

Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Radio Commercials Production

Unit code: DM17 34

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed to enable candidates to develop the skills involved in the production of radio commercials. It prepares them for this role by introducing them to professional practice and requiring them to take part in the production of commercials. It is primarily intended for candidates seeking starter positions in the radio or broadcast industries, but it would also be relevant to those with existing experience of the radio or broadcast industries.

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

1. Evaluate standards of professional radio commercials.
2. Liaise with client on the brief.
3. Produce radio commercials appropriate to client briefs.

Credit points and level: 1 HN Credit at SCQF level 7: (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: Candidates should have good communication skills. These may be demonstrated by the achievement of core skill communication at Higher level or by possession of a suitable NQ English or Communication Unit (SCQF level 6). Candidates without these qualifications may be considered on the strength of their additional experience or motivation for the course. It is not necessary for candidates to have previous experience of broadcast or production, although, where this is the case, the Unit may provide an opportunity to reflect on this experience.

Core skills: There may be opportunities to gather evidence towards core skills in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of core skills or core skills components.

Context for delivery: from the award, to candidates interested in, for example, community or hospital radio. This Unit is delivered as part of the HNC in Creative Industries: Radio. It is likely to be taught and assessed within the subject area of that group award. However, it may also be delivered on a stand-alone basis, or as part of a limited package of HN Units.

General information for centres

Assessment: The Unit could be assessed in a variety of ways, as follows:

- ◆ Outcomes 1-3 linked (e.g. commercials for a particular client analysed, the same client negotiated with, a commercial produced for that client)
- ◆ Outcome 1 separate, Outcomes 2 and 3 linked (e.g. Outcome 1 assessed on a spread of typical commercials, Outcomes 2 and 3 assessed on a particular client)
- ◆ Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 separate (e.g. Outcome 1 assessed on spread of typical commercials, Outcome 2 negotiated with a client, Outcome 3 produced for another client)

The second of the above options perhaps offers the best choice for the majority of candidates, providing maximum opportunity for originality (no clash with existing campaigns, for example) while offering an element of continuity.

Assessments for Outcomes 1 and 2 should take place in the candidate's own time or in time allocated by the tutor, but not in controlled conditions. Assessment for Outcome 3 must be completed in a studio.

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

Evaluate standards of professional radio commercials

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Target audience
- ◆ Use of voice
- ◆ Use of music
- ◆ Use of sound effects
- ◆ Generation of creative idea(s)
- ◆ Use of radio as commercial medium
- ◆ Types of radio commercials
- ◆ Roles of personnel involved in the production of radio commercials

Evidence requirements

Assessment evidence will be generated by means of written or oral material, produced by the candidate, which evaluates recorded examples of professional radio commercials.

Each candidate will be required to show that they can identify the chief components of a commercial and evaluate their use in terms of its purpose. The evidence must be based on a minimum of three commercials.

The total minimum length of a written assessment should be 300 words and a maximum of 400 words. An oral presentation should last a minimum of 5 minutes.

Assessment guidelines

Assessment for this Outcome may take the form of an extended response or a set of restricted response questions.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Radio Commercials Production

Outcome 2

Liaise with client on the brief

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Dealing with client in efficient and courteous manner
- ◆ Checking accuracy of details in the production brief
- ◆ Preparation of draft to meet client's approval
- ◆ Client advised on scheduling
- ◆ Client advised on cost

Evidence requirements

Candidates should identify a potential client and undertake a negotiation which involves informing him/her of production details and agreeing a brief. The negotiation should be conducted in a professional manner. Evidence should consist of an agreed production brief, signed by the client, which should include the following:

- ◆ company name
- ◆ name of company representative
- ◆ title of company representative
- ◆ client address
- ◆ candidate name
- ◆ product
- ◆ target audience
- ◆ duration of the commercial
- ◆ client guidelines on its content.

Assessment guidelines

The Assessment of this Outcome can be combined with Outcomes 3 as part of a single assessment, details of which are given under Outcome 3 below.

In the brief, it would also be possible to add sections on whether either male or female voices, or a mixture, are required; whether particular sound effects have been agreed between the client and the candidate; and any details of production costs (including, for example, music copyright, voice-over fees and studio time); client signature; client review form.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Radio Commercials Production

Outcome 3

Produce radio commercials appropriate to client briefs

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Scripts reflecting requirements of client briefs
- ◆ Use of music to meet briefs
- ◆ Use of sound effects to meet briefs
- ◆ Use of voice to meet briefs
- ◆ Recording to exact time durations
- ◆ Commercials evaluated in terms of client brief
- ◆ Keeping appropriate administrative records including production costs
- ◆ Implementing music licensing procedures
- ◆ Compliance with radio advertising statutory and voluntary controls

Evidence requirements

Assessment of the knowledge and skills for this Outcome will be generated by means of written or oral evidence, as defined below.

Candidates should produce:

- ◆ completed scripts for two commercials which meets specified time durations
- ◆ recordings of two finished commercials which meet requirements of a specified brief agreed with a client

The assessment should be carried out in studio conditions. The candidate should produce a minimum of two commercials. The commercials should follow industry standards in terms of length.

Assessment guidelines

The assessment of this Outcome can be combined with Outcome 2. A pair of advertisements – for example, one 20 second and one 40 second – may be produced based on the same production brief for one client. The commercials may contain sound effects, music and voice but need not contain all these to meet the requirements of the Unit. Evaluation of success or failure in meeting the client's brief may take the form of additional written evidence, or feedback from tutor to candidate, or the candidate's personal reflection. Additional administrative records may also be used, for example, keeping records of checking music licensing procedures and/or advertising codes of practice.

Administrative Information

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Radio Commercials Production

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

This Unit is designed to prepare candidates for producing radio commercials. It is aimed at candidates with no previous radio experience, but could also prove useful to candidates with some work experience in the radio or broadcast industries.

The Unit may be delivered in a way which allows candidates maximum opportunity to use their own initiative in identifying clients. Candidates could be encouraged to seek clients among their friends, relatives or personal contacts.

Outcome 1 introduces the candidate to the accepted standards and practices of making commercials for the industry. Candidates could be familiarised with the possible effects of mixtures of sound (e.g. the combined use of several voices, music and sound effects to produce a lively, cheerful atmosphere in an advertisement for a soft drink); or the possible effects of single-source sound (e.g. the use of a voice only to produce a grave, sombre effect, as in a public service Health Warning). He/she could be given the opportunity to observe how the medium helps create the script through its demands on a listener's visual imagination. Similarly, he/she could be introduced to the subtleties of professional production through analysing and evaluating the use of humour, pathos, seriousness, contrast of light and dark in professional commercials. Other factors, such as the use of sound effects to suggest atmosphere, the quickness of ideas demanded by the discipline, variations of tone contained within a voice or dialogue, and the intimate participation between listener and producer in conjuring a scene can all be brought out through examination of a range of radio commercials.

Outcome 2 should allow the candidate the opportunity to negotiate with clients. Candidates could be encouraged to make their approaches after some preparation, perhaps undertaking a formative piece of work, about how to deal with a client, first. The candidate could also be encouraged to sell a client a number of ideas, while allowing the client the final say. If appropriate, the candidate may assist the client with suggestions on target audience or guidelines on content. Although part of the exercise should contain details of budget (for example, providing the client with a list of production costs), it is recommended that this part of the exercise is simulation only. The client need not approve the finished commercial, unless the candidate so wishes.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Radio Commercials Production

Outcome 3 should be undertaken by the candidate in a studio. He/she may use other candidates for additional voices or technical assistance, but must be able to demonstrate that the productions have been generated and seen through by him/herself. Each candidate should produce a minimum of two commercials. Original scripts should be produced.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

The Assessment for Outcome 1 could consist of a series of short answer questions containing headings, directing the candidate towards taking note of some of the finer parts of radio performance, such as subtlety of voice, mood, tone, etc. Alternatively, candidates could attempt an extended response or essay (400 words recommended maximum) which analyses and evaluates the commercials used as the basis for the assessment.

There should be headroom within the assessment for the very able candidate to demonstrate a high level of understanding, appreciation and insight into the medium, while the less able or motivated candidate simply meets its minimum requirements. A wide range, possibly of prize-winning advertisements, could be used for formative exercises. A minimum of two professionally produced commercials should be used as the basis for summative assessment.

Materials used as the basis for assessment of Outcome 2 should consist of the completed production brief as defined under Assessment Guidelines. The brief may be a single sheet or a longer document, but it should prove that the candidate has negotiated with a client, either in a real situation or a role-play. Again, an able candidate may demonstrate that a high level of negotiation, while the less able one may meet minimum requirements. Remediation should take place when the candidate has clearly failed to conduct a negotiation. Centres may provide the candidate with a pro-forma or short log for this assessment, which can include headings to assist the candidate.

Materials used as the basis for assessment of Outcome 3 may consist of any commercials produced by the candidate. The productions may use only a single sound-source, or more than one, or may consist of more than one commercial using different amounts of sound-sources. A commercial using only a voice is acceptable, as is a commercial using a mixture of voice, music, sound effects and silence. The emphasis should be on the quality of the finished productions, with the candidate aware of the primary financial purpose of all advertising, and the many ways it can be achieved. The length of the commercials should be industry standard. A commercial longer than one minute need not adhere to an exact time (e.g. 1 minute 16 seconds). The very able candidate may produce highly original pieces of work, the less able candidate only mediocre or plodding recordings, but all should be able to reflect on and learn from the experience.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Radio Commercials Production

Open learning

This Unit could be delivered by distance learning. However, it would require planning by the centre to ensure sufficiency and authenticity of candidate evidence. Arrangements would have to be made to ensure that the assessment for Outcome 3 is undertaken in suitable (professional radio studio) conditions.

Candidates with additional support needs

This Unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Additional Support Needs* (www.sqa.org.uk).

General information for candidates

Unit title: Radio Commercials Production

This Unit is designed to introduce you to radio commercials. In it, you will study existing radio commercials and make your own, to a client's brief. The aim of the Unit is to give you some insight into the standards and practices of radio advertising, and some experience of making a professional production. You may find the skills and knowledge offered in the Unit useful in acquiring a voluntary or starter position in the radio industry. If you already work in the industry, this Unit may reinforce and/or enhance the experience you already have.

The Unit has three main areas, each of which is the subject of a separate Outcome. To begin with, you examine existing advertisements produced by commercial agencies and take note of the variety of methods used, and the technical and creative skills employed. You then move on to a practical exercise which covers two Outcomes, where first you negotiate a production brief – or agreed set of guidelines – for a radio advertisement, and second make two commercials.

Overall, you should use the experiences gained in the Unit to help you assess what makes a radio commercial as effective as possible. Some of this knowledge may come from your own personal reflection. You do not need to make the perfect commercial to pass, but you should consider what lessons about making radio commercials you have learned.

To complete the Unit successfully, you will be required to achieve a satisfactory level of performance in all three Outcomes. The first Outcome is satisfied by means of a written analysis, the second by means of a production brief, the third by your finished commercials. The last Outcome – where you produce the advertisements – must be undertaken in studio conditions. You can work with others in your class to produce this, perhaps having them act out parts or using them for technical assistance, but you must be able to demonstrate that you have produced the commercial yourself, from initial contact with the client to the finished recording.

Although part of Outcome 2 indicates that you should negotiate with the client over budget, you should note that this part of the assessment is simulation only. You need not liaise with the client after agreeing the brief. However if you wish, you may allow the client to hear the production. It should not be broadcast without your permission.

As with all the Units on the Radio Broadcasting course, an active interest in radio, and the motivation to listen to, and learn from, as much radio as possible, will greatly assist the successful completion of the Outcomes.