



National 5 Drama

Course code:	C821 75
Course assessment code:	X821 75
SCQF:	level 5 (24 SCQF credit points)
Valid from:	session 2024-25

The course specification provides detailed information about the course and course assessment to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year. It describes the structure of the course and the course assessment in terms of the skills, knowledge and understanding that are assessed.

This document is for teachers and lecturers and contains all the mandatory information you need to deliver the course.

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Course overview

The course consists of 24 SCQF credit points which includes time for preparation for course assessment. The notional length of time for a candidate to complete the course is 160 hours.

The course assessment has two components.

Component	Marks	Scaled mark	Duration
Component 1: question paper	60	40	1 hour and 30 minutes
Component 2: performance	60	60	See course assessment section

Recommended entry	Progression
<p>Entry to this course is at the discretion of the centre.</p> <p>Candidates should have achieved the fourth curriculum level or the National 4 Drama course or equivalent qualifications and/or experience prior to starting this course.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Higher Drama◆ National Certificate in Acting and Theatre Performance (SCQF level 6)◆ National Certificate in Technical Theatre (SCQF level 6)◆ National Progression Award in Acting and Performance (SCQF level 6)◆ National Progression Award in Technical Theatre in Practice (SCQF level 6)◆ other qualifications in drama or related areas◆ further study, employment and/or training

Conditions of award

The grade awarded is based on the total marks achieved across all course assessment components.

Course rationale

National Courses reflect Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles. They offer flexibility, provide more time for learning, more focus on skills and applying learning, and scope for personalisation and choice.

Every course provides opportunities for candidates to develop breadth, challenge and application. The focus and balance of assessment is tailored to each subject area.

The National 5 Drama course encourages candidates to exercise imagination and creativity. They develop important skills, attitudes and attributes, including creativity and adaptability, learning independently and as part of a group, critical thinking, enthusiasm, and confidence.

The course allows candidates to develop practical skills in creating, presenting and producing drama. It provides scope for personalisation and choice by encouraging candidates to be creative and to express themselves in different ways. Learning through drama helps candidates to appreciate cultural values, identities and ideas.

Purpose and aims

This purpose of the National 5 Drama course is to enable candidates to develop and use a range of drama skills and production skills.

Candidates develop practical skills in creating and presenting drama and knowledge and understanding of cultural and social influences on drama. They analyse and evaluate how the use of self-expression, language and movement can develop their ideas for drama. They also develop critical-thinking skills as they investigate, develop and apply a range of drama skills and production skills.

The course aims to enable candidates to:

- ◆ generate and communicate thoughts and ideas when creating drama
- ◆ develop a knowledge and understanding of a range of social and cultural influences on drama
- ◆ develop a range of skills in presenting drama
- ◆ develop knowledge and understanding of the use of a range of production skills when presenting drama
- ◆ explore form, structure, genre and style

Who is this course for?

The course is suitable for candidates with a general interest in drama or for those wishing to progress to further levels of study.

The learning experiences in the course are flexible and adaptable, with opportunities for personalisation and choice. This makes the qualification highly accessible as it can be contextualised to suit a diverse range of candidates' needs and aspirations. The course is largely candidate-centred with practical and experiential learning opportunities.

Course content

The National 5 Drama course has an integrated approach to learning which develops practical and evaluative skills as well as knowledge and understanding of drama and its influences.

Throughout the course, candidates explore and develop a range of drama skills and approaches to communicating thoughts and ideas to an audience. They develop a range of acting skills in relation to portraying characters.

They learn how to respond to stimuli, including text, and develop knowledge, understanding and practical experience of form, structure, genre and conventions when creating and presenting drama.

Candidates generate ideas for presenting text using production areas. They explore and develop practical skills in a range of production areas. They apply these skills to enhance text when presenting.

Candidates develop knowledge and understanding of social and cultural influences on drama. They learn how to evaluate their own progress and the progress of others.

Skills, knowledge and understanding

Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course

The following provides a broad overview of the subject skills, knowledge and understanding developed in the course:

- ◆ responding to stimuli, including text, when creating drama
- ◆ working with others to share and use drama ideas
- ◆ developing awareness of social and cultural influences when creating drama
- ◆ exploring drama form, structure, genre and style
- ◆ gaining knowledge and understanding of a range of production skills
- ◆ using a range of drama and production skills when presenting
- ◆ using evaluative skills within the creative process

Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment

The following provides details of skills, knowledge and understanding sampled in the course assessment:

Question paper

The purpose of the question paper is to assess application of knowledge and skills from across the course. It allows candidates to demonstrate their ability to interpret questions and respond in an informed way.

The question paper assesses candidates' ability to demonstrate the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

- ◆ responding to stimuli
- ◆ characterisation techniques
- ◆ character relationships and status
- ◆ performance concepts
- ◆ design concepts
- ◆ form, structure and conventions
- ◆ presenting — application of concepts
- ◆ audience reaction
- ◆ analysis and evaluation skills of self and others
- ◆ genre and themes
- ◆ mood and atmosphere
- ◆ rehearsal techniques
- ◆ target audience
- ◆ a range of production roles
- ◆ different staging, settings and styles of production
- ◆ problem-solving and critical-thinking skills

Performance

All candidates are assessed on their preparation for performance which includes research into chosen text, thoughts and ideas for proposed performance, and the development of these thoughts and ideas.

All candidates must demonstrate skills by:

- ◆ responding to text (full-length published script)
- ◆ developing character or creatively using production skills
- ◆ using a range of acting or production skills
- ◆ communicating to an audience

Candidates undertaking an **acting role** must perform to an audience. The performance must involve interaction with at least one other actor.

Candidates undertaking a **production role** are assessed on the practical realisation of one of the following:

- ◆ designs for the set, including detailed ground plan(s) and elevation(s)
- ◆ designs for costumes, sourced costumes, including one made or adapted costume
- ◆ designs for make-up and hair and demonstrating an application of make-up and hair design
- ◆ lists and designs for props and one made prop
- ◆ plans for lighting and demonstrating lighting operation
- ◆ plans for sound, including digital formats of music/effects for the play, and demonstrating sound operation

Skills, knowledge and understanding included in the course are appropriate to the SCQF level of the course. The SCQF level descriptors give further information on characteristics and expected performance at each SCQF level (www.scqf.org.uk).

Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

This course helps candidates to develop broad, generic skills. These skills are based on [SQA's Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work](#) and draw from the following main skills areas:

1 Literacy

1.3 Listening and talking

3 Health and wellbeing

3.1 Personal learning

4 Employability, enterprise and citizenship

4.3 Working with others

5 Thinking skills

5.3 Applying

5.4 Analysing and evaluating

5.5 Creating

These skills must be built into the course where there are appropriate opportunities and the level should be appropriate to the level of the course.

Further information on building in skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work is given in the course support notes.

Course assessment

Course assessment is based on the information provided in this document.

The course assessment meets the key purposes and aims of the course by addressing:

- ◆ breadth — drawing on knowledge and skills from across the course
- ◆ challenge — requiring greater depth or extension of knowledge and/or skills
- ◆ application — requiring application of knowledge and/or skills in practical or theoretical contexts as appropriate

This enables candidates to:

- ◆ apply their knowledge and understanding in a question paper to evaluate the performance of self and others
- ◆ demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding to create and develop a drama from a choice of stimuli
- ◆ apply their knowledge and understanding in a question paper to demonstrate drama process and performance and design concepts
- ◆ demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding to create and develop a creative concept for a text-based performance either as an actor or in a production role
- ◆ apply their knowledge and understanding of a text to their chosen production role in a performance
- ◆ apply skills to create and present a text-based drama performance, working collaboratively with others

Course assessment structure: question paper

Question paper

60 marks

The question paper requires candidates to draw on and apply a sample of all the skills, knowledge and understanding listed for the question paper in the 'Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment' section of this document.

The question paper has 60 marks (40% of the overall course award).

The question paper consists of two sections:

- ◆ section 1 assesses the candidate's ability to evaluate their own work and the work of others
- ◆ section 2 assesses the candidate's ability to respond to stimuli and create their own piece of drama suitable for performance

Candidates are required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of both process and performance. They are expected to use drama terminology throughout.

Section 1

Candidates respond to the questions in section 1 as:

◆ an actor

or

◆ someone in a production role, ie a lighting designer, costume designer, make-up and hair designer, sound designer, set designer, or props designer

These questions require candidates to give a personal evaluative response (not from a group perspective) of self and of others on a piece of work that they have been involved with or seen during the course, either as an actor or in one of the production roles. This may be from the course assessment performance or another performance they have taken part in during the course.

The questions require candidates to demonstrate their reflective and evaluative skills.

Section 2

Candidates are required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of creating drama by responding to one of the stimuli provided. The drama must be suitable for a live theatrical performance: television or film dramas are not appropriate.

All questions in the question paper are compulsory.

Setting, conducting and marking the question paper

The question paper is set and marked by SQA, and conducted in centres under conditions specified for external examinations by SQA. Candidates complete this in 1 hour and 30 minutes.

Specimen question papers for National 5 courses are published on SQA's website. These illustrate the standard, structure and requirements of the question papers candidates sit. The specimen papers also include marking instructions.

Course assessment structure: performance

Performance

60 marks

The purpose of the performance is to enable candidates to draw on, extend and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding they have learned during the course. The performance assesses the candidate's preparation and performance of a textual extract. The candidate can be assessed in either an acting or a production role.

The performance has 60 marks (60% of the overall course award).

The performance has two sections: a **performance** and the **preparation for performance**.

The weighting of marks across the two sections of the performance is as follows:

- ◆ 50 marks for the performance in either an acting or a production role
- ◆ 10 marks for the preparation for performance

Performance section

Groups should contain between two and 10 candidates. Each group should consist of acting candidates, or a combination of acting candidates and production role candidates.

Where a group has acting candidates and production role candidates, there must be only one production role candidate undertaking each production role. Multiple candidates cannot be presented in the same production role for a performance.

Acting

The performance must involve interaction with at least one other actor. The actors need not necessarily be candidates from within the same class and could be candidates who are not being assessed in this area.

Or:

Production role

Candidates select one production role from those listed below and design for their chosen text. They demonstrate their production concept for the play (this may include plans, drawings, designs, plot sheets and mood boards) and the practical realisation of this.

Costume

Costumes must be designed for all characters in the production (a minimum of two). One costume must be made or altered in accordance with size, style and character requirements. The candidate must produce detailed costume designs and a costume list for all characters. Costumes must be labelled, maintained and stored effectively in preparation for the performance. Each actor should be dressed in their costume and checks must be carried out before the performance.

Lighting

The lighting rig used in this production role must consist of a minimum of eight lanterns. A minimum of seven lighting cues and five states must be designed and used in the lighting plot. The candidate must produce a detailed lighting plot and create a lighting cue sheet. They must rig, or instruct the rigging of, the required lanterns, and focus the required lanterns with correct gels (or appropriately program colour if using LED lanterns). They must carry out pre-show checks and operate the equipment on cue and at the levels specified in the lighting cue sheets during the performance.

Make-up and hair

Make-up and hair must be applied to all characters in the performance. One full make-up and hair application must be demonstrated live to the assessor. Designs must be produced for all characters. The make-up must reflect the character requirements as illustrated in the make-up/hair designs. Suitable materials and tools must be used safely and hygienically.

Make-up and hair candidates are expected to use theatrical make-up. They must have carried out a patch test at least 24 hours before application to determine if the model is allergic to the products. For hygiene purposes, lipstick and mascara must be applied with disposable applicators or the model's own can be used.

Theatrical make-up can be supplemented with cosmetic make-up when a candidate wishes to achieve a particular effect and they have taken into account the performance space and lighting conditions they are designing for.

Props

A minimum of eight different props from two of the three areas of personal, pre-set or hand props must be used at this level. One fully functional prop must be designed and created for use in the performance. The candidate must produce a master props list. They must label and store props effectively and organise the props table for the performance.

Set design

Working designs and plans for the set, including elevation, must be produced, appropriate to the text. Detailed ground plan(s) must be produced. The candidate must carry out pre-show checks to ensure the set is ready for the performance. The final set must reflect the candidate's own creative design as well as being functional in performance.

Sound

A minimum of six different sound effects and eight sound cues must be included in the sound design at this level. The candidate must source and edit music and effects and provide a back-up plan. They must produce a sound cue sheet detailing volume, duration and type and carry out pre-show checks. They must operate the equipment during the performance in accordance with the sound cue sheet.

Preparation for performance section

In this section, candidates write about their preparation for their selected production role for assessment.

Marks are awarded for:

- ◆ research into chosen text
- ◆ thoughts and ideas for proposed performance
- ◆ the development of the thoughts and ideas into a final performance concept

Setting, conducting and marking the performance and preparation for performance

The **performance** is:

- ◆ set by centres within SQA guidelines
- ◆ conducted under a high degree of supervision and control

The **preparation for performance** is:

- ◆ set by centres within SQA guidelines
- ◆ conducted under some supervision and control

The performances of a sample of 12 candidates are marked collaboratively by an SQA visiting assessor and a centre assessor under conditions set by SQA. When there are more than 12 candidates the centre assessor applies the national standard to the remainder of the cohort.

Assessment conditions

Time

The performance should be of a sufficient length to allow candidates to demonstrate the required skills, knowledge and understanding.

Each performance must last a minimum of 10 minutes and must not exceed a maximum of 50 minutes. The duration of the performance depends on the number of candidates performing.

The preparation for the performance is carried out over a period of time. Candidates should start this at an appropriate point in the course, in advance of the performance date.

Supervision, control and authentication

The assessor must ensure candidates are provided with a suitable performance environment and appropriate conditions to undertake their assessment.

This assessment requires candidates to rehearse and perform as part of a cast and production team. However, there must be clear evidence to show that each individual candidate has met the assessment requirements of the drama performance. The balance within the performance should allow the assessor to clearly observe and assess each candidate's performance.

Teachers or lecturers must ensure that evidence submitted by a candidate is the candidate's own work.

Resources

Prior to the assessment event, centres are responsible for selecting and preparing a published drama text to be used for the performance.

The performance must be performed to a 'live', age-appropriate, audience.

There are no restrictions on the resources to which candidates may have access while producing their preparation for performance. The preparation for performance review sheet must be generated in open-book conditions.

Reasonable assistance

Candidates must undertake the assessment independently. However, reasonable assistance may be provided prior to the formal assessment process taking place. The term 'reasonable

assistance' is used to try to balance the need for support with the need to avoid giving too much assistance. If any candidates require more than what is deemed to be 'reasonable assistance', they may not be ready for assessment or it may be that they have been entered for the wrong level of qualification.

Evidence to be gathered

The following candidate evidence is required for the performance:

- ◆ a performance in either an acting or a production role
- ◆ a completed preparation for performance review sheet (contained within the candidate mark sheet)

Volume

The preparation for performance review sheet should provide a concise and relevant description of the candidate's research into the chosen text, thoughts and ideas for the proposed performance and development of the thoughts and ideas during the rehearsal process. As a guide, the preparation for performance should be approximately 400 words.

Performance marking instructions

There are marking instructions for the acting role, the production role and the preparation for performance. The marking instructions give generic activity requirements which are then broken down into the specific skills as required in the individual candidate mark sheets.

General marking principles

For each of the sections, the assessor should select the band descriptor which most closely describes the evidence gathered. Once the best fit has been selected:

- ◆ where the evidence almost matches the level above, the higher available mark from the range should be awarded
- ◆ where the candidate's work just meets the standard described, the lower available mark from the range should be awarded

Detailed marking instructions

The **performance** is marked according to how the candidate has:

- ◆ responded to text (published script)
- ◆ developed a character or creatively used production skills
- ◆ used a range of acting or production skills
- ◆ communicated to an audience

A maximum of 50 marks can be awarded to the performance.

Acting role

In an acting role the marks are awarded according to how the candidate:

- ◆ communicates the agreed interpretation of the character with reference to textual clues
- ◆ sustains character through learning lines and cues and conveys relationships through interaction with other characters
- ◆ applies skills with effective and appropriate use of voice
- ◆ applies skills with effective and appropriate use of movement
- ◆ creates an impact on an audience

Activity	Mark range	Summary statement
Understanding: Communicates the agreed interpretation of character through the use of textual clues	9–10	Excellent: understanding is conveyed through use of all textual clues; wholly convincing interpretation.
	7–8	Good: understanding is conveyed through a good use of textual clues; convincing interpretation.
	5–6	Sound: understanding is conveyed through use of some textual clues; fairly convincing interpretation.
	3–4	Limited: understanding is conveyed through an occasional use of textual clues, limited interpretation.
	1–2	Little: little use of textual clues; unconvincing interpretation.
	0	No communication of textual clues.
Portrayal: Sustains character through learning lines and cues and conveys relationships through interaction with other characters	9–10	Excellent: portrayal is wholly sustained and there is detailed interaction with other characters.
	7–8	Good: portrayal is sustained and there is good interaction with other characters.
	5–6	Sound: portrayal is mostly sustained and there is fair interaction with other characters.
	3–4	Limited: portrayal is partly sustained and there is limited interaction with other characters.
	1–2	Little: portrayal is unconvincing and there is unconvincing interaction with other characters.
	0	No portrayal of character.

Activity	Mark range	Summary statement
Voice: Uses voice effectively and appropriately	9–10	Excellent: use of voice, pace, tone, clarity, projection all sustained throughout.
	7–8	Good: use of voice, pace, tone, clarity, projection sustained throughout.
	5–6	Sound: use of voice, pace, tone, clarity, projection reasonably sustained.
	3–4	Limited: use of voice weak, pace lacked variety, inaudible at times.
	1–2	Unconvincing: monotonous, inaudible or garbled.
	0	No voice skills applied.
Movement: Uses movement effectively and appropriately	9–10	Excellent: use of movement is fluent, totally integrated, has varied use of facial expression, body language, gesture, posture and space.
	7–8	Good: use of movement is integrated in use of facial expression, body language, gesture, posture and space.
	5–6	Sound: use of movement is mainly integrated in use of facial expression, body language, gesture, posture and space.
	3–4	Limited: use of movement is lacking variety and at times awkward.
	1–2	Unconvincing: awkward use of movement.
	0	No movement skills applied.
Impact: Creates an impact on audience	9–10	Highly successful performance creating a strong impact on audience.
	7–8	Successful performance contributing to impact on audience.
	5–6	Sound performance contributing to impact on audience.
	3–4	Limited contribution to impact on audience.
	1–2	Little contribution to impact on audience.
	0	No positive impact on audience.

Production role

In a **production role** the marks are awarded according to how the candidate:

- ◆ responds to text by producing creative and effective designs/plans/cue sheets for their production role with reference to textual clues
- ◆ creates/adapts/selects appropriate resources for their production role in response to the chosen text
- ◆ demonstrates and applies practical skills in relation to their production role and designs/plans/cue sheets, either by operating lighting or sound equipment, applying make-up and styling hair, checking all costumes, or positioning set or props creatively and effectively
- ◆ applies practical skills of production area in response to the chosen text
- ◆ creates impact on audience

Activity	Mark range	Summary statement
Design concept: Produces creative and effective designs/plans/cue sheets for production role through the use of textual clues	9–10	Excellent: innovative design concept, understanding is conveyed through use of all textual clues.
	7–8	Good: imaginative design concept, understanding is conveyed through a good use of textual clues.
	5–6	Sound: coherent design concept, understanding is conveyed through use of some textual clues.
	3–4	Limited: design concept lacks coherence, limited interpretation of textual clues.
	1–2	Weak design concept, little use of textual clues.
	0	No evidence provided.
Resources: In relation to role, creates/adapts/selects appropriate resources in response to the chosen text	9–10	Excellent: detailed and highly appropriate resources produced, fully reflecting the requirements of the text.
	7–8	Good: detailed and appropriate resources produced, reflecting the requirements of the text.
	5–6	Fair: mostly appropriate resources produced, reflecting some requirements of the text.
	3–4	Limited: basic resources lacking relevance to the text.
	1–2	Little: resources are inaccurate and not appropriate to the text.
	0	No evidence provided.

Activity	Mark range	Summary statement
Application of skills: Demonstrates practical skills in relation to role and designs/plans/cue sheets: either by operating lighting or sound equipment, applying make-up and styling hair, checking all costumes, positioning set or props	9–10	Excellent: highly effective application of all skills and fully reflective of designs/plans/cue sheets.
	7–8	Good: effective application of skills and reflective of designs/plans/cue sheets.
	5–6	Fair: application of most skills with some reference to designs/plans/cue sheets.
	3–4	Limited: basic application of skills with limited reference to designs/plans/cue sheets.
	1–2	Little: inaccurate application of skills with little reference to designs/plans/cue sheets.
	0	No evidence provided.
Creativity of skills: Creativity and effectiveness of production area in response to the chosen text	9–10	Excellent: production area is innovative, highly creative and very effective.
	7–8	Good: production area is imaginative, creative and effective.
	5–6	Sound: production area is mostly effective.
	3–4	Limited: production area is basic and lacking creativity.
	1–2	Little: production area is inappropriate.
	0	No evidence provided.
Impact: Creates an impact on audience	9–10	Highly successful in contributing to a strong impact on audience.
	7–8	Successful in contributing to impact on audience.
	5–6	Sound contribution to impact on audience.
	3–4	Limited contribution to impact on audience.
	1–2	Little contribution to impact on audience.
	0	No positive impact on audience.

Preparation for performance

The **preparation for performance** is marked according to the candidate's account of their preparation for their performance role — either acting or production.

A maximum of 10 marks can be awarded to the preparation for performance.

Activity	Mark range	Summary statement
Preparation for performance review which covers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ research into chosen text ◆ thoughts and ideas for proposed performance ◆ the development of the thoughts and ideas into a final performance concept 	9–10	A concise and relevant account of the research on the chosen text. It reflects a range of relevant thoughts and ideas on the interpretation of these for the production. The review also provides a concise summary of the process of developing these ideas for performance, giving a clearly justified statement on final performance concepts.
	7–8	A mainly concise and relevant account of the research on the chosen text. It reflects thoughts and ideas on the interpretation of these for the production. The review also describes the process of developing these ideas for performance, giving a justified statement on final performance concepts.
	5–6	A mainly relevant account of the research on the chosen text. It reflects some thoughts and ideas on the interpretation of these for the production. The review also describes some aspects of the process of developing these ideas for performance, giving a mainly justified statement on final performance concepts.
	3–4	A limited account of the research on the chosen text. It reflects narrow thoughts and ideas on their interpretation of these for the production. The review gives a basic account of the process of developing these ideas for performance and gives final performance concepts which lack justification.
	1–2	A weak account of the research on the chosen text. It shows little or no reflection of thoughts and ideas on their interpretation of these for the production. The review shows little or no description of the process of developing these ideas for performance, with no final performance concepts.
	0	No evidence produced.

Grading

A candidate's overall grade is determined by their performance across the course assessment. The course assessment is graded A–D on the basis of the total mark for all course assessment components.

Grade description for C

For the award of grade C, candidates will typically have demonstrated successful performance in relation to the skills, knowledge and understanding for the course.

Grade description for A

For the award of grade A, candidates will typically have demonstrated a consistently high level of performance in relation to the skills, knowledge and understanding for the course.

Equality and inclusion

This course is designed to be as fair and as accessible as possible with no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment.

For guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs, please follow the link to the assessment arrangements web page: www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

Further information

The following reference documents provide useful information and background.

- ◆ [National 5 Drama subject page](#)
- ◆ [Assessment arrangements](#)
- ◆ [Building the Curriculum 3–5](#)
- ◆ [Guidance on conditions of assessment for coursework](#)
- ◆ [Guide to Assessment Recent SQA research](#)
- ◆ [Remote assessment](#)
- ◆ [SCQF Handbook](#)
- ◆ [SCQF level descriptors tool](#)
- ◆ [SQA's Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work](#)

Appendix 1: course support notes

Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance to teachers and lecturers on approaches to delivering the course. They should be read in conjunction with this course specification and the specimen question paper and coursework.

Developing skills, knowledge and understanding

This section provides further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding that could be included in the course. Teachers and lecturers should refer to this course specification for the skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment. Course planners have considerable flexibility to select coherent contexts which will stimulate and challenge their candidates, offering both breadth and depth.

Responding to stimuli, including text, when creating drama

Teachers or lecturers should provide a variety of stimuli, including texts, to allow candidates to respond and to develop ideas. Stimuli could be short extracts from plays, pictures/photos, poems, newspaper articles, famous sayings, or phrases etc. Creative ideas could also be developed in response to external themes or topics. This approach could be useful in providing contextualised learning experiences that relate to other areas of the curriculum. Anything which could be interpreted by candidates to create an original piece of drama could be used as a stimulus.

Working with others to share and use drama ideas

Candidates should work in groups of differing sizes. In a small group, they could respond to stimuli (including texts) and create a piece of drama to perform to others. In a larger group they could develop a different stimulus, with individual candidates contributing to different production areas, eg acting, lighting, sound, costume, props, make-up and hair and set.

Candidates should develop an awareness of all production areas to make connections between them.

Candidates could demonstrate their ability to respond to and develop ideas through class discussions.

Developing awareness of social and cultural influences when creating drama

When discussing stimuli, candidates should be encouraged to explore and develop awareness of the social and cultural influences on drama. Candidates could explore time periods, locations, and appropriate vocabulary to bring credibility to their performance.

For example, a group selecting an extract from *Bold Girls* by Rona Munro for devising their drama may choose to investigate The Troubles in Northern Ireland. This could lead the group

to set their drama in Northern Ireland or choose a time period of the 1970s or 1980s. They should be aware of society, historical facts, fashions of the time, gender roles, language use, appropriate designs, music and technology of the period etc. This will allow their drama to be more authentic or symbolic.

Exploring drama form, structure, genre and style

Developing an awareness of form, structure, genre and style to communicate ideas to an audience could be achieved through introductory activities and the use of stimuli. Candidates could experiment with drama skills (such as mime, improvisation, tableaux, narration) and conventions to find the most effective way to convey their message to their audience.

Teachers or lecturers could use a range of approaches to encourage candidates to consider non-linear and linear approaches to their drama through experimentation with drama skills. In addition, candidates could experiment with a variety of drama forms to find an appropriate form for their purposes.

During this process, teachers or lecturers could use open-ended questions to prompt and guide candidate discussion and to confirm candidates' understanding of form and structure. This approach could also be used to help candidates reflect on their own ideas.

Gaining knowledge and understanding of a range of production skills

Candidates should be given opportunities to gain knowledge and understanding of production skills. In a devised drama, a directorial concept may rely on specific costumes or lighting, so candidates should have opportunities to experiment with and use production skills.

Candidates could be encouraged to trial ideas in their selected area to advance their production concept. This process could include practical activities, eg drawings, taking photographs and research activities.

For a textual extract, this process could allow the teacher or lecturer to discuss and highlight the relevant requirements of their chosen area, providing an opportunity to develop candidates' ideas and concepts. It could also be used to help candidates understand the stages of the production process. Teachers or lecturers could discuss examples of performances/productions viewed by candidates to help them make more informed production decisions.

Teachers or lecturers could use a range of approaches with candidates, eg internet research, demonstrations, and practical workshops. This could encourage candidates to experiment with staging, time periods, locations and characterisation while they form ideas for their chosen area.

Using a range of drama and production skills when presenting

Candidates should be given the opportunity to portray a range of characters and to demonstrate their ability to use a range of production skills.

Throughout the course, the teacher or lecturer could build in opportunities for candidates to perform their drama/character in order to receive feedback. This allows candidates to develop their characterisation skills and refine the use of drama form, structure, genre and style.

To prepare candidates for using production skills, the teacher or lecturer could build in opportunities for the following activities:

- ◆ making and/or selecting and/or adapting pieces of set
- ◆ planning and creating lighting effects
- ◆ creating and operating sound
- ◆ making and/or selecting and/or adapting props
- ◆ making and/or selecting and/or adapting pieces of costume
- ◆ applying theatrical make-up and hair

Using evaluative skills within the creative process

After each performance, candidates should be given opportunities to discuss their role and the roles of others. During this process, teachers or lecturers could use open-ended questions to prompt and guide the discussion and to confirm candidates' understanding of their use of drama skills and production skills to develop a performance concept and a design concept. By discussing the process, decisions made and end performance, candidates should develop their ability to evaluate their own concepts and those of others.

Teachers or lecturers could film performances to enable candidates to evaluate their successes and next steps. Expressing ideas back to the class or small group could help candidates structure and sequence their evaluative thinking.

Approaches to learning and teaching

Generic approaches

Effective learning and teaching draws on a variety of approaches to enrich the experience of candidates. In particular, practical approaches to learning and teaching which provide opportunities for personalisation and choice helps to motivate and challenge candidates.

Teachers or lecturers could build variety into their teaching and learning approaches to meet the needs of different learning styles and preferences within the class group.

An investigation of drama skills and practice using technology could be carried out by groups of candidates. This resource could be added to at different stages of learning as required and used as a focus for group discussion. Innovative and creative ways of using technology could create inclusive learning and teaching approaches and develop candidates' creativity, eg:

- ◆ online research
- ◆ interactive activities to reinforce learning
- ◆ digital logs
- ◆ blogs/vlogs capturing candidate's reflections on their learning

To guide this process, teachers or lecturers should support candidates to self-reflect on their learning and to discuss and/or record their thoughts as their work and ideas develop. They could use diaries, logbooks, folios or other approaches to help with this.

Teachers or lecturers should support candidates to consider and develop their ideas in an individual way when responding to their stimulus. Open-ended questioning techniques and structured activities to reflect on their work could be used to support this process. Research may help to further stimulate candidates' creativity as they develop their ideas. Where possible, teachers or lecturers should support independent learning, helping candidates to build confidence in their own creative abilities through structured activities and clearly defined tasks, providing them with opportunities to discuss and share their ideas and experiences with others where appropriate.

The approaches below outline two possible strategies to help teachers and lectures to deliver the course. The first approach focuses on the drama process, and the second on the production process. They could be used separately or together for one or two performances. Candidates could use their role in one of these performances to answer section 1 of the question paper, where they are asked to evaluate their own work and the work of others.

Learning and teaching approach 1 — creating drama

In this approach, teachers or lecturers could focus on developing knowledge and understanding of the process involved in creating drama (the drama process) through response to stimuli. This helps candidates throughout the course and to prepare for section 2 of the question paper.

Teachers or lecturers should establish the starting point of each candidate as a basis for development. This also allows them to put differentiated activities into place in order to support those candidates with additional learning needs.

Teachers or lecturers could use a variety of introductory activities to encourage trust, communication and working with others. For example, short role plays or improvisation scenarios, incorporating drama skills such as structure, form, conventions and genre help candidates work together. These activities should also encourage candidates to reflect on their own work and the work of others.

At this stage, candidates should experiment with voice and movement techniques and terminology. They could also be introduced to a selection of stimuli to read or look at and discuss. The stimuli could reflect the interests of candidates and should provide opportunities for them to portray sufficiently challenging characters. Candidates could respond to the social and cultural influences for their chosen stimuli by reading, discussing, and researching issues and characters.

Candidates could then be given an area to research either individually or in groups. They could present the results of their research back to the class in a variety of ways, eg PowerPoint presentations, directly addressing the class, or in other visual ways.

Following the presentations, several ideas could emerge. These ideas could be discussed by the class. Practical activities could also be used to explore and develop the ideas. Through these activities, candidates could develop an understanding of the characters involved and the thinking behind characters' actions and reactions. The information candidates gain from these activities could inform their portrayal of the characters.

Candidates could then decide on the relevant form, structure, genre, style and techniques they need to incorporate in order to communicate their chosen ideas. Candidates may devise preliminary work to share with the class on their initial ideas. After informal presentations, the whole class or individual groups could decide on the most successful ideas to work with. Using self- and peer-evaluation could help candidates arrive at their final concepts.

At this point, the teacher or lecturer could develop some activities to support candidates with creating and developing portrayal of character, eg hot-seating, character cards and role play.

Candidates or the teacher or lecturer could then identify the section of the drama they feel most suited to direct. Some differentiation could occur here. Again, candidates may need support from the teacher or lecturer to establish positive strategies for working together as director and actors. This is an ongoing reflective process, with regular improvements being made as candidates rehearse, make informal presentations of work and discuss progress.

Once candidates have created their drama, they could present it to their peers, a younger age group, invited audience or the teacher or lecturer.

Other candidates may undertake production roles during the rehearsal process. They could combine with the actors to create a performance with added production elements.

After performing, the candidates could reflect on the work they have undertaken and performed. This could take the form of a written response to questions or a discussion with the teacher or lecturer and members of their group (this could be filmed or audio-recorded, or notes could be taken by the teacher or lecturer).

Teachers or lecturers could develop candidates' understanding of the drama process by:

- ◆ offering ideas in response to stimuli
- ◆ using dramatic conventions like hot-seating and thought-tracking
- ◆ identifying appropriate ideas associated with the chosen stimuli, including texts
- ◆ discussing key questions during improvisation (eg What do candidates want the audience to gain from viewing their performance? What is the purpose of their drama?)
- ◆ discussing decisions on performance style and genre
- ◆ discussing decisions on appropriate form and structure
- ◆ offering ideas for researching chosen stimuli
- ◆ offering ideas for characters and roles

- ◆ offering ideas for situations and setting
- ◆ selecting and rejecting ideas
- ◆ providing rehearsal strategies and opportunities for evaluation
- ◆ using characterisation techniques like character cards, writing in role, hot-seating to add depth to characters
- ◆ identifying opportunities for using voice and movement skills
- ◆ offering ideas for design and technical aspects
- ◆ presenting final performance to an audience
- ◆ evaluating rehearsal process and final performance (self and others)

Learning and teaching approach 2 — production skills

In this approach, teachers or lecturers could focus on developing knowledge and understanding of the following production areas: lighting, sound, set, costume, make-up and hair, props and acting. This helps candidates throughout the course and to prepare for section 2 of the question paper.

Candidates should develop knowledge and understanding of design rudiments associated with each role from initial ideas and research through to selection with justification for proposals/concepts.

Teachers or lecturers should establish the starting point of each candidate as a basis for development. This also allows them to put differentiated activities into place in order to support the different learning needs of candidates.

Teachers or lecturers should demonstrate available resources and activities to reinforce skills and to encourage candidates to experiment. They should also reinforce health and safety requirements at this point along with the tasks and duties associated with each production team member.

At this point, teachers or lecturers could introduce stimuli and/or text. This could be a selection of stimuli for the candidates to read or look at and discuss, or a selection of extracts from texts for the candidates to read and discuss. These could reflect the design interests of the candidates or their prior experience.

Exploring stimuli and/or short textual extracts together helps the group co-operate and allows them to reflect on their own work and the work of others. This establishes a starting point for each candidate and provides a basis for the teacher or lecturer to develop skills in using a range of design ideas/concepts and theatrical terminology.

Teachers or lecturers should ensure that the stimuli and/or short textual extracts chosen provide opportunities for candidates to explore, design, create and present a sufficiently challenging production concept.

Candidates should start by responding to the social and cultural influences in their chosen stimuli and/or short textual extracts. This may involve discussion; research; analysing theme, issues, characters, social and historical contexts, and previous design concepts; or watching recorded evidence.

Candidates could research theatre companies who have performed the plays to gain insight from previous productions. (Many companies now publish designs and support notes on their websites.)

At this point, candidates could benefit from viewing a professional performance. Discussing the acting, directing and design concepts could support candidates in creating and realising their own concepts. Industry professionals could also be invited to give talks. Backstage visits or online interviews could also support candidates in their initial design stage.

Individually or in groups, candidates could be given a production area from their chosen stimuli and/or short textual extracts to research. They could then present to their findings verbally to the rest of the class, or through a visual or PowerPoint presentation. The information from the presentations could be held centrally as a resource. It could also be used by teachers or lecturers to assess candidates' knowledge and understanding of the production areas and terminology associated with each.

Following the presentations, several concepts could emerge. The practicability and viability of these concepts could be deliberated and discussed to help candidates understand their next task.

Following this, practical activities could be used to explore and develop ideas. Through these activities, candidates could develop an understanding of the potential barriers to realising their design concept. Further research activities into theatre companies, playwrights, themes, issues, staging, and health and safety could develop candidates' ability to formulate feasible production concepts. The information gained from these activities could inform their final concept.

Candidates may develop preliminary work to share with the class on their initial ideas. After informal presentations, the whole class or individual groups could decide on the most successful concepts to work with. Using self-and peer-evaluation could help candidates arrive at their final concepts.

The teacher or lecturer could develop some activities to support the candidates in developing their concepts. This could include further demonstrations, exploring characters, technical workshops and directing workshops.

At this point, candidates can formulate their final concept. Candidates, with the support of the teacher or lecturer, should select the stimuli and/or short textual extracts, ideas, techniques and production areas they wish to use. Candidates or the teacher or lecturer should then identify the most suitable production role. Candidates may need support from the teacher or lecturer to establish positive strategies for working together as actors and designers. (Production meetings may be useful.) This is an ongoing reflective process, with regular improvements being made as candidates experiment, rehearse, make informal presentations of work and discuss progress.

Once candidates have developed their production concept through rehearsal, they could perform it to their peers, a younger age group, invited audience or the teacher or lecturer.

After performing, candidates could reflect on the work they have undertaken and performed. This could take the form of a written response to questions or a discussion with the teacher

or lecturer and members of their group (this could be filmed or audio-recorded or notes could be taken by the teacher or lecturer). Candidates could evaluate their own work throughout the rehearsal period and that of others in the group. They could also evaluate their final performance and that of others in their group or another group.

Preparing for course assessment

This course has additional time which may be used at the discretion of the teacher or lecturer to enable candidates to prepare for course assessment. This time may be used near the start of the course and at various points throughout the course for consolidation and support. It may also be used towards the end of the course, for further integration, revision and preparation for course assessment.

Within the notional time for the course assessment, time is required for:

- ◆ preparing for the performance task
- ◆ presenting the performance
- ◆ consolidating learning
- ◆ preparing for the question paper

The 'approaches to learning and teaching' section of this course specification contains detailed suggestions and strategies for preparing candidates for the performance and the question paper.

Developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

Course planners should identify opportunities throughout the course for candidates to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

Candidates should be aware of the skills they are developing and teachers and lecturers can provide advice on opportunities to practise and improve them.

SQA does not formally assess skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

There may also be opportunities to develop additional skills depending on approaches being used to deliver the course in each centre. This is for individual teachers and lecturers to manage.

The following table highlights some opportunities to develop these skills during this course.

1 Literacy		
1.3	Listening and talking	The starting point of almost every response to stimuli in the drama classroom is to discuss, generate ideas, listen to others' ideas and develop these ideas.
3 Health and wellbeing		
3.1	Personal learning	This could be developed through a particular choice of stimulus. For example, a particular newspaper headline could be used for candidates to discuss and create ideas, taking their own cultural and social experiences into account.
4 Employability, enterprise and citizenship		
4.3	Working with others	Throughout the course candidates work co-operatively in various groupings. Contributing ideas and negotiating sensitively with others could allow candidates to mature and take ideas forward. Drama lends itself to candidates becoming adaptable, having a set goal, working within a set of expectations and relying on self and others to complete tasks. Ongoing reflection by candidates such as diaries, logbooks or folios could be used to help teachers or lecturers to monitor candidate progress and to help candidates identify next steps for learning.
5 Thinking skills		
5.3	Applying	Questions or prompts designed by the teacher or lecturer could be used to help candidates identify features of text which are important to consider before decisions are made about structure, techniques, conventions, and productions skills to use within a performance. Candidates could be guided to review their decisions and consider alternative solutions through discussing the text and practical exploration. Performance analysis could also give candidates the opportunity to develop their evaluative skills in reviewing a performance they have taken part in. Candidates could offer both analysis and evaluation of a performance. This could be evidenced through notes on their performance and/or evaluative essays.
5.4	Analysing and evaluating	
5.5	Creating	

During the delivery of the course there may also be opportunities for candidates to develop their communication skills. Communication skills are particularly important for candidates as these skills allow them to access, engage in, and understand their learning and communicate their thoughts, ideas and opinions.

Appendix 2: drama lexicon

General terms	Movement	Voice	Conventions	Form	Staging/areas of the stage
Stimulus	Mime	Accent	Flashback	A play, scripted or improvised	Proscenium arch
Characterisation	Body language	Pace	Flash-forward	Dance drama	End-on
Target audience	Facial expression	Volume	Freeze frame	Mime	Traverse
Mood	Gesture	Clarity	Frozen picture	Monologue	Theatre-in-the-round
Atmosphere	Naturalistic	Emphasis	Mime	Movement	Thrust/apron
Directing	Stylised	Pitch	Monologue	Musical	Extended
Design concepts	Eye contact	Tone	Movement	Pantomime	Avenue
Purpose	Posture	Pause	Slow motion	Forum theatre	Up-stage left
Message	Balance	Articulation	Narration		Up-stage centre
Focus	Speed	Fluency	Voice over		Up-stage right
Time period (historical)	Timing	Intonation	Aside		Centre-stage left
Language	Use of levels	Register	Soliloquy		Centre-stage
Special effects	Use of space/proxemics		Tableau		Centre-stage right
Performance concepts	Positioning				Down-stage left
Rehearsal activities	Mannerisms				Down-stage centre
Status	Rhythm				Down-stage right
Tension	Stance				
Dramatic irony	Use of direction				

Genre	Structure	Style	Characterisation technique	Production area
Comedy Tragedy Crime drama Docudrama Melodrama Commedia dell'arte Farce Tragicomedy Satire Slice of life Mystery	Linear Non-linear Episodic	Naturalistic Non-naturalistic	Character cards Improvisation Role play Hot-seating Voices in the head Writing in role Thought-tracking Thought tunnel	Lighting — LFX, profile spot, flood, Fresnel spot, Parcan, strobe, cue, crossfade, fade-up, fade-down, blackout, gel, gobo, safety chain, G-clamp. Sound — live (SFX), pre-recorded (SFX), mixing desk, cue, crossfade, fade-in, fade-out. Costume — clothing, hats, jewellery, wigs. Make-up and hair — foundation, powder, liner, sponge, stipple sponge, highlighter, blusher, mascara, fake blood, crepe hair, spirit gum, nose putty, scar wax, pencils, tooth varnish. Set — backcloth, sightlines, wings, flats, floor cloth, blacks, tabs, cyclorama, flies, gauze, rake, rostra, treads. Props — costume prop, handheld prop, personal prop, pre-set prop, props table.

The above list is simply a guide. It is designed to inform teaching and learning and to support candidates as they move through the course at National 5. It is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive, but the terms used reflect what could be assessed during the course assessment.

Appendix 3: recommended texts

Name of play	Playwright
A Midsummer Night's Dream	William Shakespeare
After Juliet	Sharman Macdonald
And the Cow Jumped Over the Moon	Donna Franceschild
Be My Baby	Amanda Whittington
Between the Sheets	Jordi Mand
Blooded	Isabel Wright
Bold Girls	Rona Munro
Britannia Rules	Liz Lochhead
Confusions	Alan Ayckbourn
Daisy Pulls it Off	Denise Deegan
Divided City	Theresa Breslin
DNA	Dennis Kelly
Hannah and Hanna	John Retallack
Journey to X	Nancy Harris
Just	Ali Smith
Let the Right One In	Jack Thorne
Like a Virgin	Gordon Steel
Nasty, Brutish and Short	Andy Duffy
Neither Here Nor There	Olwen Wymark
Our Day Out	Willy Russell
Passing Places	Stephen Greenhorn
Sparkleshark	Philip Ridley
The Beauty Manifesto	Nell Leyshon
The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds	Paul Zindel
The Heights	Lisa McGee
The Incredible Adventures of See Thru Sam	Johnny McKnight
The Monster in the Hall	David Greig
The Static	Davey Anderson
The Wall	DC Jackson
Too Fast	Douglas Maxwell

Administrative information

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History of changes to course specification

Version	Description of change	Date
2.0	Course support notes added as an appendix.	July 2017
2.1	Preparation for performance marking instructions amended for clarification.	September 2018
3.0	Recommended texts added as appendix 3 and make-up and hair requirements amended for clarification.	September 2019
3.1	Added two sentences on page 8 in relation to the Performance component, for clarity. 'Further information' section updated.	August 2024

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