National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT   Media: An Introduction to Comics and Graphic Novels (SCQF level 5)

CODE   F57K 11

SUMMARY

The purpose of this Unit is to introduce candidates to the content and characteristics of comics and graphic novels. Candidates will be introduced to the structure, genres, codes and conventions of both comics and graphic novels and will have the opportunity to investigate how these various features have been combined to produce professional products.

Following this theory and practical investigation, candidates will have the opportunity to produce their own illustrative comic strip frames in both comic and graphic novel format.

This Unit is suitable for candidates who wish to be introduced to the techniques of comic and graphic novel production.

OUTCOMES

1   Explain the key characteristics of comics and graphic novels.
2   Investigate the content of a range of given comics and graphic novels.
3   Produce illustrated comic strip sequences in comic and graphic novel formats.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Entry is at the discretion of the centre.

Additional copies of this Unit Specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Please contact the Customer Contact Centre, telephone 0845 279 1000.

National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT   Media: An Introduction to Comics and Graphic Novels (Intermediate 2)

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Intermediate 2 (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 5*).

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 is no automatic certification of Core Skills in this Unit.

There are opportunities for Core Skill development, these are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit Specification.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT   Media: An Introduction to Comics and Graphic Novels
                (Intermediate 2)

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 SQA.

OUTCOME 1

Explain the key characteristics of comics and graphic novels.

Performance Criteria

(a) Describe the general structure and key differences between comics and graphic novel formats.
(b) Describe a range of genres available within each format.
(c) Explain the function of artistic codes and conventions used in comics and graphic novels.
(d) Explain the function of narrative structure within comics and graphic novels.
(e) Explain the function of representation within comics and graphic novels.

OUTCOME 2

Investigate the content of a range of given comics and graphic novels.

Performance Criteria

(a) Accurately identify the genre.
(b) Describe the language used.
(c) Describe the use of artistic codes and conventions.
(d) Describe the use of narrative structure.
(e) Describe the use of representation.

OUTCOME 3

Produce illustrated comic strip sequences in comic and graphic novel formats.

Performance Criteria

(a) Select a genre and appropriate storyline.
(b) Identify an appropriate target audience.
(c) Produce an outline of sequences indicating planned content and style.
(d) Develop and refine the sequences.
(e) Produce a final draft of the sequences.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Media: An Introduction to Comics and Graphic Novels
(Intermediate 2)

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Evidence is required which demonstrates that candidates have achieved all Outcomes and
Performance Criteria.

Outcome 1 — Written and/or Oral Evidence

Evidence is required which demonstrates that the candidate has achieved Outcome 1 to the standard
specified in the Outcome and Performance Criteria.

Candidates must be able to describe the general structure and key differences between comics and
graphic novels. They must be able to identify and describe a minimum of one genre from each format.

Candidates must explain the function of:

♦ artistic codes and conventions — including placing the character within the frame, conventions
  for facial expression, and variations in size of frame
♦ narrative structure, methods of transition from one frame to another, and the use of storyline
  boxes
♦ representation in terms of gender, race, class, and stereotyping

The assessment will take place at appropriate points throughout the Unit.

Outcome 2 — Written and/or Oral Evidence

Evidence is required which demonstrates that the candidate has achieved Outcome 2 to the standard
specified in the Outcome and Performance Criteria.

In Outcome 2 candidates will be provided with 1 previously-unseen short comic sequence and one
previously-unseen short graphic novel sequence. Each given sequence must show narrative and
character development. For each given sequence candidate will be required to:

♦ accurately identify the genre
♦ describe the language used (eg slang, informal language, and vernacular)
♦ describe the use of artistic codes and conventions
♦ describe the use of narrative structure
♦ describe the use of representation

The assessment will take place at appropriate points throughout the Unit.

The assessor must authenticate that the evidence produced is the candidate's own work.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT   Media: An Introduction to Comics and Graphic Novels
            (Intermediate 2)

Outcome 3 — Product Evidence and Written and/or Oral Evidence

Evidence is required which demonstrates that the candidate has achieved Outcome 3 to the standard specified in the Outcome and Performance Criteria.

Candidates are required to produce product evidence in the form of one graphic novel sequence and one comic sequence. Each sequence must be produced individually, and be a minimum of 10 frames in length to allow for continuity and narrative development.

For each sequence produced, candidates are also required to produce written and/or oral evidence which indicates the chosen genre and an appropriate storyline. This evidence must also detail an appropriate target audience and an outline of the content and style of each sequence. This evidence must show the development and refinement of each sequence over time.

Evidence should be gathered at appropriate points throughout the Unit.

Candidates are not being assessed on their drawing skills.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT   Media: An Introduction to Comics and Graphic Novels
(Intermediate 2)

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 Unit is an optional Unit within the National Certificate Group Award in Media (SCQF level 6), but can be taken as a free-standing Unit.

The purpose of this Unit is to introduce candidates to basic principles and features of comics and graphic novels. Candidates will have the opportunity to study a number of comics and graphic novels as a means of investigating the attributes which make up a successful comic strip frame. They will then have the opportunity to put this theory into practice in Outcome 3 where they are asked to produce their own comic strip sequence and graphic novel sequence.

Candidates are not required to have advanced skills in freehand drawing.

In Outcome 1 candidates should be introduced to a wide range of comic and graphic novel genres, such as picture strips, illustrated novels, comic books, science fiction, fantasy, war stories, and Japanese manga.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

It is suggested that the Outcomes are approached sequentially and that much of the work for Outcomes 1 and 2 is undertaken before progressing to Outcome 3.

It is recommended for Outcomes 1 and 2 that candidates are introduced to a wide range of comic and graphics novel genres. Through tutor-led class discussions on selected comic and graphic novel sequences candidates should be able to contextualise their learning.

In Outcome 3 candidates can choose to use appropriate computer software packages or freehand drawing. At this level some tutor guidance may be necessary regarding suitable software packages.

Candidates may wish to use the internet and magazines to source relevant information on comics and graphic novels.

Candidates would benefit from visits from professional writers of comic and graphic novel material where possible.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Media: An Introduction to Comics and Graphic Novels
(Intermediate 2)

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Candidates will be producing written and/or oral communication evidence as part of the assessment. This offers ideal opportunities to develop aspects of the Core Skill of *Communication*.

Candidates will have the opportunity to develop aspect of the Cores Skill of *Information Technology*, should they choose to use computer software to produce their illustrated comic strip frames in Outcome 3.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

The following approaches to assessment are suggested:

Outcome 1   Annotated comic and annotated graphic novel
Outcome 2   Project (supported by a folio)
Outcome 3   Practical exercise

In Outcome 3 the production exercise should be completed by the individual candidate. Narrative closure is not a necessary part of the exercise but it is important that attention is paid to continuity.

Time should be allowed for any necessary re-assessment.

Opportunities for the use of e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by information and communications technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or e-checklists. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all candidate evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. Further advice is available in *SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education (AA1641, March 2003), SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools (BD2625, June 2005)*.

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 Outcomes for Units. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (**www.sqa.org.uk**).