



## Higher National Unit specification: general information

**Unit title:** Public Relations: Strategic Analysis, Planning and Application

**Unit code:** FM10 35

**Superclass:** BA

**Publication date:** June 2011

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**Version:** 01

### Unit purpose

This Unit is designed to provide candidates with the knowledge and understanding of Public Relations (PR) activities and media in the communications industry. It is a specialised Unit that will develop the theory and practice of PR across different client needs and objectives - from both in-house and external perspectives. It will facilitate an understanding of media relations, problem solving and creative PR planning and implementation.

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

- 1 Research and report on an organisation from an in-house perspective with sponsorship or funding objectives.
- 2 Plan and present a short campaign requiring sponsorship or funding to in-house management.
- 3 Produce a proposal for a damage limitation campaign for a client.
- 4 Organise and deliver a press conference on behalf of a damage limitation client.

### Recommended prior knowledge and skills

Access to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, but it would be beneficial if the candidate had competence in communications and Public Relations. This may be demonstrated by possession of the following or equivalences:

- ◆ Core Skill Communications at SCQF level 5
- ◆ Public Relations: Principles and Practice

## General information (continued)

### Credit points and level

2 Higher National Unit credits 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.*

### Core Skills

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of *Communication* at SCQF level 6, *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 6, *Working with Others* at SCQF level 6, *Information Communication Technology* at SCQF level 6 and *Numeracy* at SCQF level 6 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components

### 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.

### Assessment

This Unit could be assessed in a variety of ways and it is possible to link Outcome 1 and 2 together and Outcomes 3 and 4 together along the lines of:

- ◆ Candidates could assume the role of an in-house PR Officer for Outcome 1 and 2. In Outcome 1 candidates produce proposals linked to case study materials which relate to an organisation which would benefit from sponsorship and/or funding. In Outcome 2, candidates use these proposals to plan and present campaign proposals. Tutor checklists, based on the evidence requirements could be used to assist assessment and provide feedback to candidates.
- ◆ In Outcome 3, to reflect industry practice, candidates work in teams and act as a PR consultancy which produces a communication audit for a selected client, and produce outline proposals for a damage limitation campaign which includes the use of a press conference. Then in Outcome 4, candidates organise and deliver a press conference. The organisation of the press conference involves production of press conference objectives; identification of media contacts and key publics; an outline of the budget required; and a press pack. The delivery of the press conference, involves candidates participating in two distinctive roles - as part of a PR Consultancy team and also as an invited media representative to another press conference. Finally candidates have to produce an evaluation of a press conference attended as a media representative. Tutor checklists could be designed in line with Evidence Requirements to assist with assessment and feedback to candidates.

## Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

**Unit title:** Public Relations: Strategic Analysis, Planning and Application

**Unit code:** FM10 35

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

Research and report on an organisation from an in-house perspective with sponsorship or funding objectives

#### Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Internal PR departments
- ◆ Non and/or not for profit organisations
- ◆ PR objectives
- ◆ Sponsorship or funding
- ◆ Identification of publics
- ◆ PR media and application
- ◆ PR proposals

#### Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can assess the sponsorship or fundraising activities of an organisation. This must include:

- ◆ Identification of appropriate qualitative and quantitative objectives
- ◆ Identification of **four** of the following targets:
  - media or opinion leaders
  - consumers or users
  - (potential) employees or volunteers
  - financial market
  - the community
  - suppliers
  - distributors

## Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

### Unit title: Public Relations: Strategic Analysis, Planning and Application

- ◆ An outline PR proposal that achieves **two** of the following objectives:
  - increase awareness or support
  - increase sales or profitability or donations
  - involve new publics or targets
  - achieve positive media exposure
  - attract a key sponsor
  - finance an event
  - recruit or motivate employees or volunteers
  
- ◆ Identification of **three external and one internal media** from the following - and also outline techniques in order to achieve proposed objectives.

#### External media

- event
- exhibition or road show
- press or news release
- press or news conference
- open day or facility visit
- articles (exclusive or feature or syndicated)
- interviews
- internet
- publications
- radio
- television

#### Internal media

- newsletter or bulletin
- memo or circular
- extranet or intranet
- events or meetings
- information
- literature
- notices or posters

#### Assessment guidelines

This Outcome could be assessed in a variety of ways including the production of proposals related to case study materials. Given the nature of research involved, the assessment could be completed under self-direction outwith the classroom. If the response is in written format, in order to cover all evidence requirements, it is expected to be c.1,000 words. A checklist devised from the evidence requirements could be used to assess the candidate and provide relevant feedback.

The assessment for Outcomes 1 and 2 of this Unit could be directly linked.

## Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

**Unit title:** Public Relations: Strategic Analysis, Planning and Application

### Outcome 2

Plan and present a short campaign requiring sponsorship or funding to in-house management

#### Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ PR proposals
- ◆ In-house PR meetings
- ◆ Techniques for PR proposal acceptance

#### Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can plan and present an in-house PR campaign which covers

- ◆ identified targeted publics
- ◆ outlined PR proposal that meets objectives
- ◆ identified media and outline techniques in order to achieve proposed objectives
- ◆ effective use of audio/visual media
- ◆ use of persuasive techniques

#### Assessment guidelines

For the assessment of Outcome 2, candidates could be issued with a specific brief directly related to Outcome 1.

Based on their proposals from Outcome 1, candidates then plan and present their campaign proposals. It is recommended that these proposals are aimed at managers or decision makers in an organisation. Candidates could work in small teams (eg 2–3 people).

Tutors could devise an observational checklist based on the evidence requirements of this Outcome to assess the candidates, ask additional questions to ensure all criteria are covered and to provide feedback to candidates

Where candidates make a formal presentation, it is expected to last about six minutes to ensure all evidence requirements are covered and it is recommended that the presentation is recorded to provide supporting evidence.

## Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

**Unit title:** Public Relations: Strategic Analysis, Planning and Application

### Outcome 3

Produce a proposal for a damage limitation campaign for a client

#### Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Communication audit
- ◆ Press pack and PR materials
- ◆ PR media contacts or publics
- ◆ Crisis management or damage limitation strategies and examples
- ◆ Damage limitation
- ◆ Communication audit
- ◆ Crisis management strategies

#### Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ Identify a client requiring a damage limitation strategy
- ◆ Produce a communication audit, which covers **two** of the following:
  - community relations
  - employee-management relations
  - media attitudes
  - financial situation
  - corporate or current image
  - marketing research
  - complaints
- ◆ Produce an outline proposal for a damage limitation strategy that includes:
  - campaign objectives
  - **two** appropriate media contacts or publics from the following:
    - journalists or reporters
    - editors or publishers
    - producers or researchers
    - opinion leaders
  - the use of a press conference

## Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

**Unit title:** Public Relations: Strategic Analysis, Planning and Application

### Assessment guidelines

To reflect industry practice, candidates should act as a PR consultancy and work in teams (recommended 4 people maximum in each team). It is recommended that the PR Consultancy is given a name and corporate identity. Each team member should submit a short proposal to their team and tutor of an appropriate client in a damage limitation situation. The PR Consultancy must produce a communication audit for the client selected, and produce outline proposals for a damage limitation campaign which includes the use of a press conference. The assessment for this Outcome is closely linked to that of Outcome 4.

### Outcome 4

Organise and deliver a press conference on behalf of a damage limitation client

### Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Press conference planning and management
- ◆ Press conference objectives
- ◆ Publics
- ◆ PR media selection
- ◆ Press conference budgeting
- ◆ Press pack and PR materials
- ◆ Press conference presentation
- ◆ Press conference evaluation
- ◆ Participation as a media representative

### Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by simulating an external PR consultancy and show that they can:

- ◆ Define press conference objectives
- ◆ Identify **10** media contacts and key publics to be invited to the press conference
- ◆ Outline a press conference budget
- ◆ Design a press pack suitable for both broadcast and non-broadcast which includes:
  - one press release
  - a press pass or invitation
  - a feature article

Plus **two** of the following:

- informative literature
- promotional literature
- background or display materials

## Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

**Unit title:** Public Relations: Strategic Analysis, Planning and Application

- ◆ Address audience or media questioning, including handling conflicts and objections.
- ◆ Participate as a media representative:
  - identify role: name, job title and employer
  - prepare questions to pose at press conference
- ◆ Evaluate a press conference, including strengths, weaknesses and recommendations.

Candidates will participate in **two** distinctive roles, ie as:

- part of a PR Consultancy team
- an invited media representative to **one** other press conference.

Candidates must also provide an evaluation of a press conference attended as a media representative.

### Assessment guidelines

In the same teams as Outcome 3, candidates are to be assigned titles/roles that are relevant.

As the presenting PR Consultancy, candidates will deliver their press conference in the form of a presentation. In addition, candidates have to produce an evaluation of all press conference(s) attended as a media representative; where this is a written evaluation, it is recommended that it is c.500 words.

Tutor checklists could be designed in line with evidence requirements to assist with assessment and feedback to candidates.



## Higher National Unit specification: support notes

**Unit title:** Public Relations: Strategic Analysis, Planning and Application

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

This Unit is a mandatory Unit within the Group Award in HNC/D Advertising and PR and it may also form part of other Higher National programmes. It is intended for candidates who wish to pursue a career in the PR and media business, such as employment in in-house PR/communications departments in medium to large enterprises that devise their own strategies. Other opportunities lie in full-service advertising agencies, promotional organisations and PR Consultancies themselves. PR professionals can be found in both commercial and non/not-for profit organisations.

The main purpose of this Unit is to develop the theory and practice of PR to a more demanding level requiring research and analysis. It will provide opportunities for the candidate to experience PR from both in-house and external consultancy perspectives. Also, it will examine PR situations experienced by both profit and non/not-for profit organisations.

This double credit Unit evolves to strategic PR planning for actual, current and demanding PR scenarios and has been designed to stretch candidates from analysis to creative communication application.

The content and context of this Unit must take all these factors into account.

### Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

It is envisaged that an integrated approach to teaching the Unit will be adopted whereby the candidates will appreciate the strong links between Outcomes 1 and 2 (in-house/internal PR) and Outcomes 3 and 4 (external/PR Consultancy) as this Unit is designed to be holistic in its approach.

#### Outcomes 1 and 2:

Candidates are required to address a PR case study as an Internal Public Relations officer (PRO). This case study should be an actual non/not-for-profit organisation that benefits or would benefit from funding or sponsorship in order to achieve specific PR objectives. It should ideally be a small to medium sized organisation with a regional presence that does not have an extensive communications budget. Areas appropriate could be sport, art, education, entertainment, health and social causes. The case should promote corporate, community and/or social responsibility.

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

### **Unit title:** Public Relations: Strategic Analysis, Planning and Application

Diverse examples may therefore include the Scottish Society of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SSPCA), the Scottish Youth Football Association (SYFA), the Princes Scottish Youth Business Trust (PSYBT), or the Big Issue in Scotland magazine and charity. As well as a literature search, it may be beneficial to contact organisations to gain more direct information or invite a guest speaker.

Candidates should be given freedom to identify different PR objectives/opportunities. This has to include a reference to funding and/or sponsorship within their strategy. The individual assessment will be a report of c.1000 words and should be supported by a checklist of the evidence requirements.

Outcome 2 will organise candidates into teams of no more than three people where they will evaluate and discuss each others proposals generated in the previous Outcome. They will then decide on best practice and developments in order to organise a short in-house presentation aimed at decision makers of the organisation that follows criteria outlined in the evidence requirements. It is advised that team progress reports are issued for candidates to agree and allocate the work involved. This will promote monitoring and responsibility. As outlined in assessment guidelines, individual checklists will apply. Strict use of materials permitted and time-keeping are essential to achieve the reality of an in-house pitch. It would be a great opportunity to invite a representative from the case study organisation to attend the presentations or send good proposals from Outcome 1 to the organisation for feedback.

### **Outcomes 3 and 4:**

Candidates are to organise themselves into an external consultancy of no more than four people. Each individual member should submit a short proposal to their team and tutor of an appropriate client. Selection of an appropriate client is essential here as they will be the main thrust of Outcomes 3 and 4. The organisation should have a strong presence of controversy and criticism across the media that is long term and not just yesterday's news. Be cautious of clients that are large enterprises – if doing so, specific PR objectives must be clear. Be careful of selecting short term tabloid orientated sensationalism.

The group and tutor must agree on a client that is sustainable and continues with media attention.

Once the client is selected, a communication audit must be undertaken and this must be continuously up-dated. The audit should cover the following areas - community relations, employee-management relations, media attitudes, financial situation, corporate or current image, marketing research and complaints. The research and investigation of the above audit areas could be allocated across the team members by the tutor in order to ensure a thorough audit is carried out and up-dated by the consultancy.

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

### Unit title: Public Relations: Strategic Analysis, Planning and Application

The tutor could list and notify the teams of the various clients in the class. Candidates could also make use of websites such as Infotrack, BBC on-line and other business/media sites to up-date the file every week prior to their Press Conference date in Outcome 4.

To promote class support, it is suggested that every candidate looks at a different newspaper/newspaper website at different times (eg week-end/mid-week) and passes on any relevant abstracts/articles relating to chosen clients.

The candidate's proposal should include a contents list and sections should be sensibly identified, eg, positive, negative, tabloid, broadsheet, broadcast etc. It should not resemble a scrap book.

In Outcome 4, candidates remain in the same teams and are required to participate as part of the external consultancy team in the planning, management and delivery of a press conference. This involves the identification of press conference objectives, identification of media contacts, budget proposals, design of press pack and PR support materials, organising a press conference, and participation both as part of the PR Consultancy presentation and as part of the invited audience. Candidates will finally produce a short evaluation of the press conference they attended as part of the audience.

When designing the press pack, the groups should aim to achieve a professional looking document with the corporate identities of their PR Consultancy, their client and sponsor(s) present. The press pack should have a contents list which reflects the enclosures including additional information in line with the evidence requirements. The tasks should be allocated to specific members to promote accountability - eg one candidate may be responsible for the main press release, the travel details to the venue (map, rail, airport details) plus the title cards and poster for the press conference. The candidates are therefore contributing to all the materials for their press pack and conference.

The press release must have full contacts, ie name, position/title, telephone number(s), email address; fax number (if appropriate).

A realistic budget should be allocated for the press conference

Separate tutor checklists would be advisable:

- ◆ One checklist for the communication audit in Outcome 3.
- ◆ Other checklists would also be required for the list of media contacts and the press pack and materials.

Although this is a group assessment, individual checklists should also be completed. Again, group progress reports would help peer monitoring and accountability for Outcomes 3 and 4.

A checklist outlining the evidence requirements should include a simple rating scale for each participant to indicate their individual achievements in the press conference process.

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Public Relations: Strategic Analysis, Planning and Application

### As the presenting PR consultancy

- In the same teams as Outcome 3, candidates are to be assigned titles/roles that are relevant and could follow the Jefkins Six Point PR Planning Model identified in the evidence requirements.
- Candidates deliver their Press Conference in the form of a presentation. It is recommended that this presentation should last at least 10 minutes, with a question time of at least five minutes allocated. This assessment could be recorded and supported by an individual checklist to assess the participant's contribution.
- Support materials in the form of a press pack and other communication examples can be used to tangibly illustrate the Press Conference and media techniques

### As audience participants

- Candidates are invited to identify themselves as a media representative. Candidates should use journalist's/representative's name and publication/media/company source, selected from the Press Conference's media contact list.
- Two questions for each conference attended may be submitted and assessed by a checklist.
- An evaluation report of a Press Conference attended in line with the evidence requirements should be produced. It is recommended that this is c.500 words and a checklist may be attached.

All assessment materials, where appropriate, should be word processed with correct grammar and spelling throughout.

It is envisaged that a third of the Unit time is allocated to Outcomes 1 and 2 (ie the internal PR) leaving two thirds of the time for Outcomes 3 and 4 (ie the external PR).

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Public Relations: Strategic Analysis, Planning and Application

### Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There are no Core Skills embedded in this Unit. However, the following table gives some examples of the opportunities for developing Core Skills within this Unit.

Core Skill	SCQF level	Opportunities for development
<b>Communication</b>	Level 6	The tasks required by this Unit can contribute to the reading and writing aspects of this Core Skill.
<b>Written Communication (Reading)</b>	Level 6	Candidates are expected to read and understand complex written information
<b>Written Communication (Writing)</b>	Level 6	Candidates will be expected to source, produce and present materials to a Public Relations industry acceptable level. Where these are written, candidates have to produce well-structured and clear responses addressing the Evidence Requirements. This will include PR materials in appropriate copy length, style and language.
<b>Oral Communication</b>	Level 6	There will be a number of opportunities for candidates to develop the component 'Oral Communication' of the Core Skill Communication. Firstly by completing an individual oral presentation in Outcome 1 and in Outcome 4 by participation as a member of the both the PR Consultancy team and also as an audience/media member during the press conference.

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Public Relations: Strategic Analysis, Planning and Application

Core Skill	SCQF level	Opportunities for development
<b>Problem Solving</b>	Level 6	All Outcomes can contribute to critical thinking as candidates will use problem solving skills to evaluate and select appropriate media and public relations tools throughout this Unit.
<b>Working with Others</b>	Level 6	In Outcomes 2, 3 and 4, candidates are required to work in small groups (as a member of simulated external Consultancy) to produce PR proposals, research and design PR materials, and to plan and organise a public relations conference.
<b>Information Communication Technology</b>	Level 6	Candidates are required to use Information Technology to undertake media research; and have additional opportunity to develop Information Technology skills if, for example, they use presentation software during the assessment of Outcomes 2 and 4.

### 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. Arrangements would have to ensure the assessments are delivered in a supervised environment under controlled conditions.

For further information and advice, please see our website ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk))

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

## History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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## General information for candidates

### Unit title: Public Relations: Strategic Analysis, Planning and Application

This Unit is designed to provide you with the knowledge and understanding of Public Relations (PR) activities and media in the communications industry. It is a specialised Unit that will develop the theory and practice of PR across different client needs and objectives from both in-house (ie internal) and external perspectives. It will facilitate an understanding of the media relations, problem solving and creative PR planning and implementation.

This Unit embraces different types of PR communications, on both an individual and a team basis. It will develop your PR knowledge and skills across a variety of objectives currently required by organisations that have both strengths and weaknesses identified through their media relations and various publics. It is a challenging Unit with creative and strategic problem solving and potential.

On achievement of this Unit, you should be able to:

- ◆ Research and report on an organisation from an in-house perspective with sponsorship or funding objectives.
- ◆ Plan and present a short campaign requiring sponsorship or funding to in-house management.
- ◆ Produce a proposal for a damage limitation campaign for a client.
- ◆ Organise and deliver a press conference on behalf of a damage limitation client.

You will develop and present PR proposals and a damage limiting PR campaign. Towards the end of this Unit, as part of a group acting as a PR Consultancy, you will design a press pack and PR materials for a press conference. You will then deliver a press conference in the form of a presentation and deal with questions from the audience. Each member of the group will be assessed on their individual contribution. In addition, you will attend other press conference(s) as a member of the audience, where you will be able to ask questions. You also have to produce an evaluation of all press conference(s) you have attended as a member of the audience.