

Higher National Unit specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Journalism: Online Reporting

Unit code: F1N8 35

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed to allow the candidate to develop key journalistic skills in the area of online journalism. The 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 are designed to allow the candidate to translate writing, editing and journalistic skills to online media and to originate online-specific content.

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

- 1 Write a variety of articles for online media and other new media platforms.
- 2 Edit and adapt material from print media for online use.
- 3 Use and manage techniques for creating dialogue with the reader.
- 4 Use a content management system and other software to create content and add to a website.
- 5 Create and edit basic video/audio and picture package for online publication.

Credit points and level: 2 HN credits at SCQF level 8: (16 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 news writing and sub editing skills at an advanced level. This could be demonstrated by achievement of one of the following:

- ◆ F1N9 34 *Journalism: News Writing* and F1NG 35 *Journalism: News Writing Advanced*
- ◆ F1N6 34 *Journalism: Sub Editing* and F1N7 35 *Journalism: Sub Editing Advanced*
- ◆ 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 a core part of the HNC/HND Practical Journalism. Within the HNC/HND Practical Journalism framework, progression from F1N9 34 *Journalism: News Writing* and F1N6 34 *Journalism: Sub Editing* is important, and it is recommended that this unit is studied prior to or in conjunction with F1NG 35 *Journalism: News Writing Advanced* and/or F1N7 35 *Journalism: Sub Editing Advanced*.

A high level of technical knowledge is not necessary for completion of the Unit, and candidates will not be expected to manage web design for completion of the Outcomes. However, candidates will be expected to be able to create news stories for a website and to present them for online publishing. Candidates will also be expected to be able to create basic video and/or audio reports for online publication.

Assessment: This Unit allows candidates to be assessed over a wide variety of skills demanded by the field of online journalism, encouraging a broad folio of new media articles to be produced throughout delivery of the Unit. For completion of Outcome 1, candidates will create a variety of online articles, while they will edit articles for Outcome 2. Since Outcome 4 demands candidates create and manage for a website, this may be integrated with Outcomes 1, 2 and 3. Certainly the link between the three should be stressed. For Outcome 5, candidates are asked to create and edit a basic audio or video package, and this may then be integrated with the website produced across the previous Outcomes.

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

Write a variety of articles for online media and other new media platforms

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Structuring news stories for websites
- ◆ Writing and structuring for news tickers, SMS messages and e-mail bulletins
- ◆ Writing effective 'head' for a story
- ◆ Writing effective 'sell' intro, including traditional intro sell and summary sell for news stories
- ◆ Using appropriate quotes
- ◆ Importance of 'evergreen' copy
- ◆ Choosing appropriate topic for a blog
- ◆ Setting up and maintaining a blog

Evidence Requirements

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

- 1 Write a news lead for online use on a news website. The lead article should take into consideration key conventions of online journalism as well as news writing, make use of an effective 'sell' intro, 'head' and appropriate, effective quotes. The article should be a minimum of 300 words. It is recommended that the candidate uses this story for developing reader feedback/interaction in the Outcome 3 assessment.
- 2 Write 'sell' intros for use in, for example, SMS services. The candidate should provide a specific 'sell' for a minimum of five news stories, and use these to produce a news ticker.
- 3 Identify an appropriate topic for a blog and write and maintain a blog over a period of time. The blog should contain a minimum of four entries and should be at least 750 words in length in total.

Assessment should be conducted under open book conditions to deadlines and word limits to be agreed with tutor. The candidate should be encouraged to begin writing from an early stage in the Unit.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Journalism: Online Reporting

Assessment Guidelines

For task one, candidates may wish to choose an article which they are working on for, for example, a newspaper, which has been edited to be suitable for web production, or it may be a specifically written article. Candidates should then develop the story by incorporating 'calls to action', polls, reader feedback etc for completion of the Outcome 3 assignment.

For task two, candidates should write a series of 'sell' intros which illustrate a clear awareness of the demands for SMS news services etc, and which can be edited for use on a news ticker.

For task three, candidates should identify a theme and topic for a blog, and should be encouraged to begin this task at an early stage in the Unit, to allow for it to be updated and maintained over a period of time. For example, candidates may choose to maintain a blog over half or even all of the Unit's delivery time.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: Online Reporting

Outcome 2

Edit and adapt material from print media for online use

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Spelling, grammar and punctuation rules
- ◆ Check and correct spelling, grammar and punctuation
- ◆ Understanding of appropriate use of style
- ◆ Understanding of importance of structure for presenting online articles
- ◆ Dividing articles for multiple-screen presentation
- ◆ Writing meaningful sub-headings
- ◆ Using bulleted lists, highlighted key words or hypertext links
- ◆ Writing of head, or headline, for articles
- ◆ Using pulled out quotes

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can accurately and in a relevant style, edit an existing text-based article for a non-online publication such as a newspaper or magazine to suit an online journalistic production.

The article should be divided logically over an appropriate number of pages for multiple-screen presentation that contain key elements of the story. The candidate will also be expected to produce an opening screen to introduce the feature, meaningful sub-headings, bulleted lists, highlighted key words, head and pulled out quotes to achieve maximum impact from online presentation.

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 should be conducted under open book conditions to a deadline agreed with the tutor. The article should be a minimum of 400 words in length.

Assessment Guidelines

Tutors may wish to select a news article or feature for editing, or may encourage candidates to utilise articles which candidates have produced themselves for Units such as F1NG 35 *Journalism: News Writing Advanced* and F1N3 35 *Journalism: Feature Writing Advanced*. Candidates should be expected to demonstrate skills developed in F1N6 34 *Journalism: Sub Editing* and F1N7 35 *Journalism: Sub Editing Advanced*, and to show an awareness of the demands of web-based delivery.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: Online Reporting

Outcome 3

Use and manage techniques for creating dialogue with the reader

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Importance of reader interaction online
- ◆ Understanding and use of ‘calls to action’
- ◆ Understanding and use of reader-interaction devices such as votes and polls
- ◆ Developing relevant reader question
- ◆ Use and tagging of moderated and/or unmoderated comments to stories
- ◆ Importance of monitoring voting
- ◆ Developing news story ideas from votes and polls

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can identify relevant, appropriate news stories which are suitable for ‘calls to action’ and utilise and link a relevant call, such as a reader poll, vote or moderated/unmoderated comments.

The candidate will be expected to construct and write an appropriate call to action, and to monitor and manage the poll. Following this, the candidate should produce a clear synopsis which outlines his/her plans for a follow-up news article, including angle, suggested sources and research as well as possible lines of enquiry, questions and picture opportunities.

Assessment should be conducted under open book conditions. However, deadlines should be set with the tutor for the production of original article in Outcome 1, the ‘call to action’ and any necessary reaction or updating.

Assessment Guidelines

Candidates should be encouraged to identify one of their previously produced stories which is appropriate for a ‘call to action’ and to create an online poll or vote to elicit reader feedback and interaction. The feedback should be monitored, and any reaction such as story updates conducted in an appropriate manner.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: Online Reporting

Outcome 4

Use a content management system and other software to create content and add to a website

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Using appropriate content management system
- ◆ Using appropriate presentation software such as Photoshop
- ◆ Selecting and using appropriate templates
- ◆ Populating templates with text, heads, sells, images, pull quotes and links
- ◆ Applying html coding to articles
- ◆ Applying web links, including external links, to stories
- ◆ Applying internal links to archive stories

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can use an appropriate content management system and online templates to present journalistic articles through the use of text, heads, sells, images, pull quotes and links. The candidate may make use of html coding or website design software to create an advanced website or may simply use an existing content management system and templates.

For completion of this Outcome, the candidate should be encouraged to utilise the articles that he/she has written and edited in Outcomes 1 and 2. The candidate will also be required to write a brief which outlines his/her specific role in the presentation of copy for online production. The word count should be a maximum of 500 words.

Assessment should be conducted under open book conditions to a set of deadlines agreed with the tutor.

Assessment Guidelines

This Outcome assesses candidates' ability to present material in a relevant fashion for online consumption, and could be delivered in conjunction with the other Outcomes to write, edit and present an online production.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: Online Reporting

Outcome 5

Create and edit basic video/audio and picture package for online publication

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Identifying and researching a relevant topic for a video or audio report
- ◆ Gathering and recording material for a video or audio report
- ◆ Editing video or audio footage
- ◆ Writing a voice report to accompany pictures
- ◆ Creating a package
- ◆ Publishing a package online and linking to text element
- ◆ Identifying a story for use with slide show
- ◆ Selecting images to create slide show

Evidence Requirements

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

1. Identify a relevant topic which is appropriate for an online video or audio report, research and record material including interviews and edit the package for online use.

The candidate should record a minimum of one interview, edit footage and write a voice report to accompany pictures if necessary, to create a package which is suitable for online publishing and linking to text element of an article.

The candidate's completed package does not need to be produced and edited to full television delivery standard, but should take into account expected professional standards for a single online video or audio package.

Assessment should be conducted under open book conditions to a set of agreed deadlines for planning, interviewing, recording and editing the package.

2. Identify a relevant topic appropriate for an online still-image slide show. The candidate should select and incorporate a minimum of five pictures for a slide show for use with a story which requires particular illustration. The candidate should also produce the text element to accompany the visuals.

Assessment should be conducted under open book conditions to an agreed deadline with the tutor.

Assessment Guidelines

Candidates should be encouraged to develop a realistic idea and angle for the audio or visual report, ideally for a real-life report which includes a minimum of two interviews, and which may be a brief report of an appropriate length for online delivery. Ideas should be developed in conjunction with their tutor.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: Online Reporting

For the slide show, candidates should identify a relevant story for use with a slide show, compile a collection of at least five pictures for online presentation, and create text element in the form of accurate and relevant picture captions to accompany the visual presentation.

Administrative Information

Unit code: F1N8 35

Unit title: Journalism: Online Reporting

Superclass category: KD

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Journalism: Online Reporting

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 purpose of this Unit is to provide candidates with sufficient knowledge of the importance of online journalism and its increasingly central role in the newsroom and importance in the convergence of media. The Unit introduces candidates to some of the key concepts and terminology of online journalism and allows them to develop, write and edit articles as well as developing introductory skills in content presentation, encouraging reader interaction and recording video/audio content.

Candidates could be encouraged to develop web content in conjunction with, for example, article writing for the Units F1NG 35 *Journalism: News Writing Advanced*, F1N3 35 *Journalism: Feature Writing Advanced* while online editing skills could be developed in conjunction with F1N7 35 *Journalism: Sub Editing Advanced*.

Candidates may develop a website across the time of the Unit, perhaps in conjunction with a newspaper, magazine, television or radio production for the HND Practical Journalism Graded Unit.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

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

Teaching should be focussed on helping candidates to understand and apply the principles and main provisions of the relevant areas of online journalism and to encourage candidates to develop skills in online content creation, editing and management.

Candidates should be introduced to the key terms, concepts and developments in online journalism at an early stage. They should then be encouraged to use this knowledge for developing online journalistic planning, writing and editing skills.

There should not be a significant focus on the technical aspect of website writing, and candidates may use pre-created templates or an existing online content system such as Blackboard or develop previous desktop publishing skills to convert pages and content using online options on DTP packages such as QuarkXpress or InDesign.

However, journalists are increasingly expected to understand and utilise modern technology such as word processing and IT equipment, desktop publishing software, photography software such as Photoshop, digital camera, video/audio recording and editing equipment and an online content management system. This Unit encourages the candidate to develop a range of these skills for online production.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Journalism: Online Reporting

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 — *Using Graphical Information* — at SCQF level 5 could be developed in this Unit.

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 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 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 guidelines 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).

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: Online Reporting

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: Online Reporting

This is a two credit Unit designed to give you an understanding of the principles and key skills needed for online journalism, and to encourage you to develop skills in online content creation, editing and management.

You will be introduced to the key terms, concepts and developments in online journalism and will develop your own online journalistic planning, writing and editing skills. You will also be introduced to skills required to produce news for websites, SMS reports, ticker reports, blogs, slide shows, online audio/video reports and podcasting.

There will not be a significant focus on the technical aspect of website writing, but you will be introduced to the basics of using online content systems.

Journalists are increasingly expected to understand and utilise modern technology such as word processing and IT equipment, desktop publishing software, photography software such as Photoshop, digital camera, video/audio recording and editing equipment and an online content management system. This Unit encourages you to develop a range of these skills for online production.

Outcome 1 will be an ongoing folio-based task where you will be encouraged to write news articles for online publication. In addition to lead articles for online publication you will be encouraged to write key online articles such as 'sell' intros, 'heads', SMS 'sells', ticker reports, blogs and e-mail bulletins.

Outcome 2 will encourage you to edit print stories to ensure that they work for online publication. You will be introduced to important concepts such as presenting online articles by using 'evergreen' journalism, multiple-screen presentation of articles, 'heads' and effective sub-headings, hypertext links and pulled out quotes to add impact to website articles.

Outcome 3 introduces you to the crucial online concept of reader/user interaction. Websites have made much of their immediacy and technology to develop interactive options, linking traditional journalistic content to moderated or un-moderated comment, reader votes, polls and 'calls to action' which encourage readers and website users to interact with the website.

Outcome 4 encourages you to consider the presentation of articles that you have written and edited in Outcomes 1 and 2, and reader interaction elicited in Outcome 3. You will use an appropriate content management system and templates to present journalism online.

Outcome 5 considers the clear convergence of written, audio and visual material as they are brought together on the Internet. You will be expected to identify, research, record and edit an audio or visual report for online use, as well as creating a visual slide show for presentation along with traditional text.

The Unit may allow you the opportunity to develop the Core Skill component of Produce well-structured written communication on complex topics 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.