



Higher National Unit specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Journalism Skills: Introduction to Industry and Practice

Unit code: F7PW 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 and feature 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 journalistic media in the UK
- 2 Describe a typical news gathering operation
- 3 Produce a basic news story for newspaper/broadcast
- 4 Produce a basic feature for a newspaper/broadcast

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.*

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: Access to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. However, skills in Communication at SCQF level 6 or equivalent would be a preferred entry level. This could be demonstrated by the achievement of one of the following:

- ◆ C115 12: Higher English or its component Units
- ◆ EE3T 12: Communication 4 and E9X8 12: Literature 1
- ◆ Communication (D01B 12) or (F3GB 12)
- ◆ Relevant work experience

Core Skills: There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of Communication, at SCQF level 6 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill 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. If it is taught as part of the HNC/HND Creative Industries: Media and Communication, there is an opportunity to integrate some assessment of the Unit with other Units in the framework such as: *F60A 34: Research Skills*, *D7LN 34: Communication: Business Writing Skills* and *F607 34: The Media: Features and Trends*.

Assessment: The recommended approach to the Unit should encourage a focus on analytical examination and reflection on the features and trends, as well as the implications and effects and as an introduction to the key facts and information underpinning recent developments in journalism. Outcomes 1 and 2 may be used as an introduction to this wide aspect of the media, ensuring a working knowledge of features and trends as well as roles and responsibilities. In Outcomes 3 and 4 candidates should be introduced to key journalistic production skills.

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 journalistic 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

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

Explain the recent history and trends which have shaped the industry. In particular, the candidate 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 and convergent newsrooms.

The assessment will be undertaken in open-book conditions.

Assessment Guidelines

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

Written responses should be a minimum of 500 words. The assessment time should be no more than 90 minutes.

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.

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 selection of copy and pictures
- ◆ The follow up process of the story

Evidence Requirements

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

Describe 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, which may include newsrooms for print or broadcast, or the convergent newsroom.

The Outcome will assess the candidate's knowledge of a typical news gathering operation in either a newspaper or a broadcast centre and the candidate should be encouraged to consider the demands of convergent news coverage.

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

Assessment Guidelines

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

Written responses should be approximately 600 words. The assessment time should be no more than two hours.

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 Skills: Introduction to Industry and Practice

Outcome 3

Produce a basic news story for newspaper/broadcast

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 article
- ◆ Writing news lead stories from given material
- ◆ Grammatical accuracy
- ◆ Accurate use of spelling and punctuation

Evidence Requirements

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

Produce a page-lead newspaper news article from provided material, including press release and first-person quotations. For print, the article should be 275–325 words in length, and for broadcast should be two minutes–two minutes and 30 seconds.

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 closed book, controlled and supervised conditions within a period of two hours. A deadline should be set and adhered to in order to recreate the atmosphere of a media centre.

Assessment Guidelines

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

For print assessment, written material including one press release and several direct quotes should be made available. The page-lead news story should then be completed on a suitable word-processing package.

For broadcast assessment, audio and video material, including at least two interviews, should be made available. The news item should then be edited on a suitable broadcast editing software editing package such as Avid or Final Cut Pro.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Journalism Skills: Introduction to Industry and Practice

Outcome 4

Produce a basic feature for newspaper/broadcast

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Use of secondary research and basic feature sources
- ◆ Generating story ideas for feature articles
- ◆ Selecting story angles for feature copy
- ◆ Structuring journalistic feature copy from secondary research
- ◆ Using style and tone within journalistic copy
- ◆ Grammatical accuracy
- ◆ Accurate use of spelling and punctuation

Evidence Requirements

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

Generate feature ideas and undertake research to then write a feature article from a given brief using secondary research material.

Using a variety of viable, accurate research sources the candidate will research and write a brief feature article based on secondary research, such as background feature in the range of 300–400 words.

The standard of the articles should be such that they meet industry standard.

The assessment will be undertaken under open-book conditions and work submitted to a deadline set by the tutor.

Assessment Guidelines

Candidates may be provided with a research brief and angle, or may be asked to propose their own article ideas through presentation of a synopsis to pitch their idea to an ‘editor’. In either circumstance, they should be encouraged to work to a clear deadline to emphasise the importance of scheduled work in journalistic practice.

Administrative Information

Unit code: F7PW 34

Unit title: Journalism Skills: Introduction to Industry and Practice

Superclass category: KD

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Journalism Skills: Introduction to Industry and Practice

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 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This is an optional Unit in the HNC/HND Creative Industries: Media and Communication and provides an introduction to the key media area of journalism, introducing the key historical developments and current trends as well as examining the key roles and responsibilities of journalists in typical newsgathering operations in a convergent, multi-media age. As a result of this the candidate will develop an awareness of the features and trends of media while also moving on to develop introductory writing skills in the central areas of news and feature writing.

In this Unit the emphasis should be on developing a clear understanding of the development of journalism as a central and vitally important area of media production, examining the trends and developments of the industry overall, and an examination of the importance of sources, technology etc in the production of journalism for print, broadcast and other dissemination such as online.

Tutors may use Outcomes 1 and 2 to provide a wide-ranging historical and factual introduction to journalistic developments before moving on to detail some of the key skills and competencies of journalism.

In Outcomes 3 and 4 the candidate should be introduced to the key conventions and skills of news and feature writing, and be given ample opportunity to develop their abilities in these areas with formative news and feature exercises. These writing tasks are also an ideal starting point for progression to HN Unit *F7PX 35: Journalism Skills: Advanced*.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

For **Outcome 1**, the tutor could choose one particular journalistic area such as print/newspapers or broadcast/television/radio and through exposition and discussion demonstrate the level of information required. Candidates should then undertake their own research into key historical developments as well as detailing current trends and key areas of development and present their findings and research, perhaps in essay format.

For **Outcome 2**, the tutor could choose one type of journalistic media outlet, such as a newspaper or television newsroom and through exposition and discussion demonstrate the level of information required. It is, though, likely that convergent journalism will mean that the roles, responsibilities and tasks of the journalist across multi-media platforms will be covered, including print, broadcast and online. Candidates should then undertake their own research, analysing the roles and responsibilities of the journalist.

For **Outcome 3**, the tutor, through examples, lectures and formative work, should outline the principles/ideas and structures of sound news story production for print and/or broadcast. At this stage, by supplying material in the form of press releases and quotes, candidates should be able to concentrate on successfully structuring a news article, while developing a key skill which will translate across to HN Unit *F7PX 35: Journalism Skills: Advanced* at a later stage.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Journalism Skills: Introduction to Industry and Practice

For **Outcome 4**, the tutor, through examples, lectures and formative work, should outline the principles/ideas and structures of sound feature story production for print and/or broadcast. At this stage, by supplying material in the form of press releases and quotes, or by allowing candidates to undertake some basic secondary research tasks, candidates should be able to concentrate on successfully structuring a feature article, while developing a key skill which will translate across to HN Unit *F7PX 35: Journalism Skills: Advanced* at a later stage.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

The Core Skill component, Produce Well Structured Written Communication on Complex Topics, could be developed in this Unit at SCQF level 6.

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 audiences 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 audiences

The Core Skill component, Produce and Respond to Oral Communication on a Complex Topic, could be developed in this Unit at SCQF level 6.

The specific skills for this Core Skill component are:

- ◆ use vocabulary and a range of spoken language structures consistently and effectively at an appropriate level of formality
- ◆ convey all essential information, opinion or ideas with supporting detail accurately and coherently and with varied emphasis as appropriate
- ◆ structure communication to take full account of purpose and audience
- ◆ take account of situation and audience during delivery
- ◆ respond to others, taking account of their contributions.

Open learning

This Unit could be delivered by distance learning. However, it would require planning by the centre to ensure the sufficiency and authenticity of candidate evidence.

Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website

www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements

General information for candidates

Unit title: Journalism Skills: Introduction to Industry and Practice

This is a one credit Unit designed to give you an awareness of the features and trends in one of the most important and widely available areas of the media — journalism. It is designed to introduce you to the key historical developments and trends that have created modern journalism in its current context, as well as allowing you to more closely analyse and examine the key practitioners in this crucial media field. Building on this knowledge and understanding you will then begin to develop key journalistic skills and to hone your own writing by learning to construct two of the key types of journalistic articles — lead news stories and features.

Outcome 1 provides an introduction to the key historical developments in the press and broadcasting as well as the development of convergent journalism, and investigates current and future trends in journalism. In this you will analyse where journalism has come from, how it has developed and how it is likely to change.

Outcome 2 provides an introduction to the actual task of the working journalist, examining their roles and responsibilities in the modern newsroom and considering some of the key skills needed to undertake the role. You will also consider the importance of sources, research and information and the processes for finding and developing news for the media.

Outcome 3 focuses on developing skills in the first of two main writing and production areas – news writing. You will be expected to develop the key skills in writing clear, concise, accurate and objective news stories for media use.

Outcome 4 then moves on to focus on the other main area of journalistic writing and production — the feature article. You will be expected to develop the key skills to write clear, accurate, interesting feature articles for media use.

The Core Skill components Produce Well Structured Written Communication on Complex Topics and Produce and Respond to Oral Communication on a Complex Topic could be developed at SCQF level 6 in this Unit.