

National Course Assessment

Photography for the Media Higher C06A 12

Practical Assignment

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1. Practical Assignment overview

This national project specification provides details of the assessment tasks and the evidence which candidates are expected to produce. It contains a degree of choice in terms of the way the Practical Assignment is taken forward by centres so that it fits available resources and candidates' interests and personal strengths.

The Practical Assignment is not concerned exclusively with practical activity, but is designed to emphasise skills relating to the application of practical skills, and related knowledge and understanding to a situation that involves task management.

Candidates are provided with a brief and are expected to demonstrate attainment relating to:

- ◆ interpreting the brief
- ◆ gathering information to clarify the brief
- ◆ deciding on a product, or activity/event, or performance to develop
- ◆ selecting and managing materials/resources
- ◆ producing the product, or organising the activity/event or delivering the performance
- ◆ evaluating the product or activity/event or performance (through feedback)

Evidence requirements are as follows:

- ◆ a plan of action
- ◆ evidence of a product or an organised activity/event or a performance
- ◆ evidence which documents the processes underpinning the practical hands-on activity
- ◆ evidence showing an extended evaluation of the Practical Assignment

Copies of Units are available from the Scottish Qualifications Authority Sales Section, telephone 0141-242 2168; fax 0141-242 2244; e-mail sales@sqa.org.uk

The Scottish Qualifications Authority Helpdesk is available on 0141-242 2214.

Note:

Please note that individual specifications should always be used in conjunction with the relevant *Arrangements for Project-based National Courses*. The *Arrangements* document provides an overview of the Project-based National Courses for the given SGA. The guidance document, *Project-based National Courses: procedural guide for centres*, which gives full details of operational procedures, must also be used.

This specification forms part of Section F of the *Arrangements* document. It can be used until such a time that SQA advises centres that a new, or revised version is available, and should be used in its place.

2. Recommended entry

We strongly advise that candidates should have completed the Units in the National Course prior to embarking on the external assessment. However, there may well be candidates who, for whatever reason, choose to undertake the external assessment on a stand-alone basis. Any such candidates who have not completed or embarked upon the Units of the National Course *prior* to undertaking the Practical Assignment should have demonstrated attainment (and/or attained) the following the qualifications:

- ◆ relevant National Units in Photography at Intermediate 2 or Higher

and/or

- ◆ at the discretion of the centre

Candidates who achieve the National Course assessment will not be certificated for the Course until they have successfully completed the component Units.

3. Practical Assignment briefs

The candidate is required to produce a body of work to be used in a photo-essay. The theme of the essay must be chosen from one of the three briefs given below:

Brief 1

Theme: Youth Culture

Brief 2

Theme: The Natural World

Brief 3

Theme: 'The camera cannot lie'. Support or refute this statement.

Further details on the planning, developing and evaluating stages can be found in Section 6.

4. Outcome coverage

Course Structure		
Unit title	Credit value	Unit number
Basic Camera Techniques	1.0	D7YE 12
Photography: Research Project	1.0	D7YG 12
and one of the following:		
Digital Imaging	1.0	D7YF 12
Photo Reportage	1.0	D7YD 12
Photography: Creative Image Making Techniques	1.0	D7YC 12

All Practical Assignments for Project-based National Courses cover a minimum of two thirds of the Outcomes from the component Units. For this project these are:

Unit: Basic Camera Techniques

- 3 Demonstrate a basic understanding of exposure.
- 4 Compose and frame pleasing pictures.

Unit: Photography: Research Project

- 1 Full research a given brief in photography.
- 2 Investigate appropriate techniques and materials in photography.
- 3 Produce work in photography.
- 4 Formally present completed work in photography.

And one of the following:

Unit: Digital Imaging

- 1 Demonstrate competence in the process of importing images into a digital environment.
- 2 Demonstrate competence in image manipulation within a given software package.
- 3 Produce a series of digitally enhanced or manipulated images to meet the requirements of a given assignment.
- 4 Output final images onto appropriate printing media.

Unit: Photo Reportage

- 1 Interpret a client brief for a specific assignment.
- 2 Produce a series of images, which relate a story or event to a client brief.
- 3 Select images most appropriate to the client brief from a contact sheet.
- 4 Present selected images for the client's approval.

Unit: Creative Image Making Techniques

- 1 Utilise camera controls and selected filters to manipulate the image.
- 2 Utilise the equipment to manipulate the image.
- 3 Utilise selected techniques or chemicals to manipulate the image.

It is strongly advised that candidates should have completed the assessments for the individual component Units before undertaking the National Course assessment.

5. Subject/occupationally-related knowledge and skills

The Practical Assignment allows candidates to develop and apply skills in:

- ◆ organisation
- ◆ interpretation of a brief
- ◆ investigation techniques
- ◆ assignment planning
- ◆ IT
- ◆ layout and presentation

and develop and apply related knowledge of:

- ◆ the researched theme
- ◆ visual communication

6. Candidate evidence requirements and allocation of marks

General Information

The three stages of the Practical Assignment for all Project-based National Courses at Higher are:

- ◆ planning
- ◆ developing
- ◆ evaluating

Here we describe evidence requirements which apply to each of the three stages of the Practical Assignment for all Project-based National Courses at Higher. Where there are any specific evidence requirements relating to this Course, these are given later in this section.

Planning

Candidates must produce a 500 word (or equivalent) plan of action. The plan should include an introduction and a main body. Centres should ensure that candidates either already have, or are taught, the necessary skills to devise their own plan before they start the project.

For the introduction of the plan, candidates should:

- ◆ provide a rationale for selecting a particular brief
- ◆ interpret the brief
- ◆ gather information to clarify the brief
- ◆ define the aims and objectives of the Practical Assignment

For the main body of the plan candidates should:

- ◆ identify information sources
- ◆ identify materials and resources
- ◆ establish timescales for completion of stages of the Practical Assignment

The plan of action should be produced in a supervised environment, although candidates may carry out the preparation beforehand. Candidates may communicate with each other when producing their plans of action, but each plan must be tailored to the candidate's own project and the action points should relate to the work to be carried out by the individual candidate.

The work produced should always be the candidate's own. However, teachers/tutors are expected to provide candidates with advice, guidance and constructive criticism as necessary when they are devising their plans. It is important to note that, as the plan underpins the rest of the project, centres should ensure that no candidate proceeds to the development stage until the candidate has devised a plan that is potentially workable. The level of support that candidates need to devise a viable plan of action will, of course, vary from candidate to candidate. Centres should indicate the level of support given to each candidate on the flyleaf for the project provided by the SQA. This should not inhibit centres from providing constructive comment nor the candidate from acting on their own initiative and taking on board the advice. In some cases, however, if the level of support and intervention needed is more than that which would normally be seen as reasonable, the authenticity of the candidate's work may be called into

question. If the level of input needed from the teacher/tutor is above normal (for example, the quality of the plan is such that it would mean that the project would be unworkable if the plan was not revised) then candidates cannot score more than 20 of the 40 marks allowed for the planning stage.

Developing

Candidates must provide evidence that:

- ◆ testifies to the quality of the hands-on practical activity
- ◆ documents the processes underpinning the activity

Specific evidence requirements for this Course are given later in this section.

All of the evidence should be produced in a supervised environment. Candidates may communicate with each other but should produce work which can be clearly attributed to the candidate as being his or her own.

Evaluating

Candidates must produce an extended evaluation report which should:

- ◆ provide a brief summary of what the assignment was about
- ◆ review and update the action plan in the light of experience
- ◆ assess the effectiveness of the action plan
- ◆ summarise any unforeseen events and how they were handled
- ◆ identify knowledge and skills which have been gained and/or developed
- ◆ assess the strengths, weaknesses and quality of any hands-on activity
- ◆ assess the effectiveness of the research methods used
- ◆ determine to what extent the assignment met the original brief

The extended evaluation report should be 1,000 words (or equivalent) at Higher. Candidates may carry out the preparation for the report beforehand.

Candidates at Higher should be allowed up to three hours to complete an extended evaluation (including the summary). This is a generous time allowance and some candidates may require considerably less time — two hours should generally be sufficient.

Candidates should be allowed to take one side of an A4 page of notes which they have prepared, into the room with them. They should not be allowed to take a draft of the evaluation report into the room with them. The centre has the responsibility for ensuring that the notes brought in are the candidate's own work.

For this activity the accommodation should be arranged to reflect centre-invigilated conditions and candidates should not be allowed to communicate with each other in any way.

Specific additional information and requirements

Photography: planning stage

Total: 40 marks

The candidate should first consider the themes and, after choosing one, carefully plan their assignment. At this stage discussion with teachers or tutors is recommended.

The candidate must decide from what angle they will approach the theme with what interpretation and then conduct the research accordingly.

Some of the questions that may be considered are:

- ◆ where
- ◆ who or what
- ◆ when
- ◆ how
- ◆ accessibility

These and other questions along with the candidate decisions and choices should be presented in a plan of no more than 500 words.

Photography: development stage

Total: 120 marks

The candidate must submit 12 'finished' images (max: A4 — min: A5). The final images submitted should clearly illustrate the theme and the interpretation chosen by the candidate.

Technical elements, eg print quality. **(30 marks)**

Suitability of images to theme
and
Thematic approach **(60 marks)**

Sub-total: 90 marks

Recce evidence, eg contacts sheets, commercial enprints.

Support notes should indicate final decisions on:

- ◆ chosen images
- ◆ size
- ◆ orientation (landscape/portrait)
- ◆ manipulation used, eg filters, digital techniques **30 marks**

All evidence including planning, development and evaluation stages should be presented in an A4 or A3 folio.

Photography: evaluating stage

Total: 40 marks

The candidate should provide a 1,000 word evaluation which:

- ◆ summarises the assignment
- ◆ assesses the effectiveness of the image choices
- ◆ assesses the effectiveness of the selected approach
- ◆ justifies the use of and assesses the success of any camera, chemical or darkroom techniques used to achieve the objective
- ◆ describes how unforeseen events were handled
- ◆ justify the use of and assesses the success of any digital techniques used
- ◆ assesses the effectiveness of the planning stage

Specific evidence requirements and assessment arrangements for the Practical Assignment for Photography.

Planning	
Evidence:	Plan of action 500 words <i>or</i> equivalent (40 marks)
Conditions of National Course assessment	Supervised
Who assesses it?	Plan to be sent to SQA for marking

Developing	
Evidence:	Portfolio: For hands-on activity: 12 'finished' images (max: A4 — min: A5) For processes underpinning the activity: Recce evidence Image selection criteria Selected manipulations (120 marks in total for this stage)
Conditions of National Course assessment:	Supervised
Who assesses it:	This is to be sent to SQA for marking

Evaluating	
Evidence	Extended evaluation report — including summary 1,000 words <i>or</i> equivalent (40 marks)
Conditions of National Course assessment:	Centre-invigilated
Who assesses it?	To be sent to SQA for marking

It is important that candidates know that they will be penalised for submitting evidence that significantly exceeds the stated word count.

7. Marking and grading

The assessment evidence for Project-based National Courses is marked externally by SQA. The total mark for the Practical Assignment is 200, (this large mark allocation makes it easier to discriminate effectively between performances of candidates across the various parts of the assessment). These marks will be allocated to assessment evidence from the three Practical Assignment stages as follows in *Table A*.

Table A

Practical Assignment Stage	Assessment Evidence	Mark Allocation
Planning	Plan of action	40
Developing	Evidence arising from the hands-on practical activity and from documenting the underpinning processes involved	120
Evaluating	Extended evaluation report	40

To underpin this assessment system there are criteria to which marks are pegged, against which the candidate evidence from each of the three Practical Assignment stages is assessed. The use of such mark categories linked to broad criteria, allows for the aggregation of the various parts of the assessment which do not necessarily have the same weighting in the overall grade. *Table B* overleaf outlines the criteria to be used to assess candidate evidence. Assessors in centres will, for each of the three parts, decide firstly on the broad category of mark which is appropriate and secondly on the precise mark to be given.

Although it is possible for candidates to be given bands 7, 8 and 9 which are described as 'fails', no such categories will appear on candidates' certificates. This information should help centres agree estimates of candidate performance and provide feedback to candidates for remediation purposes.

All National Courses are subject to external marking. External Markers and Visiting Assessors will be trained by SQA to apply national standards. As candidate evidence becomes available exemplars will be issued to centres as guidance.

Practical Assignment

Table B

Higher	Equivalence to	Plan of action	Practical activity and documented process evidence	Evaluation report
Levels of performance: broad level-related criteria		Mark range	Mark range	Mark range
Content and scope: Treatment: appropriate for level excellent	Upper A 85% – 100% (Band 1)	34 – 40	102 – 120	34 – 40
Content and scope: Treatment: appropriate for level consistently thorough	Lower A 70 – 84% (Band 2)	28 – 33	84 – 101	28 – 33
Content and scope: Treatment: appropriate for level thorough in parts	B 60 – 69% (Bands 3 & 4)	24 – 27	72 – 83	24 – 27
Content and scope: Treatment: appropriate for level adequate	C 50 – 59% (Bands 5 & 6)	20 – 23	60 – 71	20 – 23
Content and scope: Treatment: OR appropriate for level adequate only in parts	Fail 40 – 49% (Bands 7 & 8)	16 – 19	48 – 59	16 – 19
Content and scope: Treatment: OR appropriate for level generally poor	Fail Below 40% (Band 9)	< 16	< 48	< 16
Content and scope: Treatment: OR basic for level adequate or poor				

Note:

Content and Scope: defined as how appropriate or otherwise the candidate interprets the level of demand for the specification
 Treatment: defined as how successful or otherwise the candidate tackles the project

Estimates and appeals

Although these Project-based National Courses are externally assessed by SQA Markers, candidates will benefit from estimate grades based on accurate internal assessment of their projects, ie the grade assessors judge a candidate should be awarded, based on all the available evidence. The processes for deciding an estimate grade are similar to the processes the external assessors (ie the Markers) would use for the final assessment. The main benefit of an estimate to an individual candidate is that an appeal can be submitted against an external decision where the estimate given the candidate was at grade C or better. An appeal will not normally be considered for candidates for whom no estimate has been received. The SQA will provide a form for submission of estimates.

For the internal marking process for estimates, internal assessors are expected to:

- ◆ compare candidate evidence arising from each stage of the Practical Assignment to the criteria outlined in *Table B* and decide on the mark category which most accurately describes it
- ◆ decide on a particular mark for the candidate, within that broad mark category for each stage, depending on how marginal the decision was
- ◆ maintain a brief record of why a certain mark was given for each of the three Practical Assignment stages (for internal moderation purposes)
- ◆ follow the internal moderation processes within their centre (see the section on internal moderation below)
- ◆ aggregate the internally moderated marks for each candidate. That gives a total mark out of 200
- ◆ divide that total mark by two to give a percentage
- ◆ convert the overall % mark for each candidate into an estimate grade and band using *Table C*

Table C

% Mark range	Grade	Band (for estimates)
85–100	A (upper)	1
70–84	A (lower)	2
65–69	B (upper)	3
60–64	B (lower)	4
55–59	C (upper)	5
50–54	C (lower)	6
45–49	Fail (near miss)	7
40–44	Fail	8
Less than 40	Fail	9

- ◆ check the grade already given to candidates against the grade descriptions tabled below, (*Table D*). This is to ensure that candidates have effectively integrated each stage of the Practical Assignment. Please use the grade descriptions as a touchstone against which grades can be checked
- ◆ provide estimates as bands

Grade Descriptions for a Practical Assignment at Higher

Table D

A	B	C
Content and scope appropriate for Higher		
Looking at the evidence as a whole:	Looking at the evidence as a whole:	Looking at the evidence as a whole:
<p>A Practical Assignment at Grade A:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ produces high quality, clearly inter-related documented and product or process-related evidence for the three essential phases of the Practical Assignment ◆ is an exercise to which candidates have brought an accurate and insightful interpretation of the Practical Assignment brief ◆ is tightly structured, relevant to the content of the Units and displays a high level of subject/occupational expertise ◆ effectively applies integrated and consolidated knowledge, understanding and skills from the Course Units to complex situations and/or design specifications 	<p>A Practical Assignment at Grade B:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ produces good quality, inter-related documented and product or process-related evidence for the three essential phases of the Practical Assignment ◆ is an exercise to which candidates have brought an accurate interpretation of the Practical Assignment brief ◆ is well structured and displays a good level of subject/occupational expertise ◆ satisfactorily applies integrated and consolidated knowledge, understanding and skills from the Course Units to situations and/or design specifications which include a degree of complexity 	<p>A Practical Assignment at Grade C:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ produces adequate, fairly well inter-related documented and product or process-related evidence, for the three essential phases of Practical Assignment ◆ an exercise to which candidates have brought an acceptable interpretation of the Practical Assignment brief ◆ is reasonably well structured and displays an adequate level of subject/occupational expertise ◆ applies integrated and consolidated knowledge, understanding and skills from the Course Units with some lack of continuity and consistency

Internal Moderation

The internal moderator oversees:

- ◆ The internal moderation process to ensure consistency of judgement or *reliability of assessment*. This process will vary according to the nature of the evidence and the number of assessors and sites. It is likely to involve agreement trials and/or Marker standardisation. The internal moderator should be a specialist in the subject. (It may be helpful in the first few years of these Project-based National Courses to do a cross-subject moderation of samples of like parts such as the plans of action and evaluation reports. Such additional cross-subject internal moderation is however not mandatory.)
- ◆ A consideration of whether, in some cases, candidates with similar overall marks/bands have been fairly treated. For example, some candidates may have produced more fully integrated projects than others. This may lead to a reconsideration of marking of the individual components for some candidates.
- ◆ Finalisation of estimate grades and submission of candidate evidence. A form will be available for this purpose.

(See *Guide to Assessment and Quality Assurance for Colleges of Further Education* (AA0841/2, December 2001) or *Guide to Assessment and Quality Assurance for Secondary Schools* (AA0840/2, December 2001), for further information relating to internal moderation. A guide to good practice for internal moderation is also under development.

Submitting candidate evidence to SQA

Specific information on this part of the process will be circulated to centres. Where materials have to be sent to SQA for marking you will be provided with any necessary packaging materials.

The following must be sent to SQA for the Practical Assignment:

- ◆ plan of action
- ◆ all transportable evidence
- ◆ extended evaluation report

Note: In addition, centres will be expected to submit all notes used by candidates during write-up sessions.

8. Ensuring evidence is authentic

The following methods should be used to ensure that the evidence produced by a given candidate is all their own work. These methods are for use outwith any situation where the candidate's work will be produced under supervised or invigilated conditions already stipulated by the SQA (eg the plan of action and the evaluation).

- ◆ Candidates working on the project-based assignment should carry out most of the work within the centre in a supervised environment.
- ◆ Candidates should be encouraged to seek feedback from the project tutors on the quality of their work. To ensure authenticity, project tutors should question candidates on the nature of their work as it progresses
- ◆ Project tutors must ensure that candidates do not breach copyright on images if they are using the internet.

9. Investigating tools

Candidates are expected to make use of the following information sources during the Practical Assignment:

Information Sources

- ◆ magazines eg FHM
- ◆ books, eg *Let Truth be the Prejudice* — Eugene Smith
- ◆ internet, eg www.masters-of-photography.com
- ◆ newspapers
- ◆ weekend colour supplements
- ◆ exhibitions
- ◆ teaching and lecturing staff

Accessing Information

- ◆ libraries
- ◆ websites
- ◆ community centres

References supplied by candidates

Please note that it is legitimate for candidates to quote from information sources such as articles (in print or stored electronically) or books. Such quotations must be placed within quotation marks followed by the reference, including the chapter and or section and page number. Texts referred to should be included in the bibliography.

The following format for references should be used:

Books

Author's surname, followed by forename or initials, title of book (in italics or underlined), place of publication, name of publisher, year of publication.

For example:

Barton, T, *Fieldwork for Geographers*, London: Edward Arnold, 1985

Articles

Author's surname, followed by forename or initials, title of the article (in inverted commas), title of the periodical (underlined or in italics), volume number, part number, year of publication, page number(s).

For example:

Sugden, D E, 'Perspectives on the Glaciation of Scotland', *SAGT Journal No. 17*, 1988, pp 4 — 10.

Maps and Diagrams

Sources should be given on each map and diagram and should be stated in the same format as for books and articles, as appropriate.

For example:

Microsoft Encarta 1997

Internet

If a website has been used then the address (URL) must be disclosed.

For example:

www.sqa.org.uk

It is important to note that unacknowledged copying will be penalised, usually by cancellation of the candidate entry.

10. Materials and resources

Candidates are expected to select from the following materials and resources as appropriate:

- ◆ photographic equipment
- ◆ computers — hardware and software
- ◆ photographic film and paper
- ◆ computer paper (quality)
- ◆ chemicals — tints, toners etc
- ◆ mounting materials

11. Core Skills

It is possible that successful attainment of this Course would lead to the automatic certification of particular Core Skills or Core Skill components. A final statement will be provided at a later date by the Scottish Qualifications Authority once full validation procedures are complete.

It should be noted that this project, in common with other Project-based Courses, follows the planning/developing/evaluating cycle. As a result of this it is likely that successful completion of the project will lead to automatic certification of the Problem Solving Core Skill at Intermediate 2. The final Core Skills statement, as above, will confirm this.