



## Higher National Graded Unit specification

### General information for centres

This Graded Unit has been validated as part of the **HNC Creative Industries: Professional Writing Skills**. 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.

This Project based practical assignment Graded Unit is designed to provide evidence that the candidate has achieved the principal aims of the HNC Creative Industries: Professional Writing Skills award. The candidate will plan, develop and present a portfolio of original material for an identified target audience. This material could also be used to support employment and Higher Education applications and interview situations. The work necessary to complete this assignment should demonstrate the candidate's creativity, self-motivation and synthesise knowledge and skills acquired throughout the HNC in Creative Industries: Professional Writing Skills award. The progression stages to achieve the completed portfolio should be evaluated by the candidate by way of a review of how best to tackle such a project in the future.

**Graded Unit title:** Creative Industries: Professional Writing Skills:  
Graded Unit 1

**Graded Unit code:** F26M 34

**Type of Graded Unit:** Project

**Assessment Instrument:** Practical Assignment

**Credit points and level:** 1 HN credit(s) 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 Creative Industries: Professional Writing Skills award:

- ◆ to foster an innovative, enterprising and creative approach in candidates
- ◆ to enable candidates to progress to further academic or professional qualifications, either before embarking on a writing career, or parallel to it
- ◆ to develop key skills for employability
- ◆ to provide a basis for future career and personal development
- ◆ to build on previously acquired transferable skills
- ◆ to develop and apply a range of vocational knowledge and skills to the business of writing and selling pieces of writing

## General information for centres

### Purpose (cont)

- ◆ to produce a portfolio of completed work, possibly including some published material, useful for consideration by publishers, as material for readings, as a sample of work for employers, as evidence of an interest in the arts and media, as proof of personal achievement, and/or for entry to academic institutions
- ◆ to develop the ability to analyse ideas and extend them across forms or genres

**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:

- ◆ D7MB 34 *Creative Writing for Vocational Purposes*
- ◆ DM0V 34 *Creative Industries: An Introduction*
- ◆ DM0W 34 *Creative Project*
- ◆ F1C0 34 *Creative Writing: Generating and Pitching Ideas*

**Core Skills:** There are opportunities to develop the Core Skill of Communication at SCQF level 6 and the Planning and Organising and Critical Thinking components of Problem Solving both at SCQF level 6 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 Project which will take the form 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.

A project brief would be a good choice of assessment tool as it would allow the necessary scope to fulfil all assessment tasks and produce a portfolio of original work for possible wider presentation at a later date.

Evidence of the evaluation component must cover both the planning and developing stages and the building of the portfolio of work.

## Administrative Information

**Graded Unit code:** F26M 34

**Graded Unit title:** Creative Industries: Professional Writing Skills:  
Graded Unit 1

**Original date of publication:** December 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

### 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*.

### 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 project consists of three stages:

- ◆ Planning
- ◆ Developing
- ◆ Evaluating

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

For this Graded Unit Practical Assignment the candidate will be given or may select an assignment brief which requires the production of evidence that itemises the different stages of Guidance on grading candidates planning and selection of target publishers/output. Reference should be made to time management, methods of collecting information such as interviews and other communication, strategies and an end evaluation of the overall practical assignment with respect to these targets. Furthermore a portfolio of original writing specifically targeting the selected publisher/output will be completed and professionally presented.

### 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.

Grade A	Grade C
<p>Is a seamless, coherent piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ interprets an assignment brief and presents sufficient evidence for the three essential phases of the project which is produced to a high standard, and is quite clearly inter-related</li> <li>◆ demonstrates strategic thinking</li> <li>◆ demonstrates ability to overcome difficulties without diminishing quality of stated end product</li> <li>◆ demonstrates self directed learning</li> <li>◆ demonstrates an insightful interpretation of the practical assignment brief</li> <li>◆ contains original material which is highly focussed and relevant to the publisher/output associated with the assignment brief</li> </ul>	<p>Is a co-ordinated piece of work which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ has sufficient evidence of the three essential phases of the project and is produced to an adequate standard</li> <li>◆ demonstrates an evaluative approach</li> <li>◆ demonstrates the ability to handle difficulties</li> <li>◆ additional assistance required to complete planning and/or process tasks</li> <li>◆ demonstrates and articulates an interpretation of the practical assignment brief</li> <li>◆ contains original material which is focussed and relevant to the publisher/output associated with the assignment brief</li> </ul>

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

Grade A	Grade C
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ demonstrates exceptional application of skills to produce material which has impact and is presented to high professional standards</li> <li>◆ contains clarity and well structured progression details throughout and the language used is of a high standard in terms of level, accuracy and technical content</li> <li>◆ consolidates and integrates required knowledge and skills</li> <li>◆ demonstrates critical analysis of original plan and aims and objectives</li> <li>◆ contains conclusions and recommendations that demonstrate insight and effective use of evidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ concludes with production of material presented in an acceptable format for the genre(s) selected and corresponding professional standards</li> <li>◆ contains structured progression details and the language used is adequate in terms of level, accuracy and technical content</li> <li>◆ consolidates and integrates knowledge and skills but this may lack some continuity and consistency</li> <li>◆ demonstrates comparison against original plan and aims and objectives</li> <li>◆ contains reference to evidence, conclusions and recommendations</li> </ul>

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	<p>A planning document which shows evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ the selection and interpretation of an assignment brief</li> <li>◆ the different stages of planning and selection of target publishers/output</li> <li>◆ analysis of the requirements of the project brief, by setting 4 objectives and identifying the key factors affecting the project</li> <li>◆ selection, justification and development of a strategy for managing the selected practical tasks, taking into account resources and time available</li> <li>◆ identification of a wide range of resources required to carry out the project, including sources of information, contacts and equipment</li> <li>◆ identification of type of original material to be produced</li> </ul> <p>The planning document should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ identify clear timelines</li> <li>◆ make reference to time management</li> <li>◆ make reference to methods of collecting information such as interviews and other communication</li> <li>◆ identify strategies and an end evaluation of the overall practical assignment with respect to these targets</li> <li>◆ show the application of critical and evaluative thinking, problem solving skills and self-directed learning</li> </ul> <p><i>The candidate must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Planning stage.</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	<p>Evidence of the candidate implementing the plan, carrying out the project, and managing the practical task in the form of product evidence which shows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ production of minimum evidence for each element in a planning document with clear timelines identified</li> <li>◆ four objectives developed and commented upon</li> <li>◆ effective application of practice - justification of assignment</li> <li>◆ Evidence showing the application of:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Critical and evaluative thinking</li> <li>— Problem solving skills</li> <li>— Self-directed learning</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ appropriate contacts/communication</li> <li>◆ development of creative idea(s)</li> <li>◆ production of a portfolio of original writing specifically targeting the selected publisher/output completed and professionally presented</li> <li>◆ effective presentation techniques - awareness of industry standards</li> <li>◆ integration of interdisciplinary skills</li> <li>◆ effective use of resources</li> </ul> <p><i>The candidate must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Developing stage.</i></p>
Stage 3 — Evaluating	<p>An evaluation of the effectiveness of the approach taken to carry out the project, to implement the plan of action, to achieve developmental tasks and an appraisal of lessons learned by candidate in terms of strengths and weaknesses of 'project management' skills.</p> <p>Evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ appropriateness of choice of task</li> <li>◆ action planning skills</li> <li>◆ implementation of developmental phase</li> </ul>



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

<p>Stage 3 — Evaluating</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ response to any modification to tasks/difficulties encountered and overcome</li> <li>◆ identification of effectiveness of ability to complete assignment</li> <li>◆ lessons learned if undertaking similar task in the future</li> <li>◆ conclusions as to how the process could be improved, with recommendations for any future attempt</li> <li>◆ detailed evidence to support all aspects of evaluation</li> </ul> <p><i>The candidate must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified above in order to pass the Evaluating stage.</i></p>

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

### **Support notes**

The Graded Unit allows candidates to plan, develop and evaluate a project which involves elements from a cross-section of those mandatory Units studied on the Creative Industries: Professional Writing Skills course. Practical Assignment briefs for this Graded Unit which are appropriate within the scope of creative writing may be selected by the candidate, but will require to be approved by the tutor.

The candidate may discuss with the tutor and agree on a suitable assignment brief that can be undertaken in the timescale allocated. Research to underpin the development of the portfolio could utilise sources such as the internet, professional journals and magazines, radio listening, TV appreciation and theatre visits. Visits to actual 'creative writing outlets' where readings are held could further widen the candidate's appreciation of the scope, scale and focus of the material to be produced for the portfolio evidence. Remember the brief requires the production of a portfolio of original material to suit the selected publisher /outlet. The extent and type of the portfolio of material produced will depend on the genre selected. Guidelines for the production of different types of original material to the stage where a 'pitch' can be made have been provided in Units the candidate has undertaken during the award.

Here are some examples of possible practical assignment briefs that may be considered:

- ◆ Research the Scottish Arts Council's funding principles for new writers and create a portfolio of work for submission using the required application forms. Material produced should meet required word counts or range of genres requested.
- ◆ Plan and research a minimum of three specific target literary magazine publications and editors and create a portfolio of work to submit to one of these targets.
- ◆ Research the script writing competition set up by (Glasgow Media Access Centre) GMac. Record detailed information about timing, addresses, and submission criteria. Create a synopsis, treatment and film scripts as required.
- ◆ Research three target universities with established creative writing courses. On the basis of your findings, create a portfolio of work for consideration if applying for a place on a Higher Education creative writing course.
- ◆ Plan and research two theatre companies and create a short stage play appropriate for one selected company.

The Graded Unit could be introduced early in the Course but formal work should begin after the teaching of the mandatory Units is underway. The candidate must be encouraged to move diligently through the planning stage and there should also be an early and swift return in the marking of plans by tutors in order to maximise time for any possible changes of direction or focus.

Tutor led discussions are important in the early stages to help the candidate generate ideas for the project.

### **Planning**

Individual tutorials could be carried out to assist in channelling and developing possibilities in this crucial planning stage. The planning section is extremely important and this is reflected in the marking scheme. A candidate may achieve a maximum of 30% of the marks in this planning stage of the Graded Unit.

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

### **Development**

In the development stage the candidate must create a portfolio of material that is fitting and appropriate for the particular assignment brief selected. Some of the portfolio material may be taken from work already completed in other Units but clearly this material can only be used if it is coherent and relevant to the brief and its selected target. The writing and presentation of the portfolio should be of a professional standard and, where relevant, candidates must ensure that the presentation meets the target recommendations in terms of layout, word count, front covers, pagination style and the placing of personal details on the scripts. A candidate may achieve a maximum of 50% of the marks for the development stage.

### **Evaluation**

The evaluation evidence must contain reflection on both the planning and development of the project. The importance of diary keeping and logging details should be stressed in order that the candidate has the necessary information to hand for writing up the evaluation. The candidate should be encouraged to be rigorous in his/her evaluating and should indicate those aspects of the overall experience that fully engaged him/her in the learning process. It is also important to remind the candidate to evaluate both positive and negative aspects of his/her work, identifying how the various aspects of the practical assignment impacted on the overall development and design of the end product. Evaluation also involves a consideration of those areas of planning and research that did not necessarily yield expected Outcome s. A candidate may achieve a maximum of 20% of the marks for the evaluation stage.

### **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](http://www.sqa.org.uk)**.

