

Higher National Unit specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Journalism: Feature Writing

Unit code: F1N2 34

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed to allow the candidate to attain the key skills that a journalist needs for writing features — researching, structuring and writing feature articles for newspapers and magazines. This Unit is aimed at the candidate with an interest in entering the journalism industry or progressing to related studies at a higher level. The skills dealt with in this Unit apply to all areas of feature writing and it is recommended that this Unit is delivered in conjunction with F1RD 34 *Journalism: Research and Interview Skills*.

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

- 1 Describe, analyse and compare feature articles from a variety of publications.
- 2 Outline the key characteristics of, and write, a synopsis.
- 3 Research feature articles for a variety of publications.
- 4 Write feature articles for a variety of publications.

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

**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.*

Recommended prior knowledge and skills: Access to this Unit is at the discretion of the Centre. However, candidates would normally be expected to have competence in communication skills at SCQF level 6 or equivalent. This could be demonstrated by achievement of one of the following:

- ◆ Higher English (C115 12) or its component Units
- ◆ Communication 4 (EE3T 12) and Literature 1 (E9X2 12)
- ◆ Communication (D01B 12)
- ◆ Relevant work experience

Core Skills: There are opportunities to gather evidence towards Core Skills in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components. Further detail is provided in the Support Notes.

General information for centres (cont)

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. This Unit is mandatory in HNC/HND Practical Journalism. If this Unit is taught within the HNC/HND Practical Journalism framework, progression to F1N3 35 *Journalism: Feature Writing Advanced* is recommended. It is also recommended that this Unit is delivered alongside the Unit F1RD 34 *Journalism: Research and Interview Skills* where significant opportunity for cross assessment is presented.

Assessment: Outcomes 1 and 2 are principally knowledge-based and require the use of an appropriate assessment instrument. Outcomes 3 and 4 move from the theoretical to the practical application of the skills covered. Also, since Outcomes 3 and 4 form part of the same feature writing process, they could be integrated with research in Outcome 3 leading to feature writing in Outcome 4. Certainly the link between the two should be stressed, as should the clear link between Outcome 3 and the skills developed in *Journalism: Research and Interview Skills*.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Journalism: Feature Writing

Unit code: F1N2 34

The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, Knowledge and/or Skills, and Evidence Requirements are mandatory.

Please refer to Evidence Requirements and Assessment Guidelines for the Unit after the Outcomes.

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

Describe, analyse and compare feature articles from a variety of publications

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Defining features as opposed to news
- ◆ Defining key feature genres
- ◆ Understanding the vocabulary of feature writing
- ◆ Analysing articles in terms of their features and key components
- ◆ Analysing articles in terms of their structure, genre, tone and position in paper
- ◆ Comparing and contrasting articles in terms of structure, genre, tone and position in paper

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can describe accurately and analyse the key features of feature articles. The focus should be on firstly accurately defining what a feature article is and on some of the key types of feature articles. The candidate should then be encouraged to analyse specific tabloid, broadsheet and local features and be able to identify key components and compare and contrast features, for example on the same subject but from a broadsheet and a tabloid newspaper.

The candidate's response should be a minimum of 800 words. Assessment should be conducted under open-book, controlled and supervised conditions within a period of two hours.

Assessment Guidelines

The candidate could be asked to produce an Extended Response or answer restricted response questions. It is important that assessment of this Outcome should be first in the assessment strategy, as it provides underpinning knowledge for the next Outcome.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: Feature Writing

Outcome 2

Outline the key characteristics of, and write, a synopsis

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ What is meant by the term synopsis?
- ◆ Relevance and importance of synopses in feature writing
- ◆ Key methods for feature article idea generation
- ◆ Use of key features of synopsis

Evidence Requirements

The candidate will need to provide evidence to demonstrate his/her Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that he/she can describe accurately synopses and their use in terms of proposing and selling feature ideas, as well as generating ideas for synopses and features, and be able to create feature synopses. These synopses may, for example, be used for the development of work in Outcome 3 and 4 or generating copy for the Unit F1N4 34 *Magazine Journalism*.

The candidate's response should be a minimum of 100 words, and should take the form of a brief report and the creation of a minimum of two synopses which should be concise, industry-standard definitions of the feature, with key information such as angle, research and interviews used as well as a recognition of other vital components when contacting commissioning editors such as contact information etc..

The knowledge and skills-based assessment should be conducted under open-book, controlled and supervised conditions within a period of one hour.

The synopses should be produced on an ongoing basis to a format and deadline approved with tutor.

Assessment Guidelines

This Outcome may be completed as a restricted response question and specific synopses. Candidates could be encouraged to produce synopses for articles which are researched for Outcome 3 and written for Outcome 4.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: Feature Writing

Outcome 3

Research feature articles for a variety of publications

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Use of secondary research and basic feature sources
- ◆ Use of primary research and use of feature sources such as interviews
- ◆ Planning and structuring an interview
- ◆ Question types, including open, closed, factual, leading
- ◆ Conducting an interview

Evidence Requirements

The Evidence Requirements and Assessment Guidelines for Outcome 3 appear within Outcome 4.

Outcome 4

Write feature articles for a variety of publications

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Generating story ideas for feature articles
- ◆ Selecting story angles for feature copy
- ◆ Structuring journalistic feature copy from secondary and primary research
- ◆ Using style and tone within journalistic copy
- ◆ Grammatical accuracy
- ◆ Accurate use of spelling and punctuation

Evidence Requirements

The candidate will need to provide evidence to demonstrate his/her Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that he/she can generate feature ideas and undertake research to then write feature articles from given briefs. It is recommended that research from Outcome 3 and from F1RD 34 *Journalism: Research and Interview Skills* be employed for writing feature articles in Outcome 4 and possibly also for use in the Unit F1N4 34 *Magazine Journalism*. The candidate should create a small assessed folio of feature articles.

The folio of articles should include:

- ◆ brief article based on secondary research, such as background feature (300–400 words)
- ◆ long article based on secondary research, such as biography (600–800 words)
- ◆ article based on primary research from one interview, such as ‘Life in the Day’ feature (600–800 words)
- ◆ article based on both primary research and secondary research, such as in-depth interview article

The standard of the articles should be such that they meet industry standard.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: Feature Writing

The assessment will be undertaken under open-book conditions and work submitted to a deadline set by the tutor.

Assessment Guidelines

An on-going folio-based approach should be encouraged to allow the candidate to begin work early on planning, researching, structuring and writing a series of feature articles employing various research skills.

Administrative Information

Unit code: F1N2 34
Unit title: Journalism: Feature Writing
Superclass category: KD
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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Journalism: Feature Writing

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 purpose of this Unit is to provide the candidate with sufficient knowledge of the importance of feature writing in newspaper and magazine production and to allow the candidate to describe accurately and analyse specific feature articles from a variety of genres such as broadsheet and tabloid newspapers. In addition, the candidate should be encouraged to read and research more on the style and structure of a variety of structures and to plan, research and write a variety of features from secondary and primary research sources.

This Unit is designed to be delivered alongside other HNC/HND Practical Journalism Units such as F1RD 34 *Journalism: Research and Interview Skills* and F1N4 34 *Magazine Journalism* as well as providing the feature angle which complements F1N9 34 *Journalism: News Writing*. Progression to F1N3 35 *Journalism: Feature Writing Advanced* is recommended for candidates interested in entry to this aspect of the industry.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

This is a mandatory Unit within the HNC/HND Practical Journalism Group Award.

Teaching should be focused on helping the candidate to understand and apply the principles and main provisions of the relevant areas of feature writing. When delivering this Unit it is best to deliver it alongside F1RD 34 *Journalism: Research and Interview Skills* and to encourage the candidate to see and become practised in the clear links between research, interviewing and feature writing.

Work done in Outcomes 3 and 4 is likely to develop research and interview work from *Journalism: Research and Interview Skills*. This will allow the candidate to work on features from inception through primary and secondary research through to writing. In the early stages the candidate should also be encouraged to read a wide variety of features from current publications and to become comfortable in describing and comparing feature articles.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: Feature Writing

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

The Core Skill component of — *Produce well-structured written communication on complex topics* — at SCQF level 6 could be developed in this Unit.

The specific skills for this Core Skill component are:

- ◆ present all essential ideas/information and supporting detail in a logical and effective order
- ◆ use a structure which takes account of purpose and audience and links the major and minor points in ways which assist the clarity and impact of the writing
- ◆ use conventions which are effective in achieving the purpose and adapted as necessary for the target audience
- ◆ use spelling, punctuation and sentence structures which are consistently accurate
- ◆ vary sentence structure, paragraphing and vocabulary to suit the purpose and target audience.

The Core Skill component of — *Produce and respond to oral communication on a complex topic* — at SCQF level 6 could be developed in this Unit.

The specific skills for this core skill component are:

- ◆ use vocabulary and a range of spoken language structures consistently and effectively at an appropriate level of formality
- ◆ convey all essential information, opinions or ideas with supporting detail accurately and coherently and with varied emphasis as appropriate
- ◆ structure communication to take full account of purpose and audience
- ◆ take account of situation and audience during delivery
- ◆ respond to others, taking account of their contributions.

The Information Technology Core Skill of — *Using an IT system effectively and responsibly to process a range of information* — at SCQF level 5 could be developed within this Unit.

The specific skills for this core skill are:

- ◆ make effective and responsible use of the range of IT equipment in everyday use
- ◆ carry out straightforward processing in two types of software applications
- ◆ carry out complex processes to use one further application in depth
- ◆ integrate different types of data in a piece of work
- ◆ carry out two searches to extract and present relevant information from electronic data sources.

The core skill component of — *Using Graphical Information* — at SCQF level 5 could be developed in this Unit.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: Feature Writing

The specific skills for this core skill component are:

- ◆ interpret information from tables, graphs, charts or diagrams
- ◆ select an appropriate form of tables, graphs, charts or diagrams and communicate information in that form

The Core Skills could be developed without formal certification.

Open learning

This Unit could be delivered by open learning provided suitable open or online learning materials were developed. However, it would require planning by the centre to ensure the sufficiency and authenticity of candidate evidence. Arrangements would have to be made to ensure that the evidence for all Outcomes is generated by assessment undertaken in the mode(s) detailed in the Evidence Requirements for each Outcome.

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

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).

General information for candidates

Unit title: Journalism: Feature Writing

This is a one credit Unit designed to give you a practical understanding of the importance of feature writing in the production of newspapers and magazines. It is designed to give you a working knowledge of the structure of a variety of types of features and the vocabulary with which to analyse a variety of feature articles. In addition, it is designed to encourage you to begin to create a folio of journalistic work through researching and writing a series of feature articles. It is also a core Unit in the HNC/HND Practical Journalism course.

Outcome 1 provides an introduction to feature writing, with a focus on analysing what a feature is and looking at a variety of types of feature, as well as the terminology used to describe and analyse features and compare features from different genres.

Outcome 2 provides an introduction to the key concept of the synopsis — used to outline the content of a feature and to promote the idea or sell a feature to a potential publisher. You will be encouraged to generate ideas and create synopses for the features which you will research and write.

Outcome 3 and **Outcome 4** can be amalgamated to assist you with the progression from idea development through planning, secondary and primary research through to actually writing features. You will be encouraged to begin to develop your own folio of feature articles.

Outcomes 1 and 2 will be assessed by an instrument of assessment suitable for testing knowledge and understanding. Outcomes 3 and 4 will be integrated in a practical exercise testing your ability to research and write feature articles for a variety of publications.

There are opportunities to develop the Communication Core Skill components of Produce well-structured written communication on complex issues and produce and respond to oral communication on a complex topic at SCQF level 6. The Core Skill of Information Technology at SCQF level 5 and the component Using Graphical Information at SCQF level 5 may be developed.