

Higher National Unit specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Journalism: Feature Writing Advanced

Unit code: F1N3 35

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed to allow the candidate to develop key journalistic skills in feature writing of a more complex nature across a wide variety of subjects, styles and publications. This Unit is aimed at the candidate with an interest in entering the journalism industry, or progressing to related studies at a higher level. The skills dealt with in this Unit apply to all areas of feature writing and are aimed at developing the skills and knowledge introduced in Journalism: Feature Writing to create a folio of features across a variety of styles.

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

- 1 Create a series of feature articles to given briefs for local and national newspapers, and magazines.
- 2 Generate ideas and a detailed synopsis for an in-depth investigative feature.
- 3 Research, conduct interviews, write and lay out an in-depth investigative feature for a named publication.

Credit points and level: 1 HN credit at SCQF level 8: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8*)

**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. However, it would be beneficial if candidates had previous experience of feature writing. This could be demonstrated by achievement of one of the following:

- ◆ F1N2 34 *Journalism: Feature Writing*
- ◆ F1RD 34 *Journalism: Research and Interview Skills*
- ◆ Relevant work experience

Core Skills: There are opportunities to gather evidence towards Core Skills in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components. Further detail is provided in the Support Notes.

General information for centres (cont)

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. This Unit is part of the HNC/HND Practical Journalism. If this Unit is taught within the HNC/HND Practical Journalism framework, progression from F1N2 34 *Journalism: Feature Writing* is recommended.

Assessment: This Unit allows the candidate to be assessed in an ongoing holistic fashion, encouraging a broad variety of features to be created throughout delivery of the Unit for completion of a feature folio in Outcome 1. Also, since Outcomes 2 and 3 form part of the same feature writing and research process, they should be integrated. Certainly the link between the two should be stressed.

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.

Please refer to Evidence Requirements and Assessment Guidelines for the Unit after the Outcomes.

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

Create a series of feature articles to given briefs for local and national newspapers, and magazines

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Generation of story ideas
- ◆ Identification and use of key secondary and primary research opportunities
- ◆ Gathering of background material and research to write feature articles
- ◆ Planning, organising and conducting of interviews to write feature articles
- ◆ Use of style, tone, pace and structure to create effective features
- ◆ Recognition of genre requirements and house style
- ◆ Writing for local and national newspapers and magazines

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can successfully plan, research and write feature articles across a broad spectrum of styles for a variety of publications and show a clear ability to manipulate style for various target publications. The candidate should be tasked with covering a variety of events and given ample opportunities to create a variety of planned features, as well as being encouraged to generate ideas of his/her own for feature writing. Features should be written to industry standard by showing recognition of demands of house style, word count and deadline, as well as meeting industry demands for accuracy in terms of spelling, punctuation, grammar, facts, legal issues etc.

Candidates should aim to produce a minimum of five articles, of varying lengths, for assessment, but should be encouraged to create a wide range of feature articles across a variety of genres, styles and topics.

Assessment should be conducted under open-book conditions and will **not** be written up under controlled conditions.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: Feature Writing Advanced

Assessment Guidelines

This Outcome will be assessed holistically across a broad spectrum of features created throughout the time of the Unit, and as such the candidate should be encouraged to begin writing from an early stage in the Unit.

Outcome 2

Generate ideas and a detailed synopsis for an in-depth investigative feature

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Key methods of feature article idea generation
- ◆ Use of synopsis to present a complex brief
- ◆ Importance and demands of investigative feature
- ◆ Key demands of composite feature
- ◆ Relevant types of feature article
- ◆ Understanding and management of key primary and secondary sources
- ◆ Spelling, punctuation and grammar

Evidence Requirements

The candidate will need to provide evidence to demonstrate his/her Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that he/she can accurately and in a relevant style develop in-depth ideas for a composite investigative feature, and write a synopsis which describes accurately the idea and methods to be used in order to 'sell' a complex feature idea to an 'editor' in the form of class tutor.

The synopsis response should be a minimum of 300 words, and should take the form of an in-depth synopsis which outlines all of the candidate's intended plans, secondary and primary sources, angle etc. for a composite feature.

Assessment should be conducted under open-book conditions. The candidate's response should be to industry standard by showing recognition of demands of synopsis convention, house style and angle, deadline as well as meeting industry demands for accuracy in terms of spelling, punctuation, grammar, facts, legal issues etc.

Assessment Guidelines

The candidate should be encouraged to develop ideas and possible investigative angles for a real-life, extended research investigation and will develop ideas in conjunction with their tutor.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: Feature Writing Advanced

Outcome 3

Research, conduct interviews, write and lay out an in-depth investigative feature for a named publication

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Generation of complex feature idea and angle for named publication
- ◆ Understanding of feature format and house style
- ◆ Understanding of grammar, punctuation, spelling to industry standard
- ◆ Understanding of feature structure to industry standard
- ◆ Secondary research for writing features
- ◆ Primary research, including interviews, for writing features
- ◆ Feature writing and structuring
- ◆ Feature layout and designed for named publication

Evidence Requirements

The candidate will need to provide evidence to demonstrate his/her Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that he/she can plan, research, conduct interviews and write a composite investigative feature intended for a named publication such as a broadsheet newspaper or specialist magazine. The candidate should be encouraged to develop his/her own realistic investigative feature idea and to carry out his/her own research and interviews throughout the Unit. When writing, the candidate should be encouraged to reflect current journalistic trends by breaking the feature down into two or three articles over the total word limit, and to consider relevant layout and design, for example by producing a four-page extended feature for a broadsheet supplement magazine or specialist magazine.

The completed piece should:

- ◆ be a total of 1,200 to 1,800 words in length
- ◆ be concise, grammatically correct and structurally and stylistically appropriate
- ◆ make use of composite structure to introduce side bars, background features, lead feature etc
- ◆ show clear signs of understanding of feature layout and design for a named publication

Assessment should be conducted under open-book. However, deadlines should be set for all stages of the process.

Assessment Guidelines

The candidate should be encouraged to develop ideas and possible investigative angles for a real-life, extended research investigation and should be encouraged to begin work early to allow for research and interviews to be carried out as well as the later task of structuring, writing and designing the completed complex feature.

Administrative Information

Unit code: F1N3 35
Unit title: Journalism: Feature Writing Advanced
Superclass category: KD
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Version	Description of change	Date

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Journalism: Feature Writing Advanced

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

The purpose of this Unit is to provide the candidate with sufficient knowledge of the importance of complex feature writing in newspaper and magazine production and to allow the candidate to develop an extended folio of feature articles for a wide variety of publications using real-life sources and interviews.

The candidate should be encouraged to develop and propose their own feature ideas in building their folio and should be encouraged to work to an industry standard by conducting interviews and showing a clear understanding of the need for objective features, and relevant use of subjectivity in features such as columns, leaders and reviews.

The candidate should be encouraged to write features from an early stage in the Unit to allow for completion of their folio, and should begin work on developing ideas and research possibilities for an extended, complex investigative feature from an early stage.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

This is a Unit within the HNC/HND Practical Journalism Group Award.

Teaching should be focused on helping the candidate to understand and apply the principles and main provisions of the relevant areas of feature writing and to encourage the candidate to develop skills in idea generation and feature writing for a variety of genres.

The candidate should be exposed to a wide variety of professionally written feature articles from a variety of sources such as local and national newspapers and magazines, and in particular should be encouraged to develop skills from F1N2 34 *Journalism: Feature Writing* in order to create a wide-ranging folio of work.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: Feature Writing Advanced

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

The Core Skill component of — *Produce well-structured written communication on complex topics* — at SCQF level 6 could be developed in this Unit.

The specific skills for this core skill component are:

- ◆ Present all essential ideas/information and supporting detail in a logical and effective order
- ◆ Use a structure which takes account of purpose and audience and links the major and minor points in ways which assist the clarity and impact of the writing
- ◆ Use conventions which are effective in achieving the purpose and adapted as necessary for the target audience
- ◆ Use spelling, punctuation and sentence structures which are consistently accurate
- ◆ Vary sentence structure, paragraphing and vocabulary to suit the purpose and target audience.

The Core Skill component of — *Produce and respond to oral communication on a complex topic* — at SCQF level 6 could be developed in this Unit.

The specific skills for this core skill component are:

- ◆ use vocabulary and a range of spoken language structures consistently and effectively at an appropriate level of formality
- ◆ convey all essential information, opinions or ideas with supporting detail accurately and coherently and with varied emphasis as appropriate
- ◆ structure communication to take full account of purpose and audience
- ◆ take account of situation and audience during delivery
- ◆ respond to others, taking account of their contributions

The Information Technology core skill of — *Using an IT system effectively and responsibly to process a range of information* — at SCQF level 5 could be developed within this Unit.

The specific skills for this core skill are:

- ◆ Make effective and responsible use of the range of IT equipment in everyday use
- ◆ Carry out straightforward processing in two types of software applications
- ◆ Carry out complex processes to use one further application in depth
- ◆ Integrate different types of data in a piece of work
- ◆ Carry out two searches to extract and present relevant information from electronic data sources

The core skill component of — *Using Graphical Information* — at SCQF level 5 could be developed in this Unit.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: Feature Writing Advanced

The specific skills for this core skill component are:

- ◆ interpret information from tables, graphs, charts or diagrams
- ◆ select an appropriate form of tables, graphs, charts or diagrams and communicate information in that form

The Core Skills could be developed without formal certification.

Open learning

This Unit could be delivered by open learning provided suitable open or online learning materials were developed. However, it would require planning by the centre to ensure the sufficiency and authenticity of candidate evidence. Arrangements would have to be made to ensure that the evidence for all Outcomes is generated by assessment undertaken in the mode(s) detailed in the Evidence Requirements for each Outcome.

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

Candidates with disabilities and/or additional support needs

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. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (www.sqa.org.uk).

General information for candidates

Unit title: Journalism: Feature Writing Advanced

This is a one credit Unit designed to give you a practical understanding and hands-on experience of the varied demands of feature writing, developing the introductory skills introduced in F1N2 34 *Journalism: Feature Writing* to encourage you to create an extended folio of diverse features on a wide variety of topics and for local, tabloid and broadsheet newspapers as well as magazines.

Outcome 1 will be an ongoing folio-based task throughout the length of the Unit, tasking you with putting into practise your research and feature writing skills to create an extended folio of feature articles for a variety of publications and to a variety of style and length requirements.

Outcome 2 and Outcome 3 will also be developed throughout the course of the Unit and will be jointly assessed, encouraging you to develop your own sound journalistic ideas for an extended, complex investigative feature. In Outcome 2 you will develop and propose ideas in the form of a synopsis, while in Outcome 3 you will research, write, design and layout a complex investigative feature for a named publication.

The assessment for Outcome 1 will require you to create a wide range of feature articles across a variety of genres, styles and topics. In Outcome 2 you will develop ideas and write a synopsis. In Outcome 3 you will plan, research conduct interviews and write a composite investigative feature.

There are opportunities to develop the Communication Core Skill components of Produce well-structured written communication on complex issues and produce and respond to oral communication on a complex topic at SCQF level 6. The Core Skill of Information Technology at SCQF level 5 and the component Using Graphical Information at SCQF level 5 may be developed.