

Higher National Unit specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Journalism: News Writing

Unit code: F1N9 34

Unit purpose: The purpose of this Unit is to allow candidates to develop the necessary basic skills and knowledge to enable them to gather material to write news items of varying length. The candidates will also understand how their work fits into the general production cycle of a newspaper/broadcast centre.

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

- 1 Explain the recent history and trends affecting the media in the UK.
- 2 Describe a typical news gathering operation.
- 3 Analyse the editorial content of a newspaper/broadcast.
- 4 Produce basic news stories and additional material for newspapers/broadcasts.
- 5 Produce a news lead based on changing developments in a story.

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. 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 (D01B12)
- ◆ 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. The Unit is mandatory in the HNC/HND Practical Journalism. If the Unit is taught within the HNC/HND Practical Journalism framework, progression to F1NG 35 *Journalism: News Writing Advanced* is recommended. It is also recommended that this Unit is delivered alongside the Unit Journalism: Research and Interview Skills where significant opportunity for cross assessment is presented.

Assessment: Outcomes 1-3 are knowledge-based and will be assessed by appropriate instruments of assessment such as extended responses or restricted response questions. Outcomes 4 and 5 are practical 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.

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

Explain the recent history and trends affecting the media in the UK

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ The historical background of the media in the UK
- ◆ Recent technological developments which affect news gathering and production capabilities of the media
- ◆ Recent technological developments in other areas of the media which have challenged the traditional press
- ◆ Growth of multi-title media business empires

Evidence Requirements

The candidate must demonstrate evidence covering all of the Knowledge and Skills items for this outcome.

The candidate must produce 500 words correctly explaining the recent history and trends affecting the media in the UK.

The assessment will be undertaken under open book conditions within a period of 90 minutes.

Assessment Guidelines

Candidates could be asked to produce an Extended Response or answer Restricted Response questions covering all Knowledge and Skills items.

The Outcome should be assessed to demonstrate candidates' knowledge of the recent trends which have shaped the industry. In particular, the Outcome should give examples of changes brought about by the introduction of new technology, the challenge to the traditional media brought about by the digital revolution, and the growth of multi-title business empires. Centres could, for example, analyse the changes to radio, television and newspapers in their area and discuss how the recent trends have affected these branches of the media.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: News Writing

Outcome 2

Describe a typical news gathering operation

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Sources of news
- ◆ Role of the journalist
- ◆ Importance of contacts
- ◆ Structure of a typical news gathering operation
- ◆ Copy flow in a typical news gathering operation
- ◆ Editorial section of copy and pictures
- ◆ The follow up process of the story

Evidence Requirements

The candidate must demonstrate evidence covering all of the Knowledge and Skills items for this Outcome.

The candidate must produce the equivalent of 600 words correctly describing the sources of news, the role and duty of the journalist, the importance of contacts, news gathering and the selection and production process of a news gathering operation.

The assessment will be undertaken under closed book, controlled and supervised conditions within a period of 2 hours.

Assessment Guidelines

Candidates could be asked to produce an extended response or answer restricted response questions covering all Knowledge and Skills items.

The Outcome will assess candidates' knowledge of a typical news gathering operation in either a newspaper or a broadcast centre. It could be that this outcome could be linked to a visit to a newspaper or other media centre where practical problems could be explored at first hand.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: News Writing

Outcome 3

Analyse the editorial content of a newspaper/broadcast

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Identification of genre of newspaper/broadcast
- ◆ Vocabulary and terminology of news writing
- ◆ Construction of news items, their news values and position in the paper/running order
- ◆ Target readership/audience

Evidence Requirements

The candidate must demonstrate evidence covering all of the Knowledge and Skills items for this outcome.

The candidate will analyse correctly the principle news pages/news items of two contrasting national daily newspapers/broadcasters, using the correct terminology.

The analysis will be the equivalent of 600 words. It will be supported by sample pages or news items from newspapers/recorded broadcast news items of the candidate's choice.

The assessment may be undertaken under open-book conditions.

Assessment Guidelines

Candidates require the vocabulary and terminology of news writing in order to understand the stories they themselves are writing or researching. This terminology is best taught from current examples of newspapers / broadcast news items and their production. Candidates should be asked to compare contrasting publications/broadcasts.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: News Writing

Outcome 4

Produce basic news stories and additional material for newspapers/broadcasts

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ The recognition of the importance of house style
- ◆ Writing and laying out copy/script in a professional style
- ◆ Structure of news introduction
- ◆ Structure of news articles
- ◆ Writing news stories from press releases
- ◆ Writing picture captions/additional broadcast captions and text
- ◆ Writing lead articles from given source material.

Evidence Requirements

The candidate must demonstrate evidence covering all of the Knowledge and Skills items for this outcome. The candidate will show that he/she can:

- 1 Select and caption pictures for newspapers or select audio/video material for broadcast
- 2 Write stories from press releases
- 3 Improve intros of existing news stories from given material in terms of structure, angle, clarity and brevity
- 4 Write clear news leads of a specific length from supplied material.

The candidate will produce 12 pieces of evidence, made up of three picture captions; (or three broadcast text items); three stories from press releases, three introductions and three news leads.

The quality of the work will be such that it is suitable for publication in a newspaper or use in a news broadcast.

The assessment will be undertaken under open-book, controlled and supervised conditions.

For each specific skill, deadlines should be set to recreate the atmosphere of a media centre. Each skill should be assessed separately over a period of time.

Assessment Guidelines

The assessment should take place against a strict deadline to recreate the atmosphere of a media centre.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: News Writing

Outcome 5

Produce a news lead based on changing developments in a story

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Reporting on a running news story
- ◆ Understanding and analysing information
- ◆ Structuring a news intro
- ◆ Structuring a news story
- ◆ Editing and updating a news story
- ◆ Interviewing

Evidence Requirements

The candidate must demonstrate evidence covering all of the Knowledge and Skills items for this outcome.

The candidate will produce a news lead amounting to 500 words, or the broadcast equivalent, reporting changing developments in a running news story.

The quality of the piece will be such that it is suitable for publication in a weekly newspaper or broadcast.

The assessment will be undertaken in closed-book, controlled and supervised conditions within an appropriate time frame.

Assessment Guidelines

The Outcome will assess candidates' ability to handle a running story and should take the form of a live exercise. It is suggested that the assessment take the form of a press release or advanced news story which is then developed by means of a brief interview and/or material from news agency snaps. The interview and snap messages should be introduced at suitable intervals throughout the exercise in order to create the impression of a changing news story.

Administrative Information

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Unit title: Journalism: News Writing
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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Journalism: News Writing

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 the Unit is to provide candidates with sufficient knowledge to understand the structure of specific media organisations and to develop skills which will allow them to write news stories. In addition, the candidates should be encouraged to read and research the style and structure of a variety of news stories, and to plan, research and write a variety of news stories from primary and secondary sources.

This Unit is designed to be delivered alongside other HNC/HND Practical Journalism Units such as Journalism: Research and Interview Skills.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

Outcome 1: This is designed to give candidates background knowledge on the forces which have shaped the media. The emphasis is on the recent technological changes which have affected the media. Centres may wish to compare how these changes have affected the media in their area. Centres may also wish to analyse the growth of multi-channel digital television, the web and consider how other developments have both challenged the traditional media, and created new multi-title business empires.

Outcome 2: This deals with the step-by-step process of news gathering. Candidates will be introduced to the main sources, the role of the journalist, and a typical news gathering operation in either a newspaper or a broadcast centre. The role of the editors and the decisions affecting the choice of news stories/video pictures should be explained. It would be helpful if candidates could visit a newspaper office or broadcast centre to gain first hand experience.

Outcome 3: Candidates will be asked to analyse the layout of newspapers/running orders of news broadcasts to determine the readership/viewing audience which is being targeted. Candidates should be made aware of the importance of house style and news values which contribute to the finished product. Candidates could be asked to debate and analyse the coverage different newspapers/broadcasters give to stories. This could take the form of a *What The Papers Say* style project, involving both those who wish to make a career in print journalism and those who wish to enter broadcasting.

Outcome 4 This is the first of the practical outcomes. Candidates may be introduced to tasks, such as re-writing items from supplied material to meet the needs of either a newspaper or a broadcaster. Once the basic skills have been mastered the candidates should then be encouraged to tackle longer items and leads. Assessment for this outcome should take place over the duration of the Unit. Each skill should be assessed separately over a period of time. Deadlines should be set to recreate the atmosphere of a media centre.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Journalism: News Writing

Outcome 5

This outcome introduces candidates to the skills needed to successfully report on a developing news story. It is suggested that candidates are given a briefing on a story which is about to develop. Basic material is supplied and then the introduction of news agency snap messages creates the changing developments. It may be possible to arrange for an interviewee to make a statement which should also be incorporated into the finished article.

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.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: News Writing

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 the evidence for all Outcomes is generated by assessment undertaken in the mode(s) detailed in the Evidence Requirement for each Outcome.

For further information and advice, please see *Assessment and Quality Assurance for Open and Distance Learning* (SQA, February 2001 — publication code a 1030).

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: News Writing

This Unit is designed to enable you to develop skills which will allow you to carry out basic journalistic tasks in either print journalism or the broadcasting industry. It is designed to give you a working knowledge of the production of newspapers/broadcast articles.

Outcome 1, 2 and 3 will give you an introduction to the recent history and trends affecting the British media. The workings of a typical news gathering operation will show the reporter's role, and you will analyse the selection of news for a particular publication/news broadcast.

Outcome 4 will introduce and develop the skills required to write basic news stories, scripts and picture captions and additional broadcast material for a variety of sources.

Outcome 5 will introduce the skills needed when handling a running news lead based on live interviews and news snaps which detail changing developments in a story.

You will also be encouraged to analyse different aspects of the media at national and local level, using the correct terminology.

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.

Outcomes 1-2 may be assessed by Extended Response or Restricted Response questions. In Outcome 3, you will be required to produce an analysis of principle news pages/news items. In Outcomes 4 and 5 you will be required to produce news stories and a news lead.