

## Higher National Unit Specification

### General information for centres

**Unit title:** Literature: Close Reading Skills

**Unit code:** D7MA 34

**Unit purpose:** This Unit is designed to allow candidates to gain skills in reading, understanding and appreciating a range of literary texts from different historical periods and demonstrating this understanding and appreciation by writing literary criticism, including practical criticism.

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

1. Analyse and interpret prose of different historical periods
2. Analyse and interpret poetry of different historical periods

**Credit value:** 1 HN Credit(s) at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7)

*SCQF (the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework) brings Scottish qualifications into a single framework of 12 levels ranging from SQA Access 1 to doctorates. The SCQF includes degrees; HNC/Ds; SQA National Qualifications; and SVQs. Each SQA Unit is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at a specific level. 1 SCQF point = 10 hours of learning. HN candidates are normally expected to input a further number of hours, matched to the credit value of the Unit, of non-contact time or candidate-led effort to consolidate and reinforce learning.*

**Recommended prior knowledge and skills:** While access to this to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre it would be beneficial if the candidate had communication and literary skills shown by, for example, possession of one of the following:

- National Unit EE3T 12 (7110055) *Communication (NC)*
- National Unit E9X8 12 *Literature 1*
- Higher *English and Communication* or its component Units
- Higher *Media Studies* or its component Units

**Core skills:** There may be opportunities to gather evidence towards core skills in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of core skills and 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.

## **Higher National Unit specification: General information for centres (cont)**

**Unit title:** Literature: Close Reading Skills

**Assessment:** The Unit has two Outcomes. Each Outcome is assessed by two assessments which should be conducted in conditions where arrangements have been put in place to assure the authenticity of the candidate's work. For each Outcome, one response will be based on a number of structured questions, and one will involve an extended written response or an oral presentation on an unseen short piece of literature. If oral assessment is used detailed checklists, candidate notes and transcripts or tapes of the presentation should be retained as evidence.

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards**

### **Unit title:** Literature: Close Reading Skills

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**

Analyse and interpret prose of different historical periods

#### **Knowledge and/or skills**

- Structure/plot
- Characterisation
- Setting in time and place
- Tone/mood/atmosphere
- Dialogue
- Imagery/style/language including, where appropriate, distinctive use of dialect, syntax and diction
- Method of narration/point of view
- Theme
- Distinctive genre of prose, where appropriate
- Other distinctive literary or linguistic features, where appropriate

#### **Evidence requirements**

The candidate will on two separate assessment occasions analyse two prose texts from different historical periods, at least one of which must be pre-Twentieth Century. The candidate must respond in writing or orally to a set of structured questions on the literary and linguistic features of one text, and must present an extended analytical written response of at least 750 words or an oral presentation of approximately eight minutes on the other text.

The candidate will need evidence to demonstrate his/her knowledge and/or skills by showing that he/she can:

- summarise surface meaning
- interpret underlying meaning coherently
- explain effectively the narrative method
- analyse effectively significant linguistic features
- discuss other key literary features effectively
- support arguments by clear and detailed reference to the text
- explain their analysis and interpretation by clear expression and appropriate terminology.

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

### **Unit title:** Literature: Close Reading Skills

Assessment should be conducted in conditions where arrangements have been put in place to assure the authenticity of the candidate's work.

#### **Assessment guidelines**

Texts selected should be short complete works or extracts of about 500 words.

The number of structured questions would depend on the text chosen. A minimum of five questions is suggested.

### **Outcome 2**

Analyse and interpret poetry of different historical periods

#### **Knowledge and/or skills**

- Verse form/poetic structure
- Personal point of view
- Poetic technique
- Figurative use of language
- Mood/tone
- Other distinctive poetic and/or linguistic features, where appropriate
- Overall effect/underlying meaning

#### **Evidence requirements**

The candidate will analyse, on two separate assessment occasions, two poetry texts from different historical periods, at least one of which must be pre-Twentieth Century. He/she must respond in writing or orally to a set of structured questions on the literary and linguistic features of one text, after which he/she must present an extended analytical written response of at least 750 words or an oral presentation of approximately eight minutes on the other text.

The candidate will need evidence to demonstrate his/her knowledge and/or skills by showing that he/she can:

- summarise surface meaning
- interpret underlying meaning coherently
- identify persona/IMPLIED speaker accurately
- discuss significant linguistic and poetic features effectively
- describe verse form accurately
- support all arguments with detailed reference to the text.

Assessment should be conducted in conditions where arrangements have been put in place to assure the authenticity of the candidate's work.

### **Assessment guidelines**

The number of structured questions would depend on the text chosen. A minimum of five questions is suggested.

### **Administrative Information**

**Unit code:** D7MA 34

**Unit title:** Literature: Close Reading Skills

**Superclass category:** FC

**Date of publication:** October 2001

**Source:** SQA

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## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes**

### **Unit title:** Literature: Close Reading Skills

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 Unit is concerned with close reading skills of literature rather than the more traditional literature course and therefore the narrower focus is on exploring literary technique by close analysis of extracts of prose texts and shorter forms of poetry or extracts from longer poems. Nevertheless, the selection of texts may enable candidates to study a variety of texts to give some appreciation of the diversity of language, style, form and concerns of literature from different historical periods and culture. It is a requirement that at least one prose and one poetry text in summative assessments should be pre-Twentieth Century.

There is no restriction on the type of literature studied as long as it will allow serious critical analysis using close reading techniques. Suitable prose could include the novel, short story, biography or autobiography, prose drama, travel writing or memoirs, and poetry might be selected from modern poetry and traditional forms including the ballad, sonnet, pastoral, ode, elegy or epic.

The study of texts may be supported by comparison and contrast with thematically linked texts, and by visits by writers, study of television, radio and film adaptations of texts, group work and independent research, as well as direct assessor exposition. Formative work may include reading and analysing, research, class and group discussions, oral presentations and writing critically about a range of prose and poetry.

In the HNC/D *Communication with Media* award, the Unit should be an attractive and valuable option for candidates intending to progress to communication, media, film or English studies at degree level. The Unit may also be taken as a free standing option for candidates interested in literature and the analytical skills involved. On completion of the Unit candidates may progress to HN Unit A5DT 04 *Literature: Contextual Analysis* or HN Unit D7M9 34 *Critical Analysis of Texts*.

Questions should relate to what is contained in the text and wider reference is not required. The candidate need not be wholly unfamiliar with the text but should not have studied it in detail.

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

**Unit title:** Literature: Close Reading Skills

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

This Unit provides candidates with a critical understanding of literary texts and complements the two other Literature based Units in HNC/D *Communication with Media*, HN Unit D7M9 34 *Critical Analysis of Texts* and HN Unit D7MC 35 *Narrative in Fiction and Film*. The Unit could be delivered at any stage in the HN programme, but might best be placed before either of the related Literature Units which are more specialised and theoretical. It would also be beneficial if taken before the HN Unit D7MB 34 *Creative Writing for Vocational Purposes* so that candidates could apply the skills developed.

### **Open learning**

This Unit is suitable for open and distance learning delivery.

For further information and advice, please see *Assessment and Quality Assurance for Open and Distance Learning* (SQA, February 2001 — publication code A1030).

### **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 and Certification Arrangements for Candidates with Special Needs and Candidates for whom English is an Additional Language* (SQA, 2000).

## **General information for candidates**

### **Unit title:** Literature: Close Reading Skills

In this Unit you will study a variety of prose (selected from novels, short stories, auto/biography, travel writing and other genres) and a range of poetry, from the Twentieth and earlier centuries. Particular attention will be paid to close reading skills, examining and analysing literary technique through practical detailed criticism of short texts. You will study the great variety and richness of styles and forms of literature from different historical periods.

An important part of your studies will be discussing and writing about literature, focussing on such key prose features as structure, characterisation, setting, method of narration and thematic issues, and poetic features including verse form, persona, imagery and underlying meaning. You will be encouraged to write about your own critical responses to your reading in preparation for the two Outcomes which will assess your progress in the Unit.

In the first Outcome you will be asked to read two short prose texts and respond to one of them by writing short answers to set questions, and to the others by writing an extended response of at least 750 words or by giving a short oral presentation of approximately eight minutes of your analysis of the text. In the second Outcome you will read two short poetry texts and respond, as before, with short written answers and an extended response of at least 750 words or an oral presentation of approximately eight minutes.

The prose texts selected will be from two different historical periods, at least one pre-Twentieth Century, and similarly the poetry texts will be from different historical periods. All four assessments will be carried out in controlled conditions. This does not mean examination conditions but that arrangements must be in place so that your lecturer can be sure that the work you submit is your own work.

By the end of the Unit you will have read, analysed, discussed and written about a range of literature and you will have developed valuable close reading skills and the ability to express your own critical views on prose and poetry.

On completion of the Unit you should be able to:

1. Analyse and interpret prose of different historical periods
2. Analyse and interpret poetry of different historical periods