

## Higher National Unit Specification

### General information for centres

**Unit title:** Writing for the Media

**Unit code:** DH4F 34

**Unit purpose:** This Unit is designed to develop the candidate's ability to analyse features of professional scripts and copy used in print, broadcast and multimedia. This will, in turn, inform and underpin the candidate's own copy and scriptwriting skills. It is aimed at those who wish to gain a basic and general competence in writing for the media; and beyond this, offers an opportunity to develop creative writing skills in a vocational context.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

1. Analyse features of professional copy produced for print and broadcast media
2. Write copy for print or electronic media
3. Write a script for a broadcast or electronic medium

**Credit value:** 1 HN Credit at SCQF level: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7\*)

*\*SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

**Recommended prior knowledge and skills:** Access to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. It would be beneficial if the candidate had competence in written English. Qualifications which would meet this include the following:

- ◆ National Unit EE3T 12 Communication (NC)
- ◆ Higher English or its component Units
- ◆ Higher Media Studies or its component Units
- ◆ Higher Media Literacy or its component Units
- ◆ National Unit A678 04 Creative Writing

**Core skills:** This Unit gives automatic certification of the following Core Skills component: Written Communication at Higher.

**Context for delivery:** If this Unit is delivered as part of a group award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the group award to which it contributes. If it is delivered as part of HNC/D Communication with Media there are opportunities for integration with HN Unit (D7M4 34): *Journalism Skills 1: Introduction to Industry and Practice* and with Units in either radio or television production. It could also be used as a free-standing Unit.

## General information for centres (cont)

**Assessment:** Outcome 1 should be assessed separately. However, it is recommended that assessment for Outcome 1 is divided. Each piece of analysis should be followed by the assessment of writing in the relevant genre (Outcomes 2 and 3). Outcomes 2 and 3 are likely to be assessed separately unless a script for multimedia is chosen, in which case there is an opportunity to integrate Outcome 3 and part of Outcome 2.

Since the Core Skill component of Written Communication at Higher is embedded in this Unit, it is strongly recommended that you follow the assessment guidelines given. If you wish to use a different assessment model you should seek prior moderation of the assessment instrument(s) you intend to use to ensure that the Core Skill is still covered. Please note, candidates must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified for each Outcome, combination of Outcomes, or for the Unit as a whole in order to pass the Unit and achieve the Core Skill.

An Assessment Exemplar pack for this Unit has been produced to indicate the national standard of achievement required at SCQF level 7.

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards**

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The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, knowledge and/or skills, and evidence requirements are mandatory.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the knowledge and/or skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

### **Outcome 1**

Analyse features of professional copy produced for print and broadcast media.

#### **Knowledge and/or skills**

- ◆ Features, conventions and terminology of professional copy and script writing in relation to narrative structure, style and layout/format
- ◆ Effectiveness of professional scripts and copy

#### **Evidence requirements**

The candidate will need evidence to demonstrate his/her knowledge and/or skills by showing that he/she can analyse and evaluate the features of professional scripts and copy by analysing **ONE** piece of copy and **ONE** broadcast script. The evidence will be written or oral.

Each candidate must correctly:

- ◆ identify the genre, purpose and audience of the professional copy/script, giving evidence in support
- ◆ identify the theme(s) of the writer and his/her stance on this theme, giving evidence in support
- ◆ explain in detail the narrative structure of the piece
- ◆ analyse features of style and explain their appropriateness to the genre
- ◆ explain the conventions of the layout/format of the script/copy
- ◆ evaluate the effectiveness of all these features and conventions in relation to the genre, purpose and audience.

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)**

### **Unit title:** Writing for the Media

The script and copy chosen for assessment should be selected by the assessor. This should be a professional piece, ie previously published or broadcast. However, the type and genre could

range from (in print) news, features, advertisement features, editorials, sports reports, human interest; website material could be selected and printed out, but must be both substantial in length and complex. Likewise, copy from advertisements could be used as long as it reached an appropriate length. In broadcast, extracts of scripts from drama, documentary, comedy, complete advertisements and news scripts etc could be used.

Assessment should be conducted in conditions where arrangements have been put in place to assure the authenticity of the candidate's work.

### **Assessment guidelines**

Structured questions may be used to guide the production of two pieces of extended writing in the form of an essay or report with appropriate headings.

Please see the support notes for amplification of the knowledge and skills items in this Outcome. Alternatively, the assessments could be conducted orally, in which case the candidate's oral responses should be recorded and assessed using a detailed checklist.

### **Outcome 2**

Write copy for print or electronic media.

#### **Knowledge and/or skills**

- ◆ Writing a treatment
- ◆ Writing copy for a variety of genres, purposes and audiences
- ◆ Features and conventions of the genre

#### **Evidence requirements**

The candidate will need evidence to demonstrate his/her knowledge and/or skills in copy writing by submitting a piece or pieces of copy, which should explore an issue in depth.

The candidates must:

- ◆ write a short treatment
- ◆ write copy in which:
  - the correct conventions of the genre are used
  - features of the chosen genre add impact, given the purpose and audience
- ◆ ensure spelling, punctuation and syntax are consistently accurate.

The piece or pieces of copy should amount to no fewer than 700 words.

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)**

**Unit title:** Writing for the Media

### **Assessment guidelines**

The assessment piece could be advertising copy, web-page text, copy for brochures, leaflets, fanzines, in-house magazines, journals, reviews, reports, etc, as long as the genre, purpose and audience is identified in the treatment and the brief is approved by the assessor.

The piece could be integrated with Outcome 3 if multimedia text is chosen. However, the finished script must incorporate copy, sound and vision.

Another opportunity for integration is with HN unit (D7M4 34): *Journalism Skills 1: Introduction to Industry and Practice*.

### **Outcome 3**

Write a script for a broadcast or electronic medium.

#### **Knowledge and/or skills**

- ◆ Writing a treatment
- ◆ Writing a script for a chosen genre, purpose and audience
- ◆ Features and conventions of the genre
- ◆ Presenting the script to a professional standard.

#### **Evidence requirements**

The candidate will need evidence to demonstrate his/her knowledge and/or skills in script writing by submitting a script, part of a script, or several scripts, amounting to approximately five minutes duration, for a broadcast or electronic medium.

The candidate must:

- ◆ write a short treatment
- ◆ write a well-developed script or scripts for radio, television or multimedia for a chosen genre, purpose and audience
- ◆ use the features and conventions of the genre(s) correctly and effectively
- ◆ present the script(s) to a professional standard.

#### **Please note that:**

A radio script must have at least 80% of original spoken material to discount the possibility of a script composed entirely of music.

A television script must incorporate both sound and vision.

If the multimedia script is integrating evidence for Outcomes 2 and 3, the suggested five minute length should be increased to account for the time taken to read/present the copy.

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)**

**Unit title:** Writing for the Media

**Assessment guidelines**

Ideally, this assessment should follow the analytical work done in Outcome 1 on radio and television scripts. Also, the script produced could integrate with the requirements of radio or television production Units.

A multimedia script would provide an opportunity to assess part of Outcome 2 and Outcome 3 integratively, as long as it meets the demands of both Outcomes.

## **Administrative Information**

<b>Unit code:</b>	DH4F 34
<b>Unit title:</b>	Writing for the Media
<b>Superclass category:</b>	KC
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## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes**

### **Unit title:** Writing for the Media

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

### **Guidance on the content and context for this Unit**

#### **Amplification of knowledge and skills:**

##### **Outcome 1**

‘Professional’ copy — must have been published but could be taken from a range of sources including local, national and international press; specialist magazines; in-house journals; published student material; copy on web sites and text from CD ROMs.

‘Professional’ scripts — must have been published and/or broadcast but could be scripts from community, hospital or student broadcasts as well as national radio or television productions.

Genre — refers to the type of text, eg feature article, website text, human interest, drama or documentary script, etc.

Purpose — at this level, the text will normally have more than one purpose, eg to inform or report; to discuss; to persuade, to entertain, to express feelings and reactions; to explore an issue; to evaluate. The candidate should be able to substantiate these purposes with reference to genre, content and likely audience.

Audience — the candidate should recognise and identify the target audience (reader, listener, viewer) from the study of genre, purpose and content of the text. The candidate should also recognise the mode of address used by the writer toward the audience.

Theme — the subject or recurring idea in the copy or script.

Stance — the writer’s attitude or point of view which may be inferred rather than directly stated.

Features and conventions of copy writing — a candidate should know and be able to apply the following terminology in his/her analysis:

Narrative structure:

- ◆ main ideas
- ◆ detail used to support main ideas: quotes, statistics, anecdotes, illustrations, expert opinion, etc
- ◆ order and development of ideas

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

### Unit title: Writing for the Media

- ◆ linkage of ideas
- ◆ opening and closure

#### Style:

- ◆ type, length and complexity of sentence
- ◆ punctuation: its use and effect
- ◆ language — word choice (lexis), word order, imagery, use of colloquial, slang and standard English
- ◆ register — formal/informal/specialised
- ◆ tone, mood and atmosphere

#### Layout:

- ◆ captions
- ◆ columns
- ◆ crossheads
- ◆ headlines
- ◆ masthead
- ◆ standfirsts
- ◆ straplines
- ◆ subheadings
- ◆ typology
- ◆ use of lines, boxes, etc
- ◆ white space
- ◆ WOB, etc

Features and conventions of scriptwriting – candidates should know and be able to apply the following terminology in their analysis:

#### Narrative structure:

#### Drama:

- ◆ establishment of setting (time and place)
- ◆ establishment and development of character(s)
- ◆ plot: ordering of events, linear or multiple storylines, etc.
- ◆ creation of suspense: hooks, cliffhangers
- ◆ use of sound effects and music
- ◆ use of props
- ◆ camera directions
- ◆ stage directions
- ◆ dialogue

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

### Unit title: Writing for the Media

#### Documentary:

- ◆ main ideas
- ◆ detail used to support main ideas: quotes, statistics, anecdotes, illustrations, expert opinion, music, sound effects, props, camera directions, etc.
- ◆ order and development of ideas
- ◆ linkage of ideas (use of a presenter, etc)
- ◆ opening and closure
- ◆ narrative voice(s)

#### Style:

- ◆ type, length and complexity of sentence
- ◆ tense
- ◆ punctuation: its use and effect
- ◆ language — word choice (lexis), word order, imagery, use of colloquial, slang and standard English
- ◆ register — formal/informal/specialised
- ◆ tone, mood and atmosphere

#### Layout/format:

- ◆ line spacing
- ◆ margins
- ◆ typeface
- ◆ use of capitals/lower case letters
- ◆ instructions to staff/speakers
- ◆ numbering lines and pages
- ◆ scene titles
- ◆ timing
- ◆ storyboards
- ◆ camera script
- ◆ camera directions
- ◆ character sketches

Evaluation — should weigh up how well the writer has achieved the purpose(s) he/she intended. The evaluation should be justified with close reference to the features and conventions previously analysed.

### Outcome 2

Treatment — genre, theme, stance, purpose, target audience, word length, sources, etc.

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Writing for the Media

### Outcome 3

Treatment — synopsis, setting, style, studio/location, crew, camera, lighting, sound, prop, talent requirements, purpose, target audience, slot, etc.

Script — The script(s) could be complete production(s) or a scripted extract from a longer piece but the treatment should make this clear.

Professional standard — The presentation of the script should be to a professional standard, ie type, proofread, and with a format appropriate to the genre.

### Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

Sequence of Delivery – *Writing for the Media* is a core Unit in the HNC/D Communication with Media framework. It is an introduction to some of the writing skills which are further developed in Units such as the *Journalism, Radio Production, Video Production, Advertising and Public Relations* Units. There are possibilities for integration if the Units are delivered in the same year.

Delivery — a variety of methods could be used, including guest speakers on professional practice, visit to production centres, direct teaching, individual and paired work; or group workshops for analysis and writing practice.

### Open learning

This Unit would be suitable for delivery by some form of open or on-line learning, assessed in conditions where arrangements have been put in place to assure the authenticity of the candidate's work.

For further information and advice, please see *Assessment and Quality Assurance for Open and Distance Learning* (SQA, February 2001 – publication code A1030).

### Special needs

This Unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. Special needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering special alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment Arrangements* (SQA, 2001).

## General information for candidates

### Unit title: Writing for the Media

This Unit is about developing your ability to analyse features of professional scripts and copy used in print, broadcast and multimedia. This will, in turn, offer you a model for your own copy and scriptwriting. It is aimed at those who wish to gain a basic and general competence in writing for the media; and beyond this, offers an opportunity to develop creative writing skills in a vocational context.

Before you are assessed you will have ample opportunity:

- ◆ to analyse and respond to a wide range of copy and scripts from different genres
- ◆ to develop your reading and writing skills
- ◆ to present your writing to a professional standard.

You will have to complete three assessments:

1. You will be required to analyse one piece of copy and one script. This analysis could take the form of an essay or report based on questions set by your assessor. Alternatively, the assessments could be conducted orally and recorded.
2. You will be required to write a piece, or pieces, of copy for print or electronic media which explores an issue in depth, and is at least 700 words long. You must submit a written treatment for approval. You must present completed work to a professional standard.
3. You will be required to write a well-developed radio, TV or multimedia script or scripts, of about five minutes in length. You must submit a written treatment for approval. You must present completed work to a professional standard.

On completion of the Unit you should be able to:

1. Analyse features of professional copy and scripts produced for print and broadcast media
2. Write copy for print or electronic media
3. Write a script/scripts for a broadcast or electronic medium