

# Next Generation Higher National Unit Specification

## Physical Theatre: Skills for Devising and Performance (SCQF level 8)

**Unit code:** J7BA 48  
**SCQF level:** 8 (8 SCQF credit points)  
**Valid from:** session 2023–24

### Prototype unit specification for use in pilot delivery only (version 1.0) May 2023

This unit specification provides detailed information about the unit to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year.

This unit specification is for teachers and lecturers and contains all the mandatory information required to deliver and assess the unit.

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## Unit purpose

This unit enables learners to develop knowledge and skills in physical theatre. It helps them to develop their physical skills, from working spontaneously to developing key techniques. They learn how to respond to one another and how to communicate with an audience.

We recommend the unit to learners who:

- ◆ have an interest in developing their physical performing skills
- ◆ have completed Acting and Performance at SCQF level 6; Acting and Theatre Performance at SCQF level 6; and Higher or Advanced Higher Drama

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

## Unit outcomes

Learners who complete this unit can:

- 1 explore a physical theatre company
- 2 develop physical theatre skills
- 3 demonstrate physical theatre skills through a devised or text-based performance

## Evidence requirements

### Outcome 1

Learners explore a physical theatre company. They must:

- ◆ research a physical theatre company
- ◆ present their findings on the selected physical theatre company

In their presentation, learners can work individually, in pairs or in small groups. If they work individually, their presentation should be a minimum of 5 minutes. If they work in a pair or group, it should be a minimum of 10 minutes. The presentation should be supported by a portfolio of work.

To assess learners' competence in the knowledge and skills for this outcome, you assess their findings as evidenced in their presentation on the selected physical theatre company.

### Outcome 2

Learners develop physical theatre skills. They must:

- ◆ participate in a series of practical class-based exercises (which can involve solo, pair and group work)
- ◆ practically explore a minimum of eight physical theatre skills

To assess learners' competence in the knowledge and skills for this outcome, you observe and assess their participation in ongoing practical workshops and classes.

### Outcome 3

Learners demonstrate physical theatre skills through a devised or text-based performance. They must:

- ◆ select a minimum of four physical theatre skills from outcome 2
- ◆ rehearse and develop physical theatre skills for a performance
- ◆ demonstrate physical theatre skills in a performance

Learners' devised or text-based performances should be a minimum of 3 minutes in length. They can be longer in length if they are integrated with another unit, such as Performance Skills: Application at SCQF level 7. This must be videoed for evidence.

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To assess learners' competence in the knowledge and skills for this outcome, you observe and assess their performance.

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

## Knowledge and skills

The following table shows the knowledge and skills covered by the unit outcomes:

Knowledge	Skills
<p><b>Outcome 1</b>                      Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ the history of a physical theatre company and their leading members</li> <li>◆ the type of work produced by the company, and their influences</li> <li>◆ the physical techniques incorporated and used by the company</li> <li>◆ the scenographic elements used in performance</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome 1</b>                      Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ present their knowledge of a physical theatre company, and describe the techniques they use and the type of work they produce</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome 2</b>                      Learners should understand a minimum of eight of the following physical theatre skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ mime techniques</li> <li>◆ gesture</li> <li>◆ clowning techniques</li> <li>◆ physical comedy timing and slapstick skills</li> <li>◆ basic unarmed stage combat</li> <li>◆ mask work</li> <li>◆ object or puppet manipulation</li> <li>◆ the body as an object</li> <li>◆ finding the life in an object</li> <li>◆ facial expressions, body language, posture and status</li> <li>◆ physical characterisation</li> <li>◆ defining relationships through physical means</li> <li>◆ interaction with an audience</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome 2</b>                      Learners can develop a range of physical theatre skills by practically exploring a minimum of eight of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ mime techniques</li> <li>◆ gesture</li> <li>◆ clowning techniques</li> <li>◆ physical comedy timing and slapstick skills</li> <li>◆ basic unarmed stage combat</li> <li>◆ mask work</li> <li>◆ object or puppet manipulation</li> <li>◆ the body as an object</li> <li>◆ finding the life in an object</li> <li>◆ facial expressions, body language, posture and status</li> <li>◆ physical characterisation</li> <li>◆ defining relationships through physical means</li> <li>◆ interaction with an audience</li> <li>◆ any other suitable or relevant physical theatre skill</li> </ul>

Knowledge	Skills
<p><b>Outcome 3</b> Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ practical devising and editing skills OR developing physical theatre through text</li><li>◆ communication of ideas, a theme, or a story to an audience</li><li>◆ sustained physical characterisation</li><li>◆ rehearsal methods and meeting deadlines</li><li>◆ appropriate responses to direction and feedback</li></ul>	<p><b>Outcome 3</b> Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ demonstrate physical theatre skills by selecting and incorporating a minimum of four skills from outcome 2</li><li>◆ demonstrate physical theatre skills through a devised or text-based performance</li><li>◆ respond to ongoing discussion and feedback</li></ul>

## Meta-skills

Throughout this unit, learners develop meta-skills to enhance their employability in the performing arts sector.

### Self-management

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ focusing: remaining focused throughout exploration, rehearsals and performances
- ◆ integrity: being a reliable member of a cast; respect for others; punctuality and attendance
- ◆ adapting: working with others as part of a group; taking direction; developing ideas; 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 group members; empathy with characters; empathy with a story; demonstrating inclusivity in practice
- ◆ collaborating: working in a team; being part of a cast; taking direction

### Innovation

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ curiosity: learning about physical theatre styles and concepts
- ◆ creativity: being artistic in devising, rehearsing, and developing physical theatre
- ◆ sense-making: researching companies; analysing stimuli and/or text
- ◆ critical thinking: reviewing and reflecting on their work and that of others

## **Delivery of unit**

This is an optional unit within the HNC Acting and Performance.

You can integrate and cross-assess the unit with the following mandatory units:

- ◆ Performance Skills: Application (SCQF level 7)
- ◆ Performance Skills: Acting, Voice and Movement (SCQF level 7)

You can also integrate and cross-assess the unit with other optional units.



## Additional guidance

The guidance in this section is not mandatory.

### Content and context for this unit

#### Explore a physical theatre company (outcome 1)

Learners explore physical theatre companies. You can introduce learners to a range of physical theatre companies, from which they select their choice of company to research.

Learners may explore companies, such as:

- ◆ Frantic Assembly
- ◆ Punchdrunk
- ◆ DV8
- ◆ COLAB
- ◆ Complicité
- ◆ Forced Entertainment
- ◆ Trestle

You could also encourage them to research local physical theatre companies and the work they do.

Learners can evidence their findings in a portfolio, which is likely to be digital and which will support their presentation.

#### Develop physical theatre skills (outcome 2)

This outcome requires learners to develop a minimum of eight physical theatre skills, which might include some of the following examples:

- ◆ mime techniques: facial expressions; gestures; body isolation and co-ordination; object formation; fixed point; click and release; focus; energy and poise; mime walks and runs; push and pull; weight and tension
- ◆ gesture: hand gestures (hello and goodbye, come here, go away, stop, no, you, me, quiet); physical gestures (shrugging shoulders, shaking and nodding head, expressions of emotions such as anger, love, fear, pain, sorrow)
- ◆ clowning techniques: breath work; facial expressions; gestures; characterisation; expression of emotion; working with props; audience connection and interaction; improvisation; playfulness
- ◆ physical comedy timing and slapstick skills: posture and status; actions and reactions; working with props
- ◆ basic unarmed stage combat (slap, punch, push, hair pull, kicks); health and safety rules

Learners should develop playfulness in their approach to learning physical theatre skills, along with spontaneity and improvisation skills. They should work on emphasising the body

to communicate effectively to express emotion and intent, and to share this with one another and an audience.

You can introduce learners to the work of classic artists (such as Marcel Marceau, Charlie Chaplin, Laurel and Hardy, and Buster Keaton) and the work of clown artists (such as Avner Eisenberg, Philippe Gaulier, Slava Polunin, Bill Irwin and David Shiner).

### **Demonstrate physical theatre skills through a devised or text-based performance (outcome 3)**

Learners must select and incorporate a minimum of four physical theatre skills from outcome 1. They must demonstrate these through a devised or text-based performance. The performance should be a minimum of 3 minutes in length. It can be longer if it is integrated with a devised, movement or acting performance.

The demonstration can be a solo, pair work or group performance. Learners can choose a theme to explore as a class or select a range of themes following their interests and skill set. You should encourage learners to respond to direction and feedback.

### **Approaches to assessment**

Learners evidence outcome 1 by presenting their exploration of a physical theatre company. You can record your assessment in an observational checklist or any other supportive documentation.

You should assess outcome 2 by observing learners. You can record this assessment in an observational checklist or any other supportive documentation.

Learners evidence outcome 3 with a practical demonstration of their physical theatre skills in a devised or a text-based performance. This must be videoed for evidence. You can record your assessment in an observational checklist or any other supportive documentation.

## **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 should take into account the needs of individual learners when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled learners and/or those with additional support needs is available on the assessment arrangements web page:

[www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements).

## Information for learners

### Physical Theatre Skills (SCQF level 8)

This section 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

In this unit, you explore and develop your skills in physical theatre and learn about physical theatre companies.

We recommend the unit if you:

- ◆ have an interest in developing your physical performing skills
- ◆ have completed Acting and Performance at SCQF level 6; Acting and Theatre Performance at SCQF level 6; and Higher or Advanced Higher Drama

During the unit, you research a company to find out about their history, the type of work they produce and the techniques they use. You develop your own physical theatre skills by participating in practical class-based exercises. You apply your skills in a devised or text-based performance.

You develop meta-skills in self-management, social intelligence and innovation to enhance your employability.

On completing the unit, you may wish to progress to further studies in performing arts and seek work in the performing arts industry.

# Administrative information

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**Superclass:** LC

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## History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date

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