National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT   Media Production (Intermediate 1)

NUMBER   DF16 10

COURSE   NQ Media Studies (Intermediate 1)

SUMMARY

This Unit is designed to develop the skill of contributing to the planning, producing and evaluating of a group media production from a brief. The centre can select the medium: for example, print, audio, video, animation, multimedia.

Where this Unit is taken as part of the NQ Media Studies Course, the medium should be one which has been studied in at least one of the Analysis Units. The Unit is suited to those who have an interest in, and wish to pursue an analytical approach to the media. It is suitable both for those who wish to pursue an analytical approach to the media. It is suitable both for those who wish to pursue further study and a career in the communications industries as well as those whose interest is more generalised.

OUTCOMES

1.   Contribute to planning a group production from a brief.
2,   Contribute to implementing a group production from a brief.
3.   Review and evaluate a group production.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally have been expected to have attained the Course or the Units in Media Studies at Access 3, or possess equivalent experience.

Additional copies of this Unit Specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. The cost for each Unit Specification is £2.50. (A handling charge of £1.95 will apply to all orders for priced items.)

National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

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CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Intermediate 1 (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 4*)

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

This Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skills for the Unit   Problem Solving   Intermediate 1
                                                Working With Others   Intermediate 1

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

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Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

OUTCOME 1

Contribute to planning a group production from a brief.

Performance Criteria

a)   Contribute effectively in terms of discussing the brief and agreeing task allocation through negotiation.
b)   Plan effectively in terms of the brief and allocated tasks.
c)   Carry out effective research in terms of the brief and the allocated tasks.
d)   Use technical terms appropriate to the medium.

Evidence Requirements
(See Evidence Requirements for the Unit at the end of the Statement of Standards).

OUTCOME 2

Contribute to implementing a group production from a brief.

Performance Criteria

a)   Contribute effectively by co-operating and sharing ideas including negotiating working methods and rules for managing the group production.
b)   Demonstrate production skills effectively in terms of the brief and allocated tasks.
c)   Use technical terms appropriate to the medium.

Evidence Requirements
(See Evidence Requirements for the Unit at the end of the Statement of Standards).

OUTCOME 3

Review and evaluate a group production.

Performance Criteria

a)   Describe strengths and weaknesses of the group production in relation to the brief.
b)   Describe individual strengths and weaknesses in relation to individual and co-operative planning and implementation.
c)   Suggest improved strategies.
d)   Describe clearly what has been learned about media production technologies, and stages.
e)   Cover the evaluation criteria for the chosen medium.

Evidence Requirements
(See Evidence Requirements for the Unit at the end of the Statement of Standards).

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE UNIT

Observation checklist which records the effective contribution of the individual candidate to planning and implementation. The observation checklist should ensure that for Outcome 1 PC (a) the candidate negotiates roles and responsibilities with others taking account of own strengths and weaknesses as well as those of colleagues.

Individual evaluation report to be completed under controlled conditions and lasts 30 minutes. The evaluation should be supported by restricted response questions. This may be in handwritten, word processed, scribed, diagrammatic and/or oral form. Oral evidence should be on audio or video tape.

At Intermediate 1, the production should involve:
♦   a familiar topic
♦   the clear targeting of a familiar audience

See NABs for observation checklists.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT   Media Production (Intermediate 1)

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

The main focus of this Unit is on the contribution to a structured group production which involves the design of a media product with a specific, familiar audience in mind. Candidates should be given personal and practical experience of some of the issues which face media professionals, such as targeting an audience. The effectiveness of the candidate's contribution is more important than the polish of the finished product.

For further details about the content to be covered in this Unit, please refer to the Content Tables which follow. Candidates are not expected to know all the terminology; however, they should be able to use the correct terminology within the context of their particular tasks.

Productions chosen could be from a variety of media, eg advert, cartoon, dramatic production, news and/or current affairs, music, newspaper, magazine or web page.

The brief should be on a familiar topic; it should specify the medium, purpose, familiar target audience, form, genre, length, deadline, institutional controls.
Research and planning should involve: topic research; plan of format; content; style; resources requirements; production stages and schedule; task allocation.

The evaluation should cover the criteria for the chosen medium as detailed in the Content Table.

Research and planning should involve:
♦   identification of sources
♦   topic research
♦   audience and product research
♦   identification of constraints
♦   plan of format
♦   content; style
♦   resources requirements
♦   production stages and schedule
♦   task allocation

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT   Media Production (Intermediate 1)

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

Candidates should be introduced to the main stages involved in production in the chosen medium. Assessors and candidates should then collaborate in a series of collective production activities of gradually increasing complexity. The technical terms should not be taught as separate from production activities but should be used as an integral part of these activities.

The assessors should assist candidates to develop their planning, production and evaluation skills by offering hints, reminders, feedback and 'tricks of the trade' and by continuing to support candidates in terms of promoting understanding of the production process and encouraging effective teamwork. As candidates gain experience the assessor should give more responsibility for the production process to the candidates. At Intermediate 1, the role of the assessor is likely to be consultative and interventionist. In other words, candidates will be expected to consult the assessor for advice or technical help and the assessor will monitor progress and intervene as assessor to ensure completion of the productions.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

The recommended instruments of assessment for this Unit are: an observation checklist; an evaluation report. See NABs for checklist.

Throughout the Unit, individual candidate performance should be recorded by the assessor by means of an observation checklist. This should record the effectiveness of the individual to the planning and implementing of the media production.

Candidates should also be encouraged to take notes during the production process (this could be in the format of a logbook), both from their own point of view and that of the group. These details could then be used to form the basis of the evaluation response.

The evaluation process involves looking back at the production process and at the product. The evaluation should be supported by restricted response questions and should include consideration of the following, as appropriate to the medium:
♦   strengths and weaknesses of the production (does it meet the brief? are the format, content, technical and cultural codes appropriate to the target audience? how good is the product technically? how could the product be improved? what effect did available resources and deadlines have on the text?)
♦   strengths and weaknesses of performance in individual planning/implementation (did you complete your tasks? how well did you carry out your tasks?)
♦   strengths and weaknesses of own performance in group planning/implementation (did you work well with others? did you listen to others' ideas? did the group work well as a team?)
♦   what has been learned about media production technologies and stages (what were the main stages in the production? what hard/software was used at each stage? what are the effects of resources and deadlines on media production?)
The evaluation should last no longer than 30 minutes and should be conducted under controlled conditions.

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SPECIAL NEEDS

This Unit Specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. Special needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering special alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment Arrangements* (SQA, September, 2003).

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT   Media Production (Intermediate 1)

CONTENT FOR PRINT
Stages
Planning and research, layout design, production of copy and images, selection of copy
and images, editing and sub-editing, production, distribution, debriefing, evaluation.
Planning and Research
♦ category: purpose, medium, form, genre, target audience
♦ narrative: story, conflict, resolution
♦ representations
♦ competition research, advertiser research
♦ identification of resources and constraints:
   i)   institutional: editorial policy, purpose, layout, number of pages, deadline, health and safety
   ii) technical: hardware, software, file backup
   iii) external: audience, representations
♦ identification of roles and remits: non-technological (production editor, advertising manager,
reporter, researcher, writer, proof-reader), technological (copy editor, photographer, sub-editor,
picture editor, layout editor). Certain roles may combine technological and non-technological
roles, eg a reporter might enter her/his copy and e-mail it
♦ identification of sources (where relevant): reporter, press agencies, press release, other media,
reference materials (cuttings, encyclopaedias, archives, internet)
♦ remits and production schedule
Technical Terms
♦ hardware: microcomputer system, printer, digital camera, photocopier
♦ software: DTP, word processing, drawing, painting, image manipulation, type manipulation
♦ page formatting: size, orientation, margins, columns, gutter, grid, dummy
♦ text elements: masthead, headline, subhead, copy, caption, header, footer
♦ character formatting: font (serif, sans serif, script, decorative), size, style (plain, italic, bold,
underline), colour
♦ paragraph formatting: indentation, leading, alignment, line length
♦ graphic elements: photograph, mug shot, logo, diagram, box, rule, colour, cropping, white space
Use of Codes
Use of technical and cultural codes and text and graphic content; their connotations; anchorage.
Print product conventions and style.
News language.
Evaluation Criteria
Brief, legibility, spelling and grammar, variety, visual impact, audience interest, narrative,
representations.

UNIT   Media Production (Intermediate 1)

CONTENT FOR AUDIO
Stages
Planning and research, scripting, rehearsing, recording, editing, broadcasting, debriefing, evaluation.
Planning and Research
♦   category: purpose, medium, form, genre, target audience
♦   narrative: story, conflict, resolution
♦   representations
♦   competition, listener, advertiser research
♦   identification of resources and constraints:
    i)   internal: editorial policy, house style, purpose, length, deadline, budget, health and safety
    ii) technical: studio, location, live, pre-recorded, tape editing, sound effects
    iii) external: audience interest, representation of social groups
♦   identification of roles and remits: non-technological (programme editor, reporter, scriptwriter, interviewer, interviewee, performer, presenter); technological (location recorder, sound engineer, editor). Roles may be both technological and non-technological, eg location interviewing
♦   identification of sources (where relevant): reporter, interview, vox pop, news sources, other media, reference materials (encyclopaedias, archives, internet), recordings of sound effects, music and interviews
♦   remits and production schedule
Technical Terms
♦   hardware: cassette recorder, reel-to-reel recorder, microphones, editor, microcomputer system, printer
♦   software: word processor
♦   words: appropriateness to genre and audience
♦   voice: accent, speed, volume, delivery
♦   music: station/programme jingles, links, mood music
♦   sounds: sound effects, silence
♦   script: voice piece, interview, dialogue, sound effects, transitions (links, intros, outros)
♦   recording: location, live, pre-recorded
♦   edits: dub edits
Use of Codes
Words and sounds; their connotations; anchorage.
Audio product conventions and style.
Radio language.
Evaluation Criteria
Brief, recording quality, editing, variety, audience interest, use of words, voice, music, sound effects and transitions, narrative, representations.

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UNIT   Media Production (Intermediate 1)

CONTENT FOR VIDEO
Stages
Planning and research, treatment, script, storyboard, rehearsing, shooting, editing, sound dubbing, screening, debriefing, evaluation.
Planning and Research
♦   category: purpose, medium, form, genre, target audience
♦   narrative: narrative: story, conflict, resolution
♦   programme format
♦   representations
♦   identification of resources and constraints:
    i)   internal: purpose, deadline, health and safety
    ii)   technical: available hardware and software
    iii) external: legal and voluntary controls, representation issues
♦   identification of roles: non-technological (producer, scriptwriter, performer, storyboard artist); technological (director, camera operator, sound recordist, editor)
♦   identification of sources (where relevant): reporter, press agency, press release, other media, reference materials (encyclopaedias, archives, internet)
♦   remits and production schedule
Technical Terms
♦   hardware: video cameras, tripod, lighting, microphones, video editing suite, microcomputer system, printer
♦   software: word processor
♦   mise-en-scene: set, props, costume, performance
♦   lighting: high-key, low-key
♦   framing: shot distance (ELS, LS, MLS, MS, MCU, CU, ECU), establishing shot
♦   angle: straight, high, low
♦   editing: cut, shot/reverse shot, shot length
♦   camera movement: pan, tilt, track
♦   sound: speech, voice-over, music, sound effects
♦   titles: opening titles, end titles, font (serif, sans serif, script, decorative), size, style, colour
Use of Codes
Text, images, sounds and music; their connotations; anchorage.
Genre conventions and style.
Evaluation Criteria
Brief, titling, mise-en-scene, quality of camerawork, sound, editing, audience interest, narrative, representations.

UNIT Media Production (Intermediate 1)

COMPUTER ANIMATION
Stages
Planning (eg action first or sound first), research, treatment, script, storyboard, creation
of characters, backgrounds and foregrounds, titles, sound dubbing, screening, debriefing, evaluation.
Planning and Research
♦ category: purpose, medium, form, genre, target audience
♦ narrative: story, conflict, resolution
♦ representations
♦ identification of resources and constraints:
   i) internal: purpose, deadline, health and safety
   ii) technical: available hardware and software, file backup
   iii) external: audience interest, representation issues
♦ identification of roles: non-technological (producer, director, scriptwriter, storyboard artist); technological (animator, artist, sound recordist). Certain roles may combine technological and non-technological roles, eg the storywriter might also record the soundtrack
♦ identification of sources, eg clip art, study of real-life movement
♦ remits and production schedule
Technical Terms
♦ hardware: microcomputer systems, printer, microphones
♦ software: painting, animation, sound recording, type manipulation, CD-ROM clip art collections
♦ character: key positions, in-betweens, cycles
♦ settings: background, foreground, perspective
♦ actions: head-turn, walk, special effects
♦ framing: shot distance (ELS, LS, MLS, MS, MCU, CU, ECU), establishing shot
♦ editing: cut, dissolve, fade in, fade out, standard wipes
♦ sound: speech, music, sound effects
♦ titles: opening titles, end titles, font (serif, sans serif, script, decorative), size, style, colour, animated
Use of Codes
Technical and cultural codes, text, images, words, sounds and music; their connotations; anchorage.
Animation conventions and style.
Evaluation Criteria
Brief, titling, characters, setting, quality of animation, sound, editing, special effects, audience
interest, narrative, representations.