

Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Graphic Design

Unit code: DV62 34

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed to develop the candidate's ability to understand and apply the processes of research, conceptualisation, development and critical analysis in the design and production of finished creative solutions for graphic design brief/s. The Unit is aimed at those wishing to investigate and develop skills in areas of commercial, information or editorial graphic design.

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

- 1 Identify, explain and critically analyse graphic design solutions.
- 2 Interpret and research graphic design brief/s.
- 3 Develop and produce design concepts for graphic design brief/s.
- 4 Produce finished design solutions for graphic design brief/s.

Credit points and level: 2 HN Credits at SCQF level 7: (16 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 experience in design-based problem solving and design-based IT skills. This may be evidenced by possession of relevant NQ Units, Higher Art and Design, prior work experience, or relevant HN Units.

Core Skills: There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of Communication, and Information Technology at SCQF level 6 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components. Further detail is provided in the support notes.

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.

Assessment: Outcome 1 may be assessed separately: however, it may be integrated with assessment of Outcome 2. Outcomes 2, 3 and 4 should be assessed together. The Unit could be delivered and assessed through more than one design brief, which would require candidates to investigate, research, and produce creative solutions.

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

Identify, explain and critically analyse graphic design

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Editorial, commercial, information
- ◆ Historical and contextual
- ◆ Function, visual language, style
- ◆ Production materials, production equipment
- ◆ Methods of production

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can in relation to a given graphic design example/s:

- ◆ Identify and explain the context
- ◆ Identify the client, audience, and function
- ◆ Analyse the visual language and style in relation to the function
- ◆ Identify and analyse the production materials
- ◆ Identify the method of production

Assessment guidelines

The assessment of Outcome 1 could be carried out by structured questions to guide the production of a short written and illustrated assignment, or through a short illustrated oral presentation in which the candidate explains the development and function, and provides an illustrated analysis of given graphic design example/s.

The graphic design example/s should be professional pieces chosen by the tutor and consist of at least four design items. The example/s could be chosen from graphic design areas such as corporate identity, advertising, promotion, information, packaging, display, editorial, and publishing.

The assessment of this Outcome may be integrated with the research element of Outcome 2 of this Unit.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Graphic Design

Outcome 2

Interpret and research graphic design brief/s

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Understanding and interpretation of design brief/s
- ◆ Research methods
- ◆ Client, audience, competitors and market analysis
- ◆ Design requirements, function, context, specifications
- ◆ Potential production materials and methods

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ apply a minimum of two research methods such as library, internet, interview/s, analysis of example/s
- ◆ present relevant reference material, which must include market analysis, existing design example/s, mood boards, examples of production materials and methods
- ◆ demonstrate correct interpretation of the brief/s through the production and presentation of an interpretation mind map or similar concept

Assessment guidelines

The assessment of this Outcome could be through practical assignments working from either one design brief with a minimum of six design requirements, or two graphic design briefs with a minimum of three design requirements.

Candidates should plan and undertake relevant research. The results should be collated and relevant reference material neatly presented. They should also produce a mind map or similar concept relevant to the design brief/s.

The assessment of this Outcome may be integrated with Outcome 1 of this Unit.

Outcome 3

Develop and produce design concepts for graphic design brief/s

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Creative concepts, thumbnails, roughs, mock-ups
- ◆ Problem-solving, time management
- ◆ Exploration of layout/image manipulation, type, colour
- ◆ Development of style and visual language, consistency
- ◆ Selection of appropriate production materials/methods
- ◆ Critical analysis and reflection

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Graphic Design

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ produce a substantial and varied range of thumbnail solutions for each design requirement, which reflect the concepts and research collated in Outcome 2
- ◆ select appropriate solutions for development and produce an extensive series of roughs that show a progressive development of layout, style and visual language of the selected design solution for each design requirement
- ◆ select and effectively apply appropriate production materials and methods in the production of roughs and mock-ups for each design requirement
- ◆ deliver critical analysis and reflection on their design solutions
- ◆ demonstrate effective time management in the completion of tasks

Assessment guidelines

The assessment of this Outcome could be through practical assignments working from either one design brief with a minimum of six design requirements, or two graphic design briefs with a minimum of three design requirements.

Candidates should produce thumbnails, roughs and mock-ups using appropriate production materials and methods for each design requirement in the design brief/s. Critical analysis and reflection could be assessed through observation, question and answer or written/annotated response.

Outcome 4

Produce finished design solutions for graphic design brief/s

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Critical analysis and reflection
- ◆ Selection of appropriate production materials/methods
- ◆ Consistency of style and visual language
- ◆ Proofreading
- ◆ Professional production and presentation
- ◆ Pre-press mark-up

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills to show that they can:

- ◆ produce client visuals for each design requirement that reflect the development in Outcome 3
- ◆ select and effectively apply appropriate production materials and methods in the production of roughs and mock-ups for each design requirement
- ◆ deliver critical analysis and reflection on their design solutions
- ◆ professionally present work produced

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Graphic Design

- ◆ demonstrate effective time management in the completion of tasks
- ◆ produce appropriate pre-press mark-up for a minimum of one client visual

Assessment guidelines

The assessment of this Outcome could be through practical assignments working from either one design brief with a minimum of six design requirements, or two graphic design briefs with a minimum of three design requirements.

Candidates should produce client visuals using appropriate production materials and methods for each design requirement in the design brief/s, and produce appropriate pre-press mark-up for a minimum of one client visual. Critical analysis and reflection could be assessed through observation, question and answer or written/annotated response.

Administrative Information

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Graphic Design

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 80 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

The Unit is intended to provide candidates with an introduction to at least one area of graphic design which might include advertising, promotion, information, corporate identity, information, editorial, or publishing.

The introduction to the Unit is through analysis of professional graphic design example/s and the research, development and completion of graphic design brief/s. The brief/s should conclude with proofreading and preparation of an appropriate pre-press mark up.

To reinforce the professional practice of teamwork, introductory exercises and/or graphic design briefs could be set as group exercises. This would be under the proviso that group work is sufficiently monitored and individual candidate roles and performances are clearly identified; monitored and observed.

Outcome 1 is intended to prepare the candidates with knowledge of the area/s of graphic design to be studied, and to initiate and develop critical appraisal and analysis of existing designs with the intention that these skills are then applied in the conceptualisation, development and conclusion of their own work through Outcomes 2–4.

Example/s provided for case study analysis should be selected by the tutor and include a minimum of four professional graphic design items. The tutor should produce an appropriate marking scheme for each case study.

The four main categories you should refer to are:

- ◆ Corporate identity; these graphic design items would be component parts of a branding/corporate identity. These might include both 2D and 3D graphic design applications such as logo, stationery, primary and secondary packaging, labelling, signage, interiors/exterior, uniforms, vehicle livery, publications, website.
- ◆ Advertising/promotion: may consist of related campaign items, alternatively, disparate items could be selected that cover a range of advertising/promotional media. These might include billboard/poster, direct mail, flier, web banners/pop-ups, tv/cinema commercial, adshell, press.
- ◆ Information design: items might include charts and diagrams, explanatory, cut-away, exploded, cartography, signage, symbols.
- ◆ Editorial/publishing: might include a range of related publications for the analysis of a 'house style', or it may be a series of unrelated publications investigating the extent of the area which might include newspapers, magazines, fiction, non-fiction, children's books, brochures, leaflets.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont.)

Unit title: Graphic Design

Outcomes 2–4 draw upon the candidate's existing experience and knowledge of the creative process and demand it to be applied in the context of the graphic design brief/s which prescribes tasks that enable the candidate sufficient creative scope to produce the Evidence Requirements defined in the statement of standards. The pre-press mark-up could include cutting and folding guide, substrates, special finishes (ie, spot varnish, die cut etc.), print process, industry standard colour references, linked files, file types, finished dimensions.

Throughout the creative process candidates regularly undertake personal objective critical analysis and reflection. This could take the form of monitored peer group critiques or by annotation of developmental work. On completion of the creative process candidates should either: provide a reflective critique/presentation, or present an illustrated, written reflective critique of their final design solutions.

The graphic design brief/s may either be: created by the tutor, a competition brief, or a 'live' brief. More than one brief may be offered to a group of candidates to provide the opportunity for individual candidate specialisation.

Practical work could be supplemented by industrial visits to design studios, commercial printers, and guest speakers/practitioners.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

Whilst this Unit is an optional Unit in the HNC/D Visual Communication Group Award, opportunities may be taken to link with other aspects of the course and a thematic approach adopted for both delivery and assessment. The Unit is primarily designed to provide candidates with the technical, creative and analytical knowledge and skills related to a specific occupational area. It would be expected, however, that those who successfully complete the award would progress to junior creative/technical posts or to higher-level education. In these circumstances it would be expected that the Unit is likely to be delivered towards the end of an HNC Group Award, or towards the end of the first year of an HND Group Award to enable candidates to have gained experience of the creative process and associated skills. The Unit may also be delivered as a stand-alone qualification.

Assessment of Outcome 1 may be undertaken early in the delivery of the Unit. Candidates produce a written/verbal and illustrated assignment of at least 500 words or equivalent. Alternatively, the assessment of this Outcome may be integrated with the research element of Outcome 2. In this instance the case study must relate to the graphic design brief/s used for Outcomes 2–4.

Assessment of Outcomes 2–4 will be by one or more instruments of assessment in the form of graphic design brief/s. Outcome 2 is likely to be assessed early in the delivery of the Unit. Product evidence and monitored peer group critiques, or annotation of developmental work will provide opportunities for formative assessment of Outcomes 3 and 4 throughout the delivery of the Unit. Product evidence and critiques/presentations/written reflective critique will provide the opportunity for summative assessment of Outcome 3 and 4 towards the end of the delivery of the Unit.

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

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont.)

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Opportunities to develop Core Skills

Candidates will be required, as they undertake the Unit, to analyse design concepts in depth and seek various types of solutions in a range of theoretical and practical situations. Checklists to support analytical evaluation of complex information accessed could be provided and might include criteria to ensure a check on the suitability for purpose and the needs of the proposed users. In planning designs to meet the practical requirements of clients, such variables as available resources and appropriate media will need to be identified and the significance of each analysed before a design approaches are selected. Developing the initial design ideas should further provide opportunities for enhancing problem solving skills to an advanced level. Evaluation which examines all stages of proposed solutions and their potential and actual impact will be on-going.

Candidates will need to produce and present materials to a standard which would be acceptable in industry and appropriate for a professional audience. This should include the use of technology to support research and oral presentation. Candidates should have opportunities to develop a sophisticated level of oral communication skills in questioning, giving information and responding to others in the most appropriate way.

The need to develop efficient systems of recording, coding and storing outline information for ease of reference should be emphasised. Candidates could develop skills in computerised record keeping and be made aware of the importance of saving materials and performing back ups.

Although skills in written communication are not formally assessed, candidates should be expected to express essential ideas, information accurately and coherently, to use a formal structure and format. Use of software to check language, spelling, punctuation and syntax for accuracy is good practice.

Open learning

This Unit would be suited to open, distance and online learning if it was conducted in conditions where arrangements have been put in place to assure the authenticity of the candidate's work: assessments could, for example, be verified by a professional person who can confirm that the work was done solely by the candidate.

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 Alternative Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs*, which is available on SQA's website: www.sqa.org.uk.

General information for candidates

Unit title: Graphic Design

This Unit is designed to introduce you to a range of graphic design areas, which might include advertising, promotion, information, corporate identity, editorial, and publishing. It is intended to allow you to develop and apply your creative skills in the production of designs for one or more graphic design areas. Throughout the design process you will develop and apply your skills of critical analysis and reflection.

This is a 2 HN credit Unit. This means that you will be required to produce a substantial volume of work, allowing you to explore the Outcomes in depth.

In Outcome 1 you will analyse a minimum of one professional graphic design example/s. You will identify the area of graphic design to which it belongs and provide a brief summary of its historical origins and developments. Additionally you will analyse individual example/s in terms of their function, historical/contextual influences, production materials/equipment and method of reproduction.

For assessment your analysis may be presented as either a short written illustrated assignment, or a short illustrated oral presentation of 500 words.

In Outcomes 2–4 you will work from either:

- ◆ one graphic design brief with a minimum of six design requirements
- or**
- ◆ two graphic design briefs each with a minimum of three design requirements

For Outcome 2 you will begin by analysing the brief/s and create a ‘mind map’ or similar method in which you list all your thoughts, related concepts, and knowledge of the brief. Using a range of research techniques you will collect appropriate visual reference material for the creation of ‘mood boards’, visual source material and information on production materials and methods.

Assessment of this Outcome is through the production and professional presentation of your initial concepts and research material.

For Outcomes 3 and 4 you will work through the design process from thumbnails and roughs to client visuals for all the design requirements in the brief/s. Your client visuals must be professionally presented and proofread for accuracy. Additionally, you will produce a pre-press mark-up for at least one design requirement. Throughout the design and development process you are required to critically appraise and reflect upon your work either through participation in group critiques or annotation of your design works.

Assessment of these Outcomes is through the production and professional presentation of your development work, visuals and correct pre-press mark-up, and by written response/annotation or observation of objective critical appraisal and reflection of your work.