Higher National Unit specification

General information for centres

Unit title: English Language Skills: Correcting Creative Text

Unit code: F1WK 34

Unit purpose: This Unit develops skills in applying the principles and conventions of English language usage to identify and correct errors in creative text. It will be particularly appropriate for candidates studying within vocational areas of the creative industries.

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

1   Apply conventions of language usage to correct spelling and grammatical errors in creative writing.
2   Apply conventions of language usage to correct errors in punctuation, syntax and factual accuracy in creative writing.

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, skills in Communication at SCQF level 6 or equivalent as evidenced by C115 12 *English* (Higher) or its component Units *or* National Unit EE3T 12 *Communication* (NC) would be a preferred entry level. It would also be beneficial if candidates were familiar with genre and form as shown by possession of one of the following: National Unit E9X8 12 *Literature 1 or* National Unit DOYF 12 *Creative Writing 2*.

Core Skills: There are opportunities to develop the Core Skill of Communication at SCQF level 6 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or 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. The Unit underpins any form of creative writing activity where text is to be produced to a publishable standard.

General information for centres

Assessment: There are two practical assessments in this Unit. The first requires the correction of text in supervised closed-book assessment conditions and should be completed within one hour.

The second requires correction of text in supervised open-book assessment conditions. The time allowed should be sufficient for the production of all evidence and at least two hours is recommended. The candidate may use writing aids, including software packages if appropriate, to assist with the second task.

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

Apply conventions of language usage to correct spelling and grammatical errors in creative writing

Knowledge and/or Skills

♦   Essential principles, rules and conventions of English language usage
♦   Common errors and confusions
♦   Influence of genre on language use
♦   Creative uses of spelling and grammar
♦   Proofreading and error correction

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate all Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

♦   apply principles, rules and conventions of English language to unseen creative text containing a minimum of 10 spelling errors and at least 10 grammatical errors
♦   correct errors

The corrected text should:

♦   have a minimum of 80% of errors corrected to meet accepted conventions of genre

Assessment should be undertaken in supervised closed-book conditions and last one hour.

Assessment Guidelines

Unseen text containing the minimum prescribed number of errors should be generated by the centre. Text should be in a form and style appropriate to genre, for example, extracts from a radio, television or film script, fiction or a feature article. The form and genre chosen will affect the length of the text and therefore no minimum or maximum word length can be specified, but a piece of about 250 words may be appropriate. Errors may be identified and corrected using any recognised method.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: English Language Skills: Correcting Creative Text

Outcome 2

Apply conventions of language usage to correct errors of punctuation, syntax and factual accuracy in creative writing.

Knowledge and/or Skills

♦ Principles, rules and conventions on usage of punctuation and syntax
♦ Common grammatical errors and confusions
♦ Formal and informal English language conventions
♦ Genre and language, form and style
♦ Methods of checking factual accuracy
♦ Writing aids

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate all Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

♦ apply principles, rules and conventions of English language to unseen creative text containing a minimum of twenty eight errors of punctuation, grammar and syntax and two errors in factual accuracy
♦ correct errors

The corrected text should:

♦ have a minimum of 80% of errors corrected to meet accepted conventions of genre

The assessment should be undertaken in open-book, supervised conditions and last at least two hours. Writing aids, including software support tools, may be used as appropriate.

Assessment Guidelines

Unseen text containing the minimum prescribed number of errors should be generated by the centre. The form and genre chosen will affect the length of the text and therefore no minimum or maximum word length can be specified, but text should be of a sufficient length to test all elements of knowledge and skills. Text should be in a form and style appropriate to copy for the creative industries, for example, an extract from a broadcasting script or a feature article. Errors may be corrected using any recognised procedure.

Administrative Information

Unit code: F1WK 34

Unit title: English Language Skills: Correcting Creative Text

Superclass category: FJ

Original date of publication: August 2007

Version: 01

History of changes:

Version	Description of change	Date

Source: SQA

SQA acknowledges the valuable contribution that Scotland's colleges have made to the development of Higher National qualifications.

Additional copies of this Unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Please contact the Customer Contact Centre for further details, telephone 0845 279 1000.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: English Language Skills: Correcting Creative Text

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 has been developed as part of the HNC Creative Industries: Professional Writing Skills Group Award, but could also be useful as a free-standing Unit for those who want to improve technical accuracy in their creative writing.

The Unit is intended to equip candidates with skills which will help them to avoid common errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar which could affect the impact and acceptance of their writing. Editors who correct and modify writing to meet specific standards make an essential contribution to the work of the creative industries, but it is important that writers are sufficiently aware of the principles of language usage to ensure that their work is taken seriously. Practical work produced in the course of the award and beyond should convey intended meaning and have an appropriate effect on the reader. Reading current media and archived texts to analyse various writing and reporting conventions used in the creative industries, and making practical use of reference guides in a variety of formats should be encouraged throughout delivery in order to focus positively on good practice. It will be evident that the rules and conventions of English language can be manipulated effectively when they have been mastered.

It may be necessary for assessors to teach some basics of spelling, grammar and punctuation and to introduce candidates to a range of writing aids used by professional writers. These should include dictionaries and standard reference books on language usage and software support tools such as dictionaries, thesauruses, spellcheckers, grammar, proofreading and change tracking. Candidates should understand the limitations of software in the checking and editing of text.

Although it is not essential for candidates to use BSI proof correction symbols, an awareness of different methods used in the creative industries for the correction and amendment of text, including publishers' proofs, should be encouraged.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

If this Unit is delivered as part of the Group Award HNC Creative Industries: Professional Writing Skills, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed at the start of the Course as it provides some of the underpinning knowledge and skills required for effective writing.

Candidates could be introduced to learning and teaching materials in the form of handouts, or details of web sites, which advise on essential rules, principles and exceptions in English usage and exemplify appropriate methods of correction. They could practise their skills by discussing and then working on text produced in different writing styles. Timed redrafting of, for example, journalistic text and press releases could also help improve the speed at which work can be undertaken.

Individual tutorial support sessions may be useful initially. Peer review and group discussion of work could be introduced once candidates have gained confidence and experience.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: English Language Skills: Correcting Creative Text

The main aim of Outcome 1 is to familiarise candidates with accepted and acceptable conventions of spelling and use of parts of speech. They have to learn basic principles and become proficient in working to time, identifying and correcting common errors without the use of technology. Text generated for assessment purposes should not be too complex nor allow a range of interpretations. Spelling errors presented for correction could include common mistakes which break established rules, words that are often confused, and words which would not be identified as incorrect by software, including American variations. Mistakes in the use of traditionally recognised parts of speech and definite and indefinite articles could be represented to meet any specific candidate needs identified by the assessor. Examples of errors of usage might include noun pronoun disagreement, inconsistency of verb tense and pronoun reference, subject verb disagreement, unacceptable comparison of adjectives and adverbs, misplacement of prepositions.

Outcome 2 requires the application of conventions of usage associated with punctuation, structure and syntax. Candidates need to be able to identify the most widely accepted written forms, and relate these to the type of writing and the inferred intentions of the writer in order to recognise conscious manipulation of language conventions. They should be able to distinguish between rules and guidelines and appreciate the limits of technical correctness in professional writing. Awareness of techniques of style appropriate to genre should include an understanding of the impact of complexity of word groups, word choice, register and word order. The characteristics of standard, colloquial, journalistic and American English could be considered. A judgement on whether 'errors' are, in fact, justifiable artistic licence could mean objective analysis of whether a corrected version of copy has less impact than the original. In assessing the Outcome there should, therefore, be some flexibility in what is considered as acceptable or preferable usage. Common punctuation errors could include omission or misuse of the full stop, comma and apostrophe. Some further work on use of parts of speech in the context of grammatical or syntactical errors may be appropriate. These could involve, for example, mismatch of singular and plural forms, misuse of conjunctions within compound and complex sentences, incorrect application of adverb modifiers as well as unattached phrases or clauses and false series in sentence parts. The ability to check factual accuracy is also assessed. Factual inaccuracies should not mean any deliberately included by a writer for effect, and could comprise incorrect or inconsistent information or use of proper names within a text. These suggestions are not exhaustive; assessor judgement on the needs of the class group and the type of copy should determine the precise type and detail of errors. Text generated for correction should be in a format and of a sufficient length that candidates are able to demonstrate competence in knowledge and skills and correct copy to make it effective, accurate and well structured. If practical, access to software tools to support proofreading and correction could be useful, although the limitations of technology in proofreading should be emphasised.

Achievement of each Outcome requires a minimum 80% accuracy, but candidates should be encouraged to further refine work in formative activities and to recognise that there may be professional situations where total accuracy is essential.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: English Language Skills: Correcting Creative Text

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

Skills in Communication could be developed to SCQF level 6 and beyond as the Unit is undertaken. Although skills in written communication are not formally assessed, candidates will access, analyse and evaluate complex texts in a variety of genres as they undertake formative work. During discussions and peer review of creative work there will be opportunities to develop sophisticated oral skills as the group question, give information and respond constructively to each other. In analysing approaches to creative writing they will consider the needs of purpose and readership and, using the terminology of the creative industries, identify, evaluate and share opinions on key elements. Active listening strategies and techniques could be explored as best practice in supportive working. There should be significant development of skills in expressing ideas effectively in writing which will support practical work in other Units; accuracy in the use of language, spelling, punctuation and syntax is integral to achievement.

Open learning

Although interaction within workshop groups would provide the best environment in which to discuss and refine language skills, the Unit would be suited to open, distance and online learning only if it was conducted in conditions where arrangements have been put in place to assure the authenticity of the candidate's work. Dedicated online support and/or opportunities for personal interviews at specific times during the delivery process would be essential. Use of teaching materials must conform to copyright legislation.

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: English Language Skills: Correcting Creative Text

This Unit will provide you with the skills required to apply the grammatical conventions associated with the use of spelling and parts of speech, sentence structure, syntax and punctuation and to check factual accuracy contained within text. The ability to present text which is grammatically correct is particularly important if you are considering writing for the creative industries.

Tutor led discussions and practical exercises will encourage you to focus on your own skills and application of the conventions of the English language. You will then be given opportunities to practise identifying and correcting errors in a variety of writing forms — poetry, radio, film and TV scripts.

The main aim of Outcome 1 is to develop your ability to spell correctly and to identify acceptable usage of parts of speech. You will be required to identify and correct common errors in spelling and use of parts of speech.

Outcome 2 concentrates on improving your ability to construct word groups, use syntax and punctuation correctly and check for factual accuracy. You will be provided with exemplar learning and teaching materials in the form of handouts/electronic text and hard copy text. Practical exercises involving the proofing and correction of text and redrafting of written work will help to develop these skills. There are writing aids which help achieve text of the desired quality. You will also be introduced to internet searches, on line dictionaries, and programs with spellcheckers, and tracking facilities which may help you to correct and produce copy.

Whilst there are no embedded Core Skills in this Unit, there are opportunities to broaden and develop your skills in Communication. As you study the work of experienced writers you will access, analyse and evaluate a range of complex creative copy. Through your involvement in workshop forums where you review and discuss good practice you will develop active listening skills and techniques for supportive interaction with others, using the terminology of the creative industries. Accuracy in written language usage is an essential aspect of competence.

Assessment for the Unit is in two supervised events, one closed-book and one open-book. Text will be given to you for correction in both assessments.