



Higher National Graded Unit specification

General information for centres

This Graded Unit has been validated as part of the 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 2

Graded Unit code: F1X5 35

Type of Graded Unit: Project

Assessment Instrument: Practical Assignment

Credit points and level: 2 HN credit 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.*

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

- ◆ To develop the candidate's knowledge of the English language and skills in journalistic writing conventions.
- ◆ To develop planning and time management skills essential to professional journalism.
- ◆ To develop research, interview and presentation skills central to professional journalistic competence.
- ◆ To provide a broad foundation in the range of digital/ICT systems and applications appropriate to the needs of print media.
- ◆ Where appropriate to specialism, to develop the required underpinning practical and technical skills appropriate to the needs of broadcast and/or on line journalism.
- ◆ To develop a knowledge of national, regional, legal requirements and protocols which relate to the industry.
- ◆ To extend the range of knowledge of areas appropriate to chosen specialist vocational area within the field (ie arts, sport, international etc).
- ◆ Prepare and develop the candidate for employment in print, radio and television.

General information for centres (cont)

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:

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:

- F1RK 34 *Journalism: Scots Law*
- F1RL 35 *Journalism: Scots Law Advanced*
- F1N2 34 *Journalism: Feature Writing*
- F1N9 34 *Journalism: News Writing*
- F1RD 34 *Journalism: Research & Interview Skills*
- F1N6 34 *Journalism: Sub Editing*
- F1N7 35 *Journalism: Sub Editing Advanced*
- DE27 34 *Shorthand as a Skill (Introductory) (60 wpm)*
- DE28 35 *Shorthand as a Skill (Speed Development 1) (70 wpm)*

and one of the following:

- DE29 35 *Shorthand as a Skill (Speed Development 2) (80 wpm)*
- DE2A 35 *Shorthand as a Skill (Speed Development 3) (90 wpm)*
- DE2C 35 *Shorthand as a Skill (Speed Development 4) (100 wpm)*

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: F1X5 35

Graded Unit title: Practical Journalism: Graded Unit 2

Original date of publication: July 2007

Version: 01

History of changes:

Version	Description of change	Date

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 2

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 *re-assessment*, 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

As part of a group, the candidate will be asked to contribute to the planning and production of either a newspaper, a magazine, a news programme or a magazine programme, to deadline.

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

The brief will require the candidate to:

- ◆ analyse the needs of the target publication/broadcast audience
- ◆ plan
- ◆ work in a group
- ◆ undertake research and interview a minimum of two people
- ◆ write a minimum of four articles/script part of a programme
- ◆ layout pages/structure programmes
- ◆ edit
- ◆ evaluate the process from start to finish

There should be a minimum of 4 people in any group unless there is a valid reason for having fewer than that. Although a maximum is not specified, lecturers should take into account the length of the proposed publication or programme and ensure that each candidate has enough work to do, but not an unreasonable amount.

The candidate's response to the brief will show knowledge of the relevant media industry and the audience's needs. The completed publication/programme 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 work in a group
- ◆ ability to select, material suitable for the chosen publication
- ◆ ability to write and layout stories/programme components
- ◆ ability to sub-edit the work of other group members
- ◆ evaluation of the project

From the outset, candidates 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. Careful records must be kept of all group meetings.

The evaluation should include an analysis of the candidate's assessment of the whole process, not just his/her input. However, each candidate will be expected to evaluate his/her own input in greater detail.

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

Guidance on grading candidates

Each candidate is required to:

- ◆ Make a significant contribution to the planning of a stated publication/programme
Evidence for this component can be in the form of a planning logbook, minutes of meetings etc.
- ◆ submit their individual articles/script (**1,500–2,000 words/8.5–11 minutes**) to deadline
- ◆ submit the finished publication/programme 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.

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.

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

Grade A	Grade C
Is a seamless, coherent piece of work which:	Is a co-ordinated piece of work which:
<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 of 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 the 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 	<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.

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 audience and their needs ◆ details of publication/programme ◆ 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 out of the 20 allocated.</i></p>
Stage 2 — Developing 60%	<p>Evidence of the candidate carrying out the project based on the group's plan through the production of a desk top published newspaper or magazine or a broadcast programme 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 editorial and production needs ◆ meeting deadlines <p>If presented orally, the broadcast piece should be recorded on an appropriate medium.</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 30 marks out of the 60 allocated.</i></p>

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

Project Stage	Minimum Evidence Requirements
Stage 3 — Evaluating 20%	<p>Candidates will provide an evaluation of the effectiveness of the approach adopted for each stage of the activity. The evaluation should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ candidate’s knowledge at the start of this Unit and how this has developed ◆ candidate’s skills at the start of this Unit and how these have developed ◆ how good the candidates’ 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 10 marks of the 20 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. 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, as part of a group, to analyse the task, agree how this task can be completed (by allocating individual tasks to group members) produce a publication/programme, 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 suitable to the identified publication/programme, using appropriate communication skills. Candidates may choose to share research material and they must 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, detailed notes and minutes of all meetings are used to ensure that all essential elements are attributable to each candidate.

Having agreed in his/her group the best way forward, the candidate goes on to produce the components of the publication/programme allocated to him/her before making an evaluation of the whole process.

This Unit could perhaps be started at the beginning of the HND year, 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 candidates' work. Some less able candidates will require more support than others but lecturers must not give undue assistance. Because of the nature of group work, lecturers must be vigilant and ensure that work is evenly allocated and undertaken by each group member. While less able candidates might benefit from working with their more able peers, the latter must not undertake more than their fair share of the assignment.

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 and group/lecturer discussions. Such discussions and related mentoring activities are a crucial part of the Graded Unit and should ensure candidates keep to the deadlines which are an essential part of the media industries.

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 publication/audience (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 you 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 candidates 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 carried out each research task (questionnaire, interview questions, websites etc.)
- ◆ kept a careful record of each task in the diary.
- ◆ assessed the value of the information obtained
- ◆ put together the publication or script

The writing and layout of scripts will be done as individual tasks, though the sub-editing should be done by another member of the group. Each candidate should keep a folio of work which should include their original scripts and the versions after they have been subbed by another group member. The folio must also include work from other group members that the candidate has sub-edited.

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, 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 group meetings, and their written skills in their articles or scripts, 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)

Each candidate is required to:

- ◆ Make a significant contribution to the planning of a stated publication/programme.
Evidence for this component can be in the form of a planning logbook, minutes of meetings etc.
- ◆ submit their individual articles/script (1,500–2,000 words/8.5–11 minutes) to deadline
- ◆ submit the finished publication/programme, to industry standard as a complete media package, to deadline. The finished group work could include a newspaper, magazine, website or a completed radio or TV programme.
- ◆ evaluate the process from start to finish

The evaluation should be the equivalent of 500 words and take place under supervised conditions though candidates 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
- ◆ a detailed package for online

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

This Unit 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.

This Unit involves both individual research and teamwork but the requirement to work in teams does not preclude this form of delivery.

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

At the beginning of your second (HND) year you will be introduced to the second Graded Unit. Like the one you did in first (HNC) year, 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 HND 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:

F1RK 34	<i>Journalism: Scots Law</i>
F1RL 35	<i>Journalism: Scots Law Advanced</i>
F1N2 34	<i>Journalism: Feature Writing</i>
F1N9 34	<i>Journalism: News Writing</i>
F1RD 34	<i>Journalism: Research & Interview Skills</i>
F1N6 34	<i>Journalism: Sub Editing</i>
F1N7 35	<i>Journalism: Sub Editing Advanced</i>
DE27 34	<i>Shorthand as a Skill (Introductory) (60 wpm)</i>
DE28 35	<i>Shorthand as a Skill (Speed Development 1) (70 wpm)</i>

and one of the following:

DE29 35	<i>Shorthand as a Skill (Speed Development 2) (80 wpm)</i>
DE2A 35	<i>Shorthand as a Skill (Speed Development 3) (90 wpm)</i>
DE2C 35	<i>Shorthand as a Skill (Speed Development 4) (100 wpm)</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 brief and you will be asked to plan and develop a response to the brief — just as you would if you were a working journalist. 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 develop planning and time management skills essential to professional journalism.
- ◆ To develop research, interview and presentation skills central to professional journalistic competence.
- ◆ To provide a broad foundation in the range of digital/ICT systems and applications appropriate to the needs of print media.
- ◆ Where appropriate to specialism, to develop the required underpinning practical and technical skills appropriate to the needs of broadcast and/or on line journalism.
- ◆ To develop a knowledge of national, regional, legal requirements and protocols which relate to the industry.
- ◆ To extend the range of knowledge of areas appropriate to chosen specialist vocational area within the field (ie arts, sport, international etc).
- ◆ Prepare and develop the candidate for employment in print, radio and television.

General information for candidates (cont)

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 keying 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.