National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT   Media: Feature Writing (SCQF level 6)

CODE   F57M 12

SUMMARY

The purpose of this Unit is to introduce candidates to the process of feature writing. Candidates will have the opportunity to investigate the key components of feature articles from a range of publications. In this Unit, candidates will have the opportunity to use this knowledge to research and produce a basic feature article.

This Unit is suitable for candidates with no prior knowledge or experience of feature writing.

OUTCOMES

1   Investigate the key components of feature articles.
2   Research and plan a basic feature article for print.
3   Produce a basic feature article for print.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Whilst entry is at the discretion of the centre, it would be beneficial for candidates to have achieved the following, or equivalent:

♦   D01B 11 – Communication (Intermediate 2)

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Higher (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6*).

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.

National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

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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: Feature Writing (SCQF level 6)

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

Investigate the key components of feature articles.

Performance Criteria

(a) Explain the purposes of feature articles.
(b) Describe a range of different types of feature articles.
(c) Analyse the key conventions of a chosen feature article.

OUTCOME 2

Research and plan a basic feature article for print.

Performance Criteria

(a) Identify the target audience and purpose of the feature article.
(b) Use secondary source research to gather information for the feature article.
(c) Use primary source research to gather information for the feature article.
(d) Produce a suitable time schedule for the feature article.

OUTCOME 3

Produce a basic feature article for print.

Performance Criteria

(a) Select an appropriate story angle for the feature article in terms of purpose and audience.
(b) Select content of feature article using appropriate secondary and primary information gathered.
(c) Use appropriate language and narrative structure for a feature article.
(d) Produce feature article using appropriate conventions.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT   Media: Feature Writing (SCQF level 6)

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

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

Evidence will be gathered under open-book conditions at appropriate points in the Unit.

Outcome 1 — Written and/or Oral Evidence

Candidates are required to show that they can:

♦ explain the purpose of feature articles
♦ describe three types of feature articles (eg biography, opinion, historical, review, travel and personal stories)
♦ analyse the key conventions of feature articles with reference to:
— structure and layout
— format
— language — narrative, style, register and tone
— genre
— illustrative material
— target audience
— type of publication the article appears in (ie tabloid, broadsheet, local newspapers or specialist magazine)
— type of research the feature article is based on (secondary/primary)

Outcomes 2 — Product Evidence

Candidates are required to produce product evidence in the form of a folio which:

♦ identifies the target audience and purpose of the feature article
♦ includes information gathered from a minimum of one secondary research source (candidates must accurately record source of information)
♦ includes information gathered from a minimum of one primary research source
♦ includes a suitable time schedule for the feature article (detailing the key milestones and when they should be achieved)

The project folder submitted can be digital and/or paper-based.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Media: Feature Writing (SCQF level 6)

Outcomes 3 — Product Evidence

Product evidence is required in the form of the completed basic feature article of a minimum of 700 words, which:

♦ has an appropriate story angle (in terms of target audience and purpose of the article)
♦ includes appropriate content from secondary and primary information gathered in Outcome 2
♦ uses appropriate narrative structure, in terms of the target audience and purpose of the feature article
♦ is word processed using double line spacing and margins
♦ is generally grammatically correct with mainly correct spelling and punctuation
♦ contains a headline

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

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Media: Feature Writing (SCQF level 6)

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.

This Unit offers candidates the opportunity to develop basic knowledge in feature writing for newspaper and magazine production. Candidates will be introduced to the key components of feature writing and will have the opportunity to compare a range of feature articles in terms of such aspects as format, language, genre, and target audience etc. Candidates will then have the opportunity to plan, research and produce their own feature article.

In Outcome 1 candidates should be aware of different types of feature articles such as biography, opinion, historical, travel, personal stories, etc. A detailed examination of how a feature article is structured will give candidates an insight into the art of writing this type of article. They should consider aspects such as: genre of the article; whether it is based on an interview or from other sources; if it is written in the first or third person; tone and style; in what type of publication it appears eg a specialist magazine or a newspaper; and is the language and style appropriate for the audience. Candidates could compare and contrast feature articles from a range of newspapers and magazines. The underpinning knowledge gained in this Outcome will inform candidates in the research and production of a feature article required in Outcomes 2 and 3.

In Outcome 2 candidates should recognise the difference between primary and secondary sources. Secondary sources include other print articles, books, reference books, statistics, and the internet. Primary sources are those sources of information which are gathered by personal observation, interviews, questionnaires and personal investigation. Information gathered by using these sources will form the basis of the candidate's feature article in Outcome 3.

In Outcome 3 the article should be a feature article and the conventions of feature writing should be observed. The candidate should decide from which angle they may wish to approach the subject of the article in addition to structuring the article from the information gathered. Candidates should be encouraged to write an article which reflects their own interest. The article should be word processed for inclusion in the folio as this would replicate professional practice.

This Unit articulates with F1N2 34 *Journalism: Feature Writing* (SCQF level 7). It is suggested that this Unit is taught alongside F57S 12 *Media: Research and Interview Skills for Journalism* (SCQF level 6) and *F57R 11 Media: News Writing for Print* (SCQF level 5) to encourage the candidate to see the links between research, interviewing and feature writing.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Media: Feature Writing (SCQF level 6)

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

Candidates should be encouraged to read a wide variety of features of different subject areas, genres and types (such as biography, travel and personal stories). They could be encouraged to consider magazine articles in an area of personal interest.

Newspapers can be used as 'texts' in Outcome 1 to illustrate contrasting subjects, styles, language, tone etc. Candidates could be introduced to feature articles through lecturer/teacher exposition and class discussion. Following this, candidates could be given articles to discuss in groups and could then report their findings to the class — generating further class discussion.

If possible a talk from a professional writer would give invaluable information to candidates.

Some tutor help and advice may be necessary in Outcomes 2 and 3 to direct candidates in their choice of subject matter and their approach to writing the article. It would be advantageous if the candidate chose a subject of personal interest on which to base their article. Outcomes 2 and 3 may be integrated with the F57S 12 *Media: Research and Interview Skills for Journalism* (SCQF level 6) Unit. In this case the source of the article could be an interview.

Some tutor help and advice may also be required in the storing and referencing of source material and this should, as far as possible, replicate industry practice.

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*.

If candidates are given articles to discuss in groups during Outcome 1 and asked to report their findings to the class, opportunities will exist to further develop the Core Skill of *Communication* and to also develop the Core Skill of *Working with Others*.

In Outcome 3 candidates are required to word process the feature article. This provides an ideal opportunity to develop aspects of the Core Skill of *Information Technology*.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT   Media: Feature Writing (SCQF level 6)

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

The following approaches to assessment are suggested:

Outcome 1   Report or annotated articles
Outcome 2   Folio
Outcome 3   Practical Exercise

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**).