

# **Next Generation Higher National Unit Specification**

## **Advanced Performance Skills: Voice (SCQF level 8)**

**Unit code:** J8R4 48

**SCQF level:** 8 (8 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 voice; specifically in:

- understanding of vocal apparatus, application and care
- advanced vocal techniques

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. demonstrate understanding of vocal apparatus, application and care
2. demonstrate advanced vocal techniques in a creative context

## Evidence requirements

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

### Outcome 1

Learners understand vocal apparatus, application and care. They must:

- provide a diagnostic of their own vocal qualities, vocal apparatus, and areas that impact positively and negatively on their vocal and speech production
- demonstrate at least two warm-up exercises designed to enhance and protect the voice, to prepare the voice for two different performance spaces, styles or characterisations
- demonstrate a vocal practice designed to enhance confidence and ability, using their own authentic voice and addressing areas of concern

To assess learners in the knowledge and skills for this outcome, you make a practical assessment of their diagnostic. You observe and assess their participation in at least two warm-ups in preparation for different performance spaces, styles or characterisations. You assess learners' vocal practice.

## **Outcome 2**

Learners demonstrate advanced vocal techniques, confidence and dexterity across a range of texts. They must:

- participate in a minimum of two group performance events, applying vocal characterisation and intention in a creative context appropriate to style and method
- perform a solo voice programme, lasting between 4 and 6 minutes, demonstrating application and understanding of texts and/or stimuli, which should include an authentic or non-dramatic vocal

To assess learners' competence in the knowledge and skills for this outcome, you must observe and assess their participation in performances in a minimum of two contrasting performance spaces, and their solo voice programme in which they demonstrate the knowledge and skills required.

You must film learners' performances as evidence.

# Knowledge and skills

Knowledge	Skills
<b>Outcome 1</b> Learners should understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• vocal apparatus, application and care, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ key breathing techniques</li><li>○ warm-up techniques</li><li>○ laryngeal muscles and tensions application</li><li>○ posture and alignment</li><li>○ core strength, supporting resonance and energy</li><li>○ articulatory areas for vocal advancement</li><li>○ overall vocal consolidation</li><li>○ own natural voice areas of strength and needs for improvement</li></ul></li></ul>	<b>Outcome 1</b> Learners can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• demonstrate a clear understanding of their own vocal qualities and areas for development</li><li>• demonstrate an awareness of vocal health and care</li><li>• demonstrate regular participation in vocal warm-ups, applying advanced techniques</li><li>• apply practice to demonstrate vocal consolidation across a range of materials</li><li>• demonstrate vocal confidence and progression in presentational materials, applying authentic voice</li></ul>

Knowledge	Skills
<p><b>Outcome 2</b></p> <p>Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• vocal skills and techniques, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ use of dynamics</li> <li>○ characterisation</li> <li>○ accents (as appropriate)</li> <li>○ mood, atmosphere, and expression</li> <li>○ connection with character and/or stimuli</li> <li>○ textual understanding, analysis and vocal intentions</li> </ul> </li> <li>• application of the vocal skills and techniques they need to meet different performance requirements</li> <li>• contrasting performative settings to support natural, intimate and dramatic vocal applications</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome 2</b></p> <p>Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate a wide range of vocal styles and applications</li> <li>• apply vocal energy in performance</li> <li>• demonstrate expressiveness and fluency in vocal practice</li> <li>• create mood and atmosphere appropriate to texts</li> <li>• demonstrate vocal characterisation in a minimum of two performance styles</li> <li>• create a solo programme of work demonstrating use of natural and/or intimate voice in a minimum of one text application</li> <li>• demonstrate an understanding and application of the use of the voice in a minimum of two contrasting spaces</li> </ul>

# 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: Acting
- 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**

### **Demonstrate understanding of vocal apparatus, application and care (outcome 1)**

The vocal diagnostic in this outcome should be practical and encourage critical self and/or peer reflection on vocal areas, including:

- throat focus
- vocal qualities
- tonal differentiation
- vocal energy linked to breathwork
- any outstanding areas of concern

You can link these to articulatory, pitch, tonal and/or other areas that learners might need to address to expand and develop their vocal production to performance requirements. You should encourage learners to listen to their own vocal practice, and research new methods and techniques designed to enhance their performance knowledge and ability. You should also encourage them to engage in reflective commentary on these processes.

Warm-up exercises can reflect the different vocal focus required for two different performance spaces, types and/or energies. Learners should demonstrate an understanding through taking part in class exercises.

You should discuss texts and the performative requirement for industry-related activity, for example:

- audio and podcasting
- performative vocals for radio drama
- stage and screen presenting and performing
- voice work to sell, entertain and inform across a range of media
- exercises and materials to enable learners to work with natural, intimate, informational, as well as the dramatic, voice

## **Demonstrate advanced vocal techniques in a creative context (outcome 2)**

Learners should work across a range of texts to demonstrate different vocal applications for performance events and a minimum of two contrasting performance spaces. Texts should include materials for natural, intimate, presentational and dramatic voice, and can be integrated with project work associated with other relevant units.

Learners should demonstrate effective research and delivery for a minimum of two dramatic characterisations. You can integrate this outcome with the other mandatory units:

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

## **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.

## **Demonstrate understanding of vocal apparatus, application and care (outcome 1)**

Learners demonstrate their understanding of their own vocal apparatus, application and care, through a diagnostic of their own vocal qualities and warm-up exercises designed to enhance and protect the voice. This should include two warm-up exercises to prepare the voice for two different performance spaces, styles or characterisations. You assess this outcome through on-going observations of learners' voice work and warm ups.

You can record practical activities for evidence.

You can assess outcome using assessors' checklists.

## **Demonstrate advanced vocal techniques in a creative context (outcome 2)**

Learners demonstrate advanced vocal techniques, confidence and dexterity across a range of texts in a minimum of two group performance events in two contrasting spaces, and in a solo voice programme. The group performances may integrate with other performances in mandatory and other optional units. The material learners select for their performances should allow them to demonstrate their vocal range, energy, expressiveness and fluency. The solo programme should last between 4 and 6 minutes.

You assess this outcome by observing learners' two performances in two contrasting spaces and by observing their solo voice programme.

You must film learners' performances 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

## Advanced Performance Skills: Voice (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 vocal skills. It provides opportunities for you to develop advanced vocal techniques so you can 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 vocal practices
- explore vocal techniques, including authentic or non-dramatic vocals
- 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
- question-and-answer sessions
- 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**

- 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**

- 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**

- 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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