



Higher National Graded Unit specification

General information for centres

This Graded Unit has been validated as part of the HNC/HND Practical Journalism. Centres are required to develop the assessment instrument in accordance with this validated specification. Centres wishing to use another type of Graded Unit or assessment instrument are required to submit proposals detailing the justification for change for validation.

Graded Unit title: Practical Journalism: Graded Unit 1

Graded Unit code: F1X4 34

Type of Graded Unit: Project

Assessment Instrument: Practical Assignment

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.*

Purpose: This Graded Unit is designed to provide evidence that the candidate has achieved the following principal aims of the HNC Practical Journalism:

- ◆ To develop the candidate's knowledge of the English language and skills in journalistic writing conventions.
- ◆ To prepare the candidate for employment in print, radio, television or web based journalism.
- ◆ To develop a range of contemporary vocational skills and competences appropriate to the conditions prevailing in current vocational practice.
- ◆ To foster an awareness of the structure, composition and broad range of operational practices of print & broadcast journalism.
- ◆ To prepare the candidate for further study in this field.

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: It is recommended that the candidate should have completed or be in the process of completing the following Units relating to the above specific aims prior to undertaking this Graded Unit:

DE27 34 *Shorthand as a Skill (Introductory) (60wpm)*
F1RK 34 *Journalism: Scots Law*
F1N2 34 *Journalism: Feature Writing*
F1N9 34 *Journalism: News Writing*
F1RD 34 *Journalism: Research and Interview Skills*
F1N6 34 *Journalism: Sub Editing*

General information for centres (cont)

Core Skills: There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of Communication at SCQF level 6, Information Technology at SCQF level 6, Working with Others at SCQF level 5 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

Assessment: This Graded Unit will be assessed by the use of a Practical Assignment. The developed Practical Assignment should provide the candidate with the opportunity to produce evidence that demonstrates she/he has met the aims of the Graded Unit that it covers.

Administrative Information

Graded Unit code: F1X4 34
Graded Unit title: Practical Journalism: Graded Unit 1
Original date of publication: July 2007
Version: 03 (July 2013)

History of changes:

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Changes to marking of Evidence Requirements.	19/10/11
03	Breakdown of marks amended to 20/70/10.	23/07/13

Source: SQA

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Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates

Graded Unit title: Practical Journalism: Graded Unit 1

Conditions of assessment

The candidate should be given a date for completion of the Practical Assignment. However, the instructions for the assessment task should be distributed to allow the candidate sufficient time to assimilate the details and carry out the assessment task. During the time between the distribution of the assessment task instructions and the completion date, assessors may answer questions, provide clarification, guidance and reasonable assistance. The assessment task should be marked as soon as possible after the completion date. The final grading given should reflect the quality of the candidate's evidence at the time of the completion date.

The evidence for the project is generated over time and involves three distinct stages, where each stage has to be achieved before the next is undertaken. Thus any reassessment of stages must be undertaken before proceeding to the next stage.

If a candidate fails the project overall or wishes to upgrade, then this must be done using a *substantially different* project, ie all stages are undertaken using a new project, assignment, case study, etc. In this case, a candidate's grade will be based on the achievement in the *reassessment*, if this results in a higher grade.

Instructions for designing the assessment task

The assessment task is a project. The project undertaken by the candidate must be a complex task which involves:

- ◆ variables which are complex or unfamiliar
- ◆ relationships which need to be clarified
- ◆ a context which may be familiar or unfamiliar to the candidate

The assessment task must require the candidate to:

- ◆ analyse the task and decide on a course of action for undertaking the project
- ◆ plan and organise work and carry it through to completion
- ◆ reflect on what has been done and draw conclusions for the future
- ◆ produce evidence of meeting the aims which this Graded Unit has been designed to cover

The candidate will be asked to source a news or feature article or a broadcast piece the equivalent of 1,500–2,000 words, make a pitch to sell it to a specified outlet, then produce the piece to deadline.

The brief will require the candidate to:

- ◆ analyse the needs of the target publication/broadcast audience
- ◆ make a pitch of an acceptable standard
- ◆ undertake research and interview a minimum of one appropriate person
- ◆ write the article/script.
- ◆ evaluate the process from start to finish

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates (cont)

The candidate's response to the brief will show knowledge of the relevant media industry and the client's needs. The response will be in a format appropriate for either written or oral presentation and should show evidence of:

- ◆ interpretation of the brief
- ◆ planning the assignment
- ◆ research appropriate to the brief
- ◆ ability to integrate research into a coherent format
- ◆ ability to make a pitch (of an acceptable standard) to the client
- ◆ evaluation of the project

Instructions for designing the assessment task

From the outset, the candidate should be given sufficient information and time to ensure they fully understand the scope of the task.

Assessors must be satisfied that responses are the work of each individual candidate and if information is researched jointly it should first be agreed with the lecturer then fully logged.

The pitch should be made at the developmental stage and, if oral, should be to a minimum of two people to allow appropriate interaction. The evaluation should include an analysis of the assessor's/panel's reaction to the pitch as well as the candidate's assessment of the whole process.

Guidance on grading candidates

Candidates who meet the minimum Evidence Requirements will have their achievement graded as C — competent, or A — highly competent or B somewhere between A and C. The grade related criteria to be used to judge candidate performance for this Graded Unit is specified in the following table.

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Grade A	Grade C
<p>Is a seamless, coherent piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ has the minimum of input and guidance from tutor ◆ has sufficient evidence for the three essential phases of the project, is a high standard and is quite clearly inter-related ◆ demonstrates an accurate and perceptive interpretation of the project brief ◆ uses a detailed, disciplined, planned and systematic approach to the brief ◆ meets all set deadlines ◆ demonstrates a high level of effective integration (of knowledge, skills and understanding) across three range of specified Units ◆ is clear and well structured throughout, using written and oral communication of a high standard ◆ includes well-considered and rational solutions, based on knowledge and skills gained from the course, and where appropriate, makes reference to research findings from a wide range of relevant sources 	<p>Is a co-ordinated piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ requires a high level of input and guidance from tutor ◆ has sufficient evidence for the three essential phases of the project and is of an adequate standard ◆ demonstrates a basic but satisfactory interpretation of the project brief ◆ is focused and relevant to the task but detail is satisfactory but insubstantial. ◆ meets the majority of deadlines set ◆ demonstrates an adequate level of integration (of knowledge, skills and understanding) across the range of specified Units but may lack some continuity and consistency ◆ is adequately structured throughout using written and oral communication of an acceptable standard ◆ includes reasonable solutions based on knowledge and skills gained from the course, and where appropriate makes reference to findings from relevant research sources

The project will be marked out of 100. Assessors will mark each stage of the project, taking into account the criteria outlined. The marks will then be aggregated to arrive at an overall mark for the project. Assessors will then assign an overall grade to the candidate for this Graded Unit based on the following grade boundaries.

A = 70% — 100%
 B = 60% — 69%
 C = 50% — 59%

Note: the candidate must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified below for each stage of the project in order to achieve the Graded Unit.

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates (cont)

Evidence Requirements

The project consists of three stages: planning; developing; and evaluating. The following table specifies the minimum evidence required to pass each stage.

Note: The candidate must achieve **all of the minimum evidence** specified below for each stage of the project in order to pass the Graded Unit.

The candidate is required to:

- ◆ make an oral or written pitch of an acceptable standard
If written the pitch will probably be done by email.
- ◆ submit the article (1,500–2,000 words) or script (8.5–11 minutes long) to deadline
- ◆ evaluate the process from start to finish;
the evaluation should be the equivalent of 500 words and take place under supervised conditions though the candidate may have access to their own planning and development materials.

The following table specifies the minimum evidence required to pass each stage:

Project Stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements
Stage 1 — Planning 20%	<p>Evidence of a plan which will enable the candidate to carry out the brief in a logical and organised way, making acceptable use of time and resources. The plan will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ an analysis of the brief ◆ consideration of a variety of possible ideas ◆ identification of appropriate primary and secondary research ◆ Identification of appropriate clients and their needs ◆ details of pitch — structure and delivery ◆ details/timetable of how the project can be completed to deadline <p>Evidence of the above may be presented in any format acceptable to the assessor and may be supplemented by oral, video or audio evidence. If oral evidence is used, notes or a tape, covering the points discussed should be retained.</p> <p><i>The candidate must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Planning stage and should achieve a minimum of 10 marks out of the 20 allocated.</i></p>

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates (cont)

Project Stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements
Stage 2 — Developing 70%	<p>Evidence of the candidate carrying out the project based on their plan through the presentation of their pitch and production of a word-processed written article or a broadcast piece which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ coherent integration of relevant research sources ◆ acceptable oral and written communication skills ◆ acceptable structure in both oral and written components ◆ understanding of client’s editorial and production needs ◆ meeting deadlines <p>If oral the pitch should be recorded on either audio or video tape. The broadcast piece should be recorded as above.</p> <p><i>The candidate must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the developing stage and should achieve a minimum of 35 marks out of the 70 allocated.</i></p>
Stage 3 — Evaluating 10%	<p>The candidate will provide an evaluation of the effectiveness of the approach adopted for each stage of the activity from start to finish. The evaluation should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ candidate’s knowledge at the start and how this has developed ◆ candidate’s skills at the start and how these have developed ◆ how good the candidate’s original plan was (in hindsight) ◆ how effective specific research methods were (strengths and weaknesses) ◆ how well the candidate dealt with any problems ◆ how well the candidate used the time available ◆ strengths and weaknesses of the completed task ◆ an explanation of how and why the candidate would do things differently if s/he had to do a similar project again ◆ how useful the project has been to the candidate in his/her course/work <p><i>The candidate must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the evaluation stage and should achieve a minimum of 5 marks of the 10 allocated.</i></p>

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates (cont)

Support notes

The candidate is to respond to a brief from a *client*. The brief will almost certainly be set by the lecturer delivering the Graded Unit but should be as true to life as possible.

The instructions given should give the candidate the opportunity to display the knowledge, skills and understanding he/she has gained over as wide a range of the specified Units as possible.

The brief should require the candidate to analyse the client's needs, provide detailed information, produce a piece, as agreed with the client, to professional standards, then draw appropriate conclusions and, where applicable, make recommendations, in their evaluation. The candidate will need to provide evidence in response to the brief, which displays a knowledge of the media industries and the elements that govern them.

The candidate response should be in a format appropriate for a pitch to the client (this could be done over the telephone or, if written, by email) using appropriate communication skills. Candidates may choose to share research material and discuss and debate with their peers possible solutions to the problems that have been identified within the brief. In such cases it is important that oral questioning and detailed notes are used to ensure that all essential elements are attributable to each candidate.

Having made a successful pitch, the candidate goes on to produce the piece as agreed with the client before making an evaluation of the whole process.

This Unit could perhaps be started approximately half way through the candidate's studies, with an increasing amount of time being spent on it towards the end of the course. It should not be seen as a repeat of previous Unit assessments. No new knowledge or skills are taught during delivery of this Unit; the lecturer's time will be spent discussing individual candidate's work. Some less able candidates will require more support than others but lecturers must not give undue assistance.

Time management is a crucial part of planning, developing and evaluating and lecturers should consider setting up individual progress reviews from the start of the Unit delivery time. Lecturers might also consider issuing a planning logbook or diary to each candidate. This could include a progress review sheet to record candidate/lecturer discussions. Such discussions and related mentoring activities are a crucial part of the Graded Unit and should ensure the candidate keeps to the deadlines which are an essential part of the media industries. Lecturers and candidates should keep detailed notes, including the date of each meeting, on the ongoing progress of each candidate. Drafts of work could also be signed by the lecturer and kept by the candidate in a folio to be submitted with his/her final submission. All this would ensure the authenticity of the candidate's work.

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates (cont)

The planning log could also address the following:

- ◆ the purpose of the project
- ◆ why the candidate chose this topic (interest, availability of information, time constraints, contacts, special skills etc.)
- ◆ an analysis of the topic, detailing the scope of the project and setting objectives that are achievable in the given timescale. (The candidate should be advised by the tutor/lecturer to be neither over ambitious nor limited when setting the number and type of objectives.
- ◆ how the candidate will achieve the above objectives. S/he must develop a strategy to manage the tasks, taking into account key factors such as resources and time available. Chosen research methods must be justified.
- ◆ clearly identify a wide range of resources required to undertake the project, including sources of information, people and equipment
- ◆ potential difficulties the candidate might have to negotiate in the process of achieving his/her objectives? (The candidate must be able to illustrate his/her problem solving skills.)

Similarly lecturers might consider providing the candidate with a development logbook/diary. This would be an extension of the planning logbook and should show how the candidate:

- ◆ researched and selected useful information
- ◆ prepared and conducted each research task (questionnaire, interview questions etc.)
- ◆ kept a careful record of each task in the diary.
- ◆ assessed the value of the information obtained
- ◆ put together the article or script

The final grade achieved by the candidate depends on both the work completed and the amount of assistance given, so it is crucial that all lecturer/candidate discussions are carefully logged and a copy kept by both parties.

Access to computers will be required for accessing the internet for research, possibly for emailing clients and for further research and for word processing. Telephones and other relevant communication equipment might also be required.

The Core Skills of Communication and IT at SCQF level 6 can be developed, as can Working with Others at SCQF level 5. Candidates will demonstrate their oral communication skills in their pitches, and their written skills in their article or script, while IT skills are evident in the final word processed version of their submission. Working with Others is evidenced by discussions with the lecturer and in any collaborative research work done with their peers.

Higher National Graded Unit specification: instructions for designing the assessment task and assessing candidates (cont)

The Candidate is required to:

- ◆ make an oral or written pitch of an acceptable standard. A written pitch will probably be done by email
- ◆ submit the article/script (1,500-2,000 words/ 8.5–11 minutes) to deadline
- ◆ evaluate the process from start to finish

The evaluation should be the equivalent of 500 words and take place under supervised conditions though the candidate may have access to their own planning and development materials.

Examples of articles or scripts could be:

- ◆ an indepth investigative feature article for a broadcast
- ◆ a specialist article for a magazine
- ◆ an indepth investigative feature for radio or television

Further examples can be found in the Assessment Exemplar.

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 assessment arrangements. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs*, which is available on SQA's website: www.sqa.org.uk.

Open Learning

As this Unit involves individual research, it is suitable for delivery by some form of open or online learning, assessed in conditions where arrangements have been put in place to assure the authenticity of the candidate's work.

In real terms the practical nature of work in the media industries involves interaction and working together in a group, and in order to develop such skills attendance at a centre with access to specialised equipment would be a preferred option for the course. Flexible part-time study with open delivery may be a practical option where a candidate is employed in a media-related post.

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

General information for candidates

About half way through your HNC, you will start your Graded Unit. The purpose of this Unit is to bring together many of the different skills you have learned throughout your course. It is the only Unit in your HNC year for which you will be given a mark (out of 100) and a grade (A, B or C).

You will already have studied, or be in the process of studying the following Units:

DE27 34	<i>Shorthand as a Skill (Introductory) (60wpm)</i>
F1RK 34	<i>Journalism: Scots Law</i>
F1N2 34	<i>Journalism: Feature Writing</i>
F1N9 34	<i>Journalism: News Writing</i>
F1RD 34	<i>Journalism: Research and Interview Skills</i>
F1N6 34	<i>Journalism: Sub Editing</i>

You will be asked to apply some of the knowledge and skills you have learned in these Units to a practical assignment. As part of this Unit you will be asked to demonstrate your journalistic skills but you will also have to show how you planned your assignment, how you developed your ideas and how you evaluated what you produced.

At the start of the Unit you will be given a client brief and you will be asked to plan and develop a response to the brief — just as you would for a client. At the end of the process you will analyse your own performance, reflecting on what you did, how you did it and whether or not you would do anything differently if you had to do it, or something similar, again.

This Graded Unit also reflects the main aims of the award. These are:

- ◆ To develop the candidate's knowledge of the English language and skills in journalistic writing conventions.
- ◆ To prepare the candidate for employment in print, radio, television or web based journalism.
- ◆ To develop a range of contemporary vocational skills and competences appropriate to the conditions prevailing in current vocational practice.
- ◆ To foster an awareness of the structure, composition and broad range of operational practices of print & broadcast journalism.
- ◆ To prepare the candidate for further study in this field.

The assignment will be marked out of 100 and you must pass each part of it to achieve the Unit. The marks you get for each part will be added up and you will be given a grade based on the following:

A = 70% - 100%
B = 60% - 69%
C = 50% - 59%

You will develop your Communication skills and those of Working with Others through discussions with your lecturer and communicating your ideas. Your IT skills will also be developed through using the internet (and possibly emails) for research and through typing your finished article or script.

Throughout the unit you will meet with your lecturer who will advise you and make sure you are on the right track to achieve the Unit within the given timescale.