

Higher National Unit specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Journalism: Sub Editing

Unit code: F1N6 34

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed to allow the candidate to develop skills in written English, editing text and proof-reading copy, and to equip the candidate with knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of newspaper and magazine sub editors. This Unit is aimed at the candidate with an interest in entering the journalism industry or progressing to related studies at a higher level. It promotes correct usage and skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling as well as introducing the basic skills required to correct the candidate's and third parties' copy to ensure accuracy.

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

- 1 Describe the roles and responsibilities of editor, chief sub editor and sub editor in editing copy.
- 2 Describe house style and explain its importance.
- 3 Identify and correct errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- 4 Identify and correct mistakes in given copy.

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: Access to this Unit is at the discretion of the Centre. However, candidates would normally be expected to have competence in communication skills at SCQF level 6 or equivalent. This could be demonstrated by achievement of one of the following:

- ◆ Higher English (C115 12) or its component Units
- ◆ Communication 4 (EE3T 12) and Literature 1 (E9X8 12)
- ◆ Communication (D01B 12)
- ◆ 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 mandatory in the HNC/HND Practical Journalism. If this Unit is taught within the HNC/D Practical Journalism framework, progression to F1N7 35 Journalism: Sub Editing Advanced is recommended.

Assessment: Outcomes 1 and 2 are principally knowledge-based and require the use of an appropriate assessment instrument. Outcomes 3 and 4 move from the theoretical to the practical application of the skills covered. Also, since Outcomes 3 and 4 form part of the same sub editing process, they could 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

Describe the roles and responsibilities of editor, chief sub editor and sub editor in editing copy

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ The editorial hierarchy and structure of newspapers and magazines
- ◆ The organisation of copy flow in the editorial department
- ◆ The organisation of the copy editing process
- ◆ The roles and responsibilities of editor, chief sub editor and sub editor in the copy editing process
- ◆ The roles and responsibilities of editor, chief sub editor and sub editor in layout, headline writing etc
- ◆ Key differences in any of above areas for regional and/or local newspapers and/or magazines

Evidence Requirements

The Candidate will need to provide evidence to demonstrate his/her Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that he/she can describe accurately the key features of the sub editing department. The focus should be on describing the organisation of the hierarchical structure of newspapers and the flow of copy through an editorial department with specific focus on the organisation of the copy editing process, as well as accurately describing the roles and responsibilities of editor, chief sub editor and sub editor in terms of copy editing, layout, headline writing and other responsibilities, and accurately describing the job functions of each area. The candidate may be asked to identify potential differences for local papers and magazines, such as smaller staff, amalgamated roles and different job titles and responsibilities.

The candidate's response should be a minimum of 500 words. The assessment should be conducted in open-book, supervised and controlled conditions within a period of two hours.

Assessment Guidelines

This Outcome could be assessed by an Extended Response.

It is important that assessment of this Outcome should be first in the assessment strategy, as it provides underpinning knowledge for the next Outcome.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: Sub Editing

Outcome 2

Describe house style and explain its importance

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ The meaning of house style in newspaper and magazine publishing
- ◆ The importance of house style in newspaper and magazine publishing
- ◆ Examples of established style guides in editing copy
- ◆ Use of established style guides in editing copy

Evidence Requirements

The candidate will need to provide evidence to demonstrate his/her Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that he/she can describe accurately the key features of house style and explain its importance. The focus should be on describing what is meant by house style when editing newspapers and magazines, and should outline the importance of a set, specific house style to maintaining standards and overall style in a publication.

The candidate's response should be a minimum of 400 words. The assessment should be conducted in open-book, supervised and controlled conditions within a period of one hour.

Assessment Guidelines

The Outcome could be assessed by an extended response.

The candidate should be encouraged to solve specific house style issues with reference to a style guide. The candidate should use and refer to specific style guides such as The Guardian style guide or a college's own journalistic style guide, if available.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: Sub Editing

Outcome 3

Identify and correct errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Basic spelling rules and exceptions
- ◆ Basic grammar and punctuation rules
- ◆ Checking and correcting spelling, grammar and punctuation
- ◆ Limitations of computerised spell check
- ◆ Accurate punctuation
- ◆ Grammatical rules and common grammatical errors
- ◆ Understanding of appropriateness of style

Outcome 4

Identify and correct mistakes in given copy

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Checking and correcting spelling, grammar and punctuation in copy
- ◆ Checking and correcting facts in given copy
- ◆ Checking and correcting house style in given copy

Evidence Requirements for Outcomes 3 and 4

The candidate will need to provide evidence to demonstrate his/her knowledge and/or skills by showing that he/she can correct a piece of unseen text of approximately 750 words, containing a minimum of 50 errors. The errors should cover typographical errors; errors of punctuation, grammar, syntax. A small number (three at most) of stylistic infelicities should also be corrected.

The corrected piece should:

- ◆ have a minimum of 47 of 50 errors identified
- ◆ introduce no unnecessary modifications
- ◆ be concise, grammatically correct and stylistically appropriate

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: Sub Editing

The assessment should be undertaken in open-book, supervised and controlled conditions. The candidate should be provided with a dictionary and, ideally, a computer with a relevant word processing package.

The assessment should be timed, with a maximum of two hours allowed.

Assessment Guidelines for Outcomes 3 and 4

The candidate may be asked to make corrections on computer to reflect modern sub editing standard practice, though paper and standard BSI proof-correction symbols may also be used, and in any case their historical role in sub editing should be highlighted. Formative assessments of each area of Outcome 3 should be encouraged to develop the candidate's skills and understanding.

The candidate should be provided with a piece of unseen text on-screen on a suitable word processing package, or on paper if using standard BSI proof-correction symbols, which has had introduced into it 50 errors in total which include: typographical errors; errors of punctuation, syntax, grammar and spelling; and stylistic infelicities, for example, the use of the split infinitive, jargon, outworn clichés or metaphors. The text should be of sufficient complexity to allow a range of syntactical errors to be introduced.

Administrative Information

Unit code: F1N6 34
Unit title: Journalism: Sub Editing
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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Journalism: Sub Editing

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.

The Evidence Requirements for this Unit may be met by successful completion of externally examined assessment(s), such as the National Council for the Training of Journalists preliminary Sub Editing examination, provided that such external assessment satisfies the Evidence Requirements specified within this Unit.

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 sub editing in newspaper and magazine production and to allow the candidate to describe accurately the roles and responsibilities of newspaper and magazine staff in the sub editing process. The candidate will also be expected to develop basic English skills, in spelling, punctuation, grammar and house style, and as such this Unit should be delivered in context alongside Units such as F1N9 34 *Journalism: News Writing* and F1N2 34 *Journalism: Feature Writing*. The candidate will then be expected to test these skills by undertaking basic editing and copy correction tasks.

The candidate should be encouraged to practise correcting errors in spelling, punctuation, syntax and grammar from an early stage to reach the standards expected by the sub editing process, and as such this Unit may be delivered alongside the National Union of Journalists' English for Journalists online learning environment.

The candidate should also be provided with several formative assessments with embedded errors to allow them to gain experience of correcting copy, both on paper and on-screen.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

This is a mandatory 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 sub editing, with a focus on the role of the sub editor in modern journalism. Sub editors' tasks will include checking and correcting copy for spelling, grammar, punctuation, factual and legal issues in the first instance as well as further skills such as cutting, altering and amalgamating copy to meet the demands of space and house style. An introduction to conventions of grammar and punctuation will prove beneficial at an early stage and the candidate should also be encouraged to correct copy on screen and paper in formative tasks, for example by identifying mistakes incorporated into pieces of journalistic work.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

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

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: Sub Editing

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

This Core Skill component will be developed without formal certification.

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

This Core Skill will 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: Sub Editing

This is a 1 credit Unit designed to give you a practical understanding of the role of sub editing in newspaper and magazines, with a particular emphasis on the promotion of good English and communication skills. It is also designed to give you a practical understanding of the importance of house style, the roles and responsibilities of key staff such as editor, chief sub editor and sub editor, and to then allow you to develop copy correction and sub editing skills. It is also a core Unit in the HNC/HND Practical Journalism award.

Outcome 1 provides an introduction to the roles and responsibilities of the key staff, such as editor, chief sub editor and sub editor, involved in the sub editing and copy correction process on a newspaper or magazine.

Outcome 2 provides an introduction to the important concept of house style, outlining the importance of adherence to an overall style in a publication such as a newspaper or magazine, and encourages you to research existing examples of style guides and house style in publications such as The Guardian newspaper, and to apply these principles.

Outcome 3 underlines the importance of clear, crisp and accurate copy in journalism, focusing on key areas of copy correction such as spelling, punctuation, syntax and grammar. Throughout the Unit you will learn the key concepts in spelling, grammar and punctuation and be expected to correct and employ these principles.

Outcome 4 deals with employing these key skills by correcting copy written by someone else, mirroring the key task of the newspaper or magazine sub editor. You will be encouraged to correct and edit copy on-screen to reflect current media practise but may also be asked to edit hard copy, on paper, to eliminate a variety of mistakes and ensure error-free copy ready for publication.

Outcomes 1 and 2 are principally knowledge-based and will be assessed by, for example, an Extended Response. In Outcomes 3 and 4 you will put theory into practice and will correct copy.

There are opportunities to develop the Communication Core Skill component of *Produce well-structured written communication on complex topics* at SCQF level 6 in this Unit and 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, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills.