

Higher National Unit specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Journalism: Specialist Reporting

Unit code: F1N5 35

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed to allow the candidate to develop key journalistic skills of a complex nature in a particular chosen specialist field. This is a Specialist Unit and 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 specialist reporting and are aimed at developing a targeted folio of articles and encouraging candidates to identify and develop a chosen professional specialism.

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

- 1 Describe, analyse and compare articles from a particular specialist journalistic field from a variety of publications
- 2 Describe and analyse a particular specialist journalistic field
- 3 Create a series of articles for a particular specialist journalistic field
- 4 Research, conduct interviews, write and lay out an in-depth article for a particular specialist journalistic field

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

**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, it would be beneficial if the candidate possessed one of the following:

- ◆ F1N2 34 *Journalism: Feature Writing*
- ◆ F1N9 34 *Journalism: News Writing*
- ◆ F1RD 34 *Journalism: Research and Interview Skills*
- ◆ 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 part of the HNC/HND Practical Journalism. If this Unit is taught within the HNC/HND Practical Journalism framework, progression from F1N9 34 *Journalism: News Writing*, F1N2 34 *Journalism: Feature Writing* and F1RD 34 *Journalism: Research and Interview Skills* is recommended. It is also recommended that the Unit is delivered in the HND year alongside F1NG 35 *Journalism: News Writing Advanced* and F1N3 35 *Journalism: Feature Writing Advanced*. The Unit may be delivered to a group aiming to study for a particular specialism such as sports reporting, possibly in conjunction with the National Council for the Training of Journalists' Sports Reporting preliminary examination, or individual candidates may be encouraged to identify and study their own individual chosen area of specialist journalism, such as sports, music, entertainment, fashion, political or financial reporting.

Assessment: Journalism: Specialist Reporting allows candidates to be assessed in an ongoing holistic fashion, encouraging a broad variety of news and feature articles to be created throughout delivery of the Unit for completion of a feature folio in Outcomes 3 and 4. Candidates will be expected to analyse existing articles and writing styles in a particular specialism for Outcome 1 and to research, report on and analyse this particular specialism for Outcome 2.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

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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

Describe, analyse and compare articles from a particular specialist journalistic field from a variety of publications

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Defining particular specialist news and feature articles
- ◆ Defining key genres
- ◆ Understanding the vocabulary and terminology of particular specialist reporting and writing
- ◆ Analysing specialist articles in terms of their key components
- ◆ Analysing specialist articles in terms of their structure, genre, tone and position in publication
- ◆ Comparing and contrasting specialist articles in terms of structure, genre, tone and position in publication

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can accurately describe and analyse the key features of articles from a particular journalistic specialism in a minimum of 800 words. The focus should be on firstly accurately defining what the particular specialism is and on some of the key types of articles in the chosen specialist field. The candidate should then be encouraged to analyse specific tabloid, broadsheet and local news and feature articles from the particular specialism and be able to identify key components and compare and contrast articles, for example on the same subject but from a broadsheet and a tabloid newspaper. Ideally, the candidate should put together a cuttings folio which illustrates key article types and publications for his/her chosen specialism and to analyse the cuttings.

Assessment should be conducted under open-book conditions and work submitted to a deadline set by the tutor.

Assessment Guidelines

The Outcome could be assessed by an Extended Response. It is important that assessment of this Outcome should be first in the assessment strategy, as it provides underpinning knowledge for the following Outcomes.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: Specialist Reporting

Outcome 2

Describe and analyse a particular specialist journalistic field

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Historical developments and trends in a particular specialist field in the UK
- ◆ Key trends and genres in a particular specialist field in the UK
- ◆ Understanding the key vocabulary and terminology of a particular specialist field
- ◆ Understanding and analysing a particular specialist field in terms of genre, construction, style and target readership

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 the key features of a particular journalistic field in a minimum of 800 words.

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

The focus should be on describing the organisation, historical and current developments, trends and genres in the particular chosen journalistic specialism. Key publications and practitioners may be analysed. In addition, the candidate should be able to describe accurately and analyse the components of specific specialist articles, sections and/or publications using accepted terminology.

Assessment Guidelines

The Outcome could be assessed by an extended response.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: Specialist Reporting

Outcome 3

Create a series of articles for a particular specialist journalistic field

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Generation of news and feature ideas for a particular specialist journalistic field
- ◆ Identification and use of key secondary and primary research opportunities
- ◆ Gathering of background material and research to write specialist articles
- ◆ Planning, organising and conducting of interviews to write specialist articles
- ◆ Use of style, tone, pace and structure to create effective specialist articles
- ◆ Recognition of genre requirements and house style
- ◆ Writing for local and national newspapers, specialist sections and magazines

Evidence Requirements

The candidate will need to provide evidence to demonstrate his/her knowledge and/or skills by showing that he/she can successfully plan, research and write news and feature articles of varying lengths for their specialism across a variety of styles for a variety of publications. The candidate should be tasked with covering a variety of events and given ample opportunities to create a variety of the key article types for his/her chosen specialism as well as being encouraged to generate ideas of his/her own for article writing. Articles should be produced to industry standard by showing recognition of demands of house style, specialism demands and style, word count, deadline, as well as meeting industry demands for accuracy in terms of spelling, punctuation, grammar, facts, legal issues etc.

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

A minimum of five articles of appropriate lengths should be produced.

Assessment Guidelines

This Outcome will be holistically assessed across a folio of news and feature articles created throughout the time of the Unit for the candidate's chosen specialist genre, and as such the candidate should be encouraged to begin writing from an early stage in the Unit. The candidate, in conjunction with the tutor, should be encouraged to identify his/her chosen specialism's key article types. For example, a candidate focusing on sports reporting may create a folio which includes: news splash, news in brief, interview feature, match report, profile piece etc.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: Specialist Reporting

Outcome 4

Research, conduct interviews, write and lay out an in-depth article for a particular specialist journalistic field

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Generation of complex news or feature idea and angle for named publication
- ◆ Use of specialist format and house style
- ◆ Use of grammar, punctuation, spelling to industry standard
- ◆ Use of specialist structure to industry standard
- ◆ Secondary research for specialist article
- ◆ Primary research, including interviews, for specialist article
- ◆ Specialist article writing and structuring
- ◆ Specialist article layout and design for named publication

Evidence Requirements

The candidate will need to provide evidence to demonstrate his/her knowledge and/or skills by showing that he/she can plan, research, conduct interviews and write a composite article based on his/her chosen journalistic specialism intended for a named publication, such as a broadsheet newspaper or specialist niche magazine. The candidate should be encouraged to develop his/her own realistic article idea and to carry out his/her own research and interviews throughout the Unit. When writing, the candidate should be encouraged to reflect current journalistic trends by breaking the extended article down into two or three articles over the total word limit, and to consider relevant layout and design, for example by producing a four-page extended feature for a broadsheet supplement magazine or specialist magazine.

Assessment will be conducted under open-book conditions but deadlines should be set for all stages of the process.

The completed piece should:

- ◆ be a total of 1,000 to 1,500 words in length
- ◆ be concise, grammatically correct and structurally and stylistically appropriate
- ◆ make use of composite structure to introduce side bars, info bars, background feature, lead feature etc

Show understanding of specialist layout and design for a named publication.

Assessment guidelines

The candidate should be encouraged to develop ideas and possible angles for a real-life, extended specialist article and should be encouraged to begin work early to allow for research and interviews to be carried out as well as the later task of structuring, writing and designing the completed complex feature.

Administrative Information

Unit code: F1N5 35
Unit title: Journalism: Specialist Reporting
Superclass category: KD
Original date of publication: June 2007
Version: 01

History of changes:

Version	Description of change	Date

Source: SQA

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Journalism: Specialist Reporting

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 specialist reporting in newspaper and magazine production and to allow the candidate to develop an extended folio of news and feature articles which develop their expertise and contacts in a chosen specialism using real-life sources and interviews.

The candidate should be encouraged to develop and propose their own specialism in order to extend their knowledge of a particular employment field, and to develop their own ideas in building their folio. They should be encouraged to work to an industry standard by conducting interviews and showing a clear understanding of the need for objective articles, and relevant use of subjectivity in features such as columns, leaders or, for example, reviews in music and entertainment journalism.

The candidate should be encouraged to write news and feature articles from an early stage in the Unit to allow for completion of their folio, and should begin work on developing ideas and research possibilities for an extended, complex article from an early stage.

The Unit may be delivered to a group aiming to study for a particular specialism such as sports reporting, possibly in conjunction with the National Council for the Training of Journalists' Sports Reporting preliminary examination. However, candidates could be encouraged to identify and study their own individual chosen area of specialist journalism, such as sports, music, entertainment, fashion, political and financial reporting. This Unit is designed to encourage the candidate to develop skills in their particular chosen field, and he/she may be encouraged to develop articles for their folio and information for Outcomes 1 and 2 in conjunction with the Unit DV0M 34 *Workplace Experience*.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

This is a Unit within the HNC/D 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 specialist journalism and an understanding of the key knowledge and article types demanded by in-depth specialist reporting and writing, and to encourage the candidate to develop skills in idea generation and writing for a chosen specialism.

The candidate should be exposed to a wide variety of professionally written articles from a variety of sources such as local and national newspapers and magazines, and in particular should be encouraged to develop skills from News Writing and Feature Writing Units in order to create a wide-ranging folio of work.

In Outcome 1 the candidate could be expected to present a cuttings folio of key types of articles from a variety of publications such as tabloid, broadsheet and local newspapers and specialist magazines, and to analyse the articles in terms of style, genre etc.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: Specialist Reporting

In Outcome 2 the candidate should research their chosen specialism, examining position in typical media outlets such as newspapers as well as key specialist magazines.

In Outcomes 3 and 4, the candidate will then be expected to move from analysis of a specialism to producing a folio of varied articles for this specialism.

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

The specific skills for this core skill component are:

- ◆ Work confidently with a numerical concept
- ◆ Decide on the numerical options to be carried out
- ◆ Carry out complex calculations or a number of sustained calculations

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: Specialist Reporting

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 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 Skills will 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: Specialist Reporting

This is a 1 credit Unit designed to give you a practical understanding and hands-on experience of the varied demands of specialist reporting, developing the news and feature writing skills. You will create an extended folio of specific specialist articles. The Unit is an ideal opportunity to develop an understanding and folio of work in a specialist reporting area of your choosing, allowing you to develop skills in an area of particular interest, perhaps in conjunction with workplace experience.

You may, for example, decide to focus on a preferred journalistic specialism such as sports, music, entertainment, fashion, political or financial reporting.

Outcome 1 is designed to encourage you to identify the key types of article used in publications which carry articles of your chosen specialist type. You should aim to put together a cuttings folio which illustrates the key types of article (match report, opinion piece, review, preview, interview feature, news splash for example) and to analyse the articles and describe their key components.

Outcome 2 then encourages you to examine your specialism in depth, identifying and examining the key publications, such as newspapers, specialist sections, magazines, websites and television and radio programmes, as well as key current and historical trends and practitioners.

Outcome 3 will then allow you to develop your own writing skills in your chosen specialism by putting together a folio of the key types of news and feature articles which are common in this particular journalistic area. You will work on a variety of articles across the course of the Unit.

Outcome 4 will also be developed throughout the course of the Unit, encouraging you to develop your own sound journalistic ideas for an extended, complex specialist article. You will research, write, design and layout a complex article for a named publication.

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 produce a variety of articles for your chosen specialism and by putting these together in a folio.

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