

# Next Generation Higher National Unit Specification

## Shakespeare in Practice (SCQF level 8)

**Unit code:** J87V 48  
**SCQF level:** 8 (8 SCQF credit points)  
**Valid from:** session 2024 to 2025

### **Prototype unit specification for use in pilot delivery only (version 1.0) May 2024**

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 deconstruct and analyse Shakespeare's texts, and explore practical methods and conventions for performance.

We recommend the unit to learners who have completed Acting and Performance (SCQF level 6); Acting and Theatre Performance (SCQF level 6); Higher Drama; Advanced Higher Drama; or Higher National Certificate (HNC) Acting and Performance (SCQF level 7). It enhances knowledge and understanding of Shakespeare's use of language and offers learners useful exercises and opportunities to bring his dramaturgical concepts and texts to life. Learners explore key works and understand how to present these effectively in performative settings.

Learners who complete the unit may find creative pathways and opportunities for advanced training and/or creative industry employment.

## Unit outcomes

Learners who complete this unit can:

- 1 analyse Shakespeare's use of language, structure and rhythm in a range of practical texts
- 2 explore Shakespeare's use of language, structure and rhythm in practical contexts
- 3 prepare and rehearse a Shakespeare scene
- 4 present a Shakespeare scene to an audience

## Evidence requirements

Learners must provide the following evidence:

### Outcome 1

Learners analyse Shakespeare's use of language, structure and rhythm in a range of practical texts. They must deconstruct and analyse a range of Shakespeare's texts to contextualise meaning.

The range should include a minimum of three texts:

- ◆ a sonnet
- ◆ a monologue or soliloquy
- ◆ a scene involving a minimum of two characters

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

### Outcome 2

Learners explore Shakespeare's use of language, structure and rhythm in practical contexts. They must:

- ◆ in workshops and rehearsals, explore structure and rhythm in a minimum of three texts:
  - a sonnet
  - a monologue or soliloquy
  - a scene involving a minimum of two characters
- ◆ understand and apply both heightened and naturalistic performance concepts
- ◆ in workshops and rehearsals, apply textual analysis to explore physical and vocal characterisation

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

For outcomes 1 and 2, the monologue or soliloquy and the scene involving a minimum of two characters should each come from different plays.

### **Outcome 3**

Learners prepare a Shakespeare extract. They select and rehearse an extract, applying knowledge and skills in accordance with your guidance and observation. Learners must:

- ◆ rehearse a specific monologue, soliloquy, or scene for performance
- ◆ mark up/annotate their performance piece

The scene learners select for their performance should be either a monologue or soliloquy lasting between 1.5 minutes and 2.5 minutes, or a scene with a minimum of two characters lasting a minimum of 4 minutes. The performance can be longer if integrated with another unit, such as Performance Skills: Application (SCQF level 7) or Performance Skills: Advanced Application (SCQF level 8).

To assess learners' competence in the knowledge and skills for this outcome, you observe their participation in ongoing rehearsals. You assess the marked-up/annotated script.

### **Outcome 4**

Learners present a Shakespeare extract to an audience. They perform a monologue, soliloquy, or scene from a selected text, applying the knowledge and skills gained throughout the unit.

Learners must perform their extract to an audience.

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

The performance should be filmed for evidence.

## 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>◆ plot</li> <li>◆ the playwright’s intention</li> <li>◆ dramatic structure</li> <li>◆ use of irony</li> <li>◆ dramatic tension</li> <li>◆ language techniques, including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— alliteration</li> <li>— assonance</li> <li>— antithesis</li> <li>— onomatopoeia</li> <li>— similes</li> <li>— symbolism</li> <li>— metaphors</li> <li>— paradoxes</li> <li>— ambiguity</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome 1</b>                      Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ deconstruct and analyse Shakespeare’s texts to contextualise meaning</li> <li>◆ explore Shakespeare’s texts and identify examples of literary terms in practice</li> <li>◆ apply knowledge and understanding of heightened language in practical ways</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome 2</b>                      Learners should understand and explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ iambic pentameter</li> <li>◆ caesura</li> <li>◆ enjambment</li> <li>◆ punctuation</li> <li>◆ subtext</li> <li>◆ asides</li> <li>◆ characterisation</li> <li>◆ direct address</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome 2</b>                      Learners can apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ structure and rhythm in text in practical workshops and rehearsals</li> <li>◆ shifts between verse and prose</li> <li>◆ physical and vocal characterisation, acting on textual analysis</li> <li>◆ heightened and naturalistic performance concepts</li> <li>◆ contextualisation and understanding of Shakespeare’s world</li> </ul>

Knowledge	Skills
<p><b>Outcome 3</b>                      Learners should understand and explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ vocal and physical characterisation</li> <li>◆ scene dynamics</li> <li>◆ action and reaction</li> <li>◆ character backstory, action and emotional journey</li> <li>◆ objectives and motivation</li> <li>◆ annotated/marked-up scripts</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome 3</b>                      Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ demonstrate intellectual and emotional engagement with text</li> <li>◆ rehearse effectively with scene partners, where appropriate</li> <li>◆ apply vocal and physical energy in rehearsal</li> <li>◆ explore opportunities for audience interaction and engagement</li> <li>◆ annotate/mark up a script, referring to knowledge of language and structure, as well as character notes</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome 4</b>                      Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ a character’s given circumstances</li> <li>◆ a character’s action and relationships</li> <li>◆ emotional throughline</li> <li>◆ creative engagement with text</li> <li>◆ energy and expression</li> <li>◆ audience communication</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome 4</b>                      Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ apply vocal, physical and mental synthesis of technique</li> <li>◆ demonstrate imaginative and creative engagement with a character</li> <li>◆ sustain characterisation in a performance</li> <li>◆ demonstrate effective performance</li> <li>◆ communicate with an audience</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 rehearsals and performance
- ◆ integrity:
  - being reliable
  - meeting deadlines
- ◆ adapting:
  - responding to a range of texts and ideas
- ◆ initiative:
  - developing ideas

### Social intelligence

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ communicating:
  - through the performance of Shakespeare
  - with other actors and audience
- ◆ feeling:
  - empathy with characters
  - empathy with the story
- ◆ collaborating:
  - taking direction during workshops and rehearsals

### Innovation

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ curiosity:
  - learning about Shakespeare
- ◆ creativity:
  - in rehearsing and performing
- ◆ sense-making:
  - researching
  - analysing texts and language

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- ◆ critical thinking:
  - reviewing and reflecting on work
  - self-reflection



## **Delivery of unit**

This unit is an optional unit in the HN Acting and Performance. The unit is a helpful platform to underpin and integrate knowledge, and to combine practice for mandatory units and other optional units.

You can deliver it as a stand-alone unit, or integrate it with the following units:

- ◆ Performance Skills: Acting, Voice and Movement (SCQF level 7)
- ◆ Performance Skills: Application (SCQF level 7)
- ◆ Performance Skills for the Actor (SCQF level 8)
- ◆ Performance Skills: Advanced Application (SCQF level 8)
- ◆ Industry and Audition Skills (SCQF level 7)
- ◆ Industry and Audition Advanced Skills (SCQF level 8)
- ◆ Acting Methods and Practitioners (SCQF level 7)
- ◆ Alternative Performance Practice (SCQF level 8)

## Additional guidance

The guidance in this section is not mandatory.

### Content and context for this unit

The learning and teaching environment should make use of the extensive range of on and offline resources and materials that are available across the subject area, including:

- ◆ scripts
- ◆ performances
- ◆ workshop packs
- ◆ apps
- ◆ teaching tools

On completion of the unit, learners should be familiar with a minimum of two Shakespeare plays and one sonnet, and have the confidence to perform classical texts.

Your delivery of the unit should be as practical as possible. You should encourage learners to grasp concepts and conventions through practical means, offering a range of learning opportunities designed to stimulate and build curiosity. They should engage with the world of Shakespeare and find throughlines and an analogy to our 21st century contemporary world.

You could encourage learners to take Shakespeare into alternative spaces, to expand their confidence and creativity.

### **Analyse Shakespeare's use of language, structure and rhythm in a range of practical texts (outcome 1) and explore Shakespeare's use of language, structure and rhythm in practical contexts (outcome 2)**

For outcomes 1 and 2, you should encourage learners to deconstruct and discuss texts. They should find practical and creative ways to explore the language terms and conventions.

This might include workshops designed to explore:

- ◆ knowledge and skills
- ◆ group practice and presentations
- ◆ research tasks and assignments
- ◆ quizzes
- ◆ question-and-answer sessions
- ◆ dialogue
- ◆ rehearsals

On completion of the unit, and through their own practice and exploration, learners should feel confident with language terms and be able to verbalise where these are in the works they have been studying and presenting. They should be familiar with a minimum of two

plays, and have explored at least one sonnet, one monologue or soliloquy, and one scene with a minimum of two characters.

### **Analyse Shakespeare's use of language, structure and rhythm in a range of practical texts (outcome 1)**

You can integrate analysis of texts and terms across all outcomes, so learners can familiarise and explore meaning through practice and retrieval.

Learners can evidence their knowledge in practical activities, which may include:

- ◆ written or oral question-and-answer sessions
- ◆ task-based assignments
- ◆ portfolio work
- ◆ dialogue
- ◆ performances

### **Explore Shakespeare's use of language, structure and rhythm in practical contexts (outcome 2)**

Practical work should include vocal and physical exercises designed to explore all knowledge and develop all required skills. The exercises should be recorded as evidence. Analysis should be practical and physical, exploring characterisation and embedding textual understanding.

The practical texts used in this outcome can be the same as those used in outcomes 1 and 3, however you must include sonnet practice in your outcome 2 delivery. Learners must explore a minimum of one sonnet, one monologue or soliloquy, and one scene involving a minimum of two characters to evidence this outcome.

### **Prepare and rehearse a Shakespeare scene (outcome 3)**

You can choose monologues, soliloquies, duologues or scenes from the same texts as learners use in outcome 1 or 2, or learners can use different texts. You can integrate rehearsal and practical performance with outcomes from other mandatory or optional units. Learners must mark up/annotate their script.

You should guide and direct learners, to enhance understanding and experience of working under direction towards a performance concept.

### **Present a Shakespeare scene to an audience (outcome 4)**

Learners should perform monologues, duologues or scenes in a shared setting with an audience. They should apply staging concepts and conventions.

## **Approaches to assessment**

### **Outcomes 1, 2 and 3**

You assess outcomes 1, 2 and 3 by observing learners' work in class and rehearsals. You assess their engagement with the texts and their performance in research tasks and assignments, quizzes, question-and-answer sessions, dialogue, and rehearsals.

You should also assess outcome 3 through learners' marked-up/annotated scripts, which should evidence their knowledge and skills in understanding language and structure, as well as character notes.

### **Present a Shakespeare scene or text to an audience (outcome 4)**

You assess outcome 4 by observing the performance of a scene.

You can record your assessment of the outcomes using an assessor's checklist.

## **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

### Shakespeare in Practice (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

This unit is part of the HN Acting and Performance. It enhances your knowledge and understanding of Shakespeare, his language and his texts.

We recommend the unit to learners who have completed Acting and Performance (SCQF level 6); Acting and Theatre Performance (SCQF level 6); Higher Drama; Advanced Higher Drama; or Higher National Certificate (HNC) Acting and Performance (SCQF level 7).

During the unit, you explore Shakespeare's works in practical contexts. You take part in workshops and rehearsals, exploring his language, structure and meaning in verse and prose. You explore his plays and characters, sonnets, monologues and soliloquies.

You are assessed as you participate in classes, workshops and rehearsals. For your final assessment, you prepare and rehearse a monologue or soliloquy, or scene, which you perform to an audience.

Throughout the unit, 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

Note: please check [SQA's website](#) to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of this document.