • explore key advanced acting practices and styles in workshops and rehearsals • positively engage with rehearsals
<p>Outcome 2</p> <p>Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate vocal and physical choices in the creation of character, role or stimulus • effective application of rehearsal techniques and practice in the development of a character or role • rehearsal etiquette and required preparation for rehearsals and performances 	<p>Outcome 2</p> <p>Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate understanding of advanced key acting methods • apply understanding of different practitioners' methods in performance opportunities • apply principles and methods for two characters in performance • communicate an effective understanding of different acting styles in performance • work effectively with other actors and a director in rehearsal • perform two characters, using acting skills to differentiate

Knowledge	Skills
<p>Outcome 3</p> <p>Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-evaluation techniques, and reflection in workshops and rehearsals that is appropriate to performance skills development • the application of key practitioner methods and techniques on the development of vocal, physical and acting skills • the process of documenting skills development • techniques required across acting, voice and movement to produce an effective performance 	<p>Outcome 3</p> <p>Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyse and evaluate performance skills, demonstrating awareness of development, and identify areas for improvement in performance practices • discuss knowledge gained across workshops, in relation to acting methods and key principles performances • identify and discuss personal strengths and weaknesses, including any challenges faced and skills gained in performance

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
 - 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 Diploma (HND) Acting and Performance.

We recommend that this unit runs throughout the duration of the HND Acting and Performance course.

There are opportunities to integrate and cross-assess with the other mandatory units at SCQF level 8:

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

Apply advanced acting practices appropriate to style requirements (outcome 1)

Learners participate in a series of workshops and rehearsals that demonstrate and enhance their knowledge and understanding of acting methods through application to text. Learners should apply advanced acting skills to stage-based work, devised work and screen-based work. These practices could be contrasting in style, allowing learners the opportunity to expand their performance vocabulary. You should focus particularly on learners' choice of vocal and physical qualities appropriate to their character, and encourage learners to expand their skills using techniques in voice and movement. Acting practices might include those of key practitioners, such as Stanislavski, Brecht, Bogart, Meisner, Uta Hagen, and other classical or other key practitioners, as appropriate.

You can integrate this outcome with work produced in Performance Skills: Advanced Application, and with work in audition preparation for Industry and Audition Advanced Skills.

Demonstrate advanced acting practices appropriate to style requirements (outcome 2)

Learners demonstrate their understanding of advanced acting practices in two performance events that show their understanding of characterisation, voice and movement. Learners must perform two characters, using acting skills to differentiate.

They should have a practical understanding of how to apply different principles and methods of acting in performances, along with observational practice.

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

Apply critical reflection and knowledge, highlighting awareness of skillset and practices (outcome 3)

Learners must produce an extended response that documents their practice, critically reflecting on their growth, research, practice and development. They should cover how they are processing and applying their performance concepts and techniques and building them into a cohesive artistic process.

Learners should include reflective content, with particular focus on the skills and knowledge gained. This could include information on choice of character, rehearsal techniques applied, and the effectiveness of these choices. In reflecting on their skills, learners should highlight any challenges they faced and how they overcame them, and the skills they have learned throughout the process.

You should encourage learners to reflect on their character research, practice, acting, vocal and movement choices, and characterisation.

The extended response should be between 1,500 to 2,000 words. If presented orally, the presentation should last a maximum of 10 minutes.

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.

Apply advanced acting practices appropriate to styles requirements (outcome 1)

Learners apply advanced acting practices appropriate to styles required, through workshops, rehearsals and performances. They produce research into their chosen acting practices and methods. They create a performance portfolio in which they evidence understanding of the skills they have gained.

You assess this outcome by observing learners' work in class and rehearsals.

You can assess outcomes using assessors' checklists.

Demonstrate advanced acting practices appropriate to style requirements (outcome 2)

Learners demonstrate advanced acting practices and acting methods in relation to text or stimulus, and character development through workshops, rehearsals and performances. They show understanding of appropriate characterisation, and vocal and physical techniques by applying these to two characters. The character performances should last a minimum of 2 minutes. You assess this outcome by observing the two performances.

Learners' performances must be filmed as evidence.

Apply critical reflection and knowledge, highlighting awareness of skillset and practices (outcome 3)

Learners present their knowledge for assessment through an extended response.

The extended response should critically analyse and evaluate their:

- own skills development
- strengths and weaknesses
- strategies for development in performance practices

The extended response should be between 1,500 to 2,000 words or equivalent.

You assess this outcome through learners' extended response.

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

Advanced Performance Skills: Acting (SCQF level 8)

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 and enhance your acting skills. It provides opportunities for you to perform in a range of materials.

We recommend the unit if you have completed Higher National Certificate (HNC) Acting and Performance at SCQF level 7.

During the unit, you:

- explore and develop advanced acting practices
- explore texts and stimulus materials
- apply your knowledge to further develop your skills as an actor
- engage creatively in practical exercises, rehearsals and performance opportunities
- perform in two performances applying appropriate acting practices

You may be assessed by:

- observation in class, rehearsals and performances
- question-and-answer sessions
- an extended response
- oral questions

When you have completed the unit, you may 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
 - 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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