

Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Media Analysis: Advertisements

Unit code: DH4C 34

Unit purpose: This Unit develops skills in identifying key technical elements of print, television and radio advertisements and analysing the ways in which these technical elements construct meaning and communicate cultural and ideological values.

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

1. Analyse the ways in which print and electronic advertisements communicate meaning and values.
2. Analyse the ways in which television advertisements communicate meaning and values.
3. Analyse the ways in which radio advertisements communicate meaning and values.

Credit value: 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. No prior knowledge of media theory is required, however, given the Unit's emphasis on analytical and written skills, it would be useful for the candidate to have possession of at least one of the following:

- ◆ National Unit EE3T 12 Communication (NC)
- ◆ Higher English or its component Units
- ◆ Higher Media Studies or its component Units
- ◆ Higher Media Literacy or its component Units
- ◆ Core Skill Communication at Higher

Core skills: There may be opportunities to gather evidence towards core skills 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.

General information for centres (cont)

Assessment: This Unit should be assessed by instruments of assessment that use a common analytical approach but which enable the candidate to attend to the specific nature of the medium. Each Outcome may be assessed discretely or may be integrated with other Outcomes to allow the candidate to follow a campaign across media.

An Assessment Exemplar pack for this Unit has been produced to indicate the national standard of achievement required at SCQF level 7.

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

Analyse the ways in which print and electronic advertisements communicate meaning and values

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Visual communication
- ◆ The functions of text
- ◆ Narrative structures
- ◆ Cultural values
- ◆ Relationships between cultural values and ideological content

Evidence requirements

The candidate will need written and/or oral evidence to demonstrate his/her knowledge and/or skills by showing that he/she can analyse one print OR one electronic advertisement and:

- ◆ identify key technical features of print advertisements including: composition, framing, lighting, colour, and focus
- ◆ explain the relationships between image and text
- ◆ describe the ways that image and text construct a narrative
- ◆ analyse the relationships between technical features and cultural and ideological values

A written response, which may take the form of annotated notes, should be approximately 500 words; an oral response should last at least five minutes

Assessment must be conducted in conditions where arrangements are in place to assure the authenticity of the candidate's work.

Assessment guidelines

The Outcome should allow the candidate to analyse an advertisement in depth and to identify the links between texts and cultural and ideological values. It may, however, be useful to concentrate on discrete elements of advertisements for some of the formative assessment.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Media Analysis: Advertisements

This Outcome may be assessed discretely or it may be integrated with other Outcomes in order to allow the candidate to follow a campaign across media and to compare and contrast approaches.

Outcome 2

Analyse the ways in which television advertisements communicate meaning and values

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Visual and audio communication
- ◆ Narrative structure
- ◆ Cultural values
- ◆ Relationships between cultural values and ideological content

Evidence requirements

The candidate will need written and/or oral evidence to demonstrate his/her knowledge and/or skills by showing that he/she can analyse ONE television advertisement and:

- ◆ identify the key technical features including: framing, lighting, focus, colour, camera shots, editing, voice-over, music and SFX
- ◆ analyse the ways in which technical features construct character and narrative structure
- ◆ analyse the relationships between technical features, narrative structure and cultural and ideological values.

A written response should be approximately 500 words; an oral response should last at least five minutes.

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

Assessment guidelines

This Outcome may be assessed discretely or it may be integrated with other Outcomes in order to allow the candidate to follow a campaign across media and to compare and contrast approaches.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Media Analysis: Advertisements

Outcome 3

Analyse the ways in which radio advertisements communicate meaning and values

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Technical features of radio advertising
- ◆ Narrative structure
- ◆ Cultural values
- ◆ Relationships between cultural values and ideological content

Evidence requirements

The candidate will need written and/or oral evidence to demonstrate his/her knowledge and/or skills by showing that he/she can analyse ONE radio advertisement and:

- ◆ identify key features of radio advertising such as speech, music and SFX
- ◆ explain the ways in which the narrative is constructed
- ◆ analyse the relationships between technical features, narrative structure and cultural and ideological values.

A written response should be approximately 500 words; an oral response should last at least five minutes.

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

Assessment guidelines

This Outcome may be assessed discretely or it may be integrated with other Outcomes in order to allow the candidate to follow a campaign across media and to compare and contrast approaches.

Administrative Information

Unit code: DH4C 34

Unit title: Media Analysis: Advertisements

Superclass category: KA

Date of publication: August 2004

Version: 02 (November 2014)

History of changes:

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Insertion of short guidance in Support Notes (in Guidance on the content and context) of this Unit re inclusion of the impact and application of digital media advertising.	03/11/14

Source: SQA

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Media Analysis: Advertisements

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 introduce a key analytical approach within the discipline of Media Studies, based upon semiotic analysis and critical theory.

The focus of the Unit is on advertising texts: the use of texts drawn from popular culture such as cinema and music may, however, provide effective examples of technical elements such as point-of-view and audio codes.

Where appropriate, it may be helpful to make candidates aware of the rapid growth and on-going development of digital media and the impact that this is having on advertising and marketing communications.

This Unit may act as a useful foundation for more complex work based upon media theory. In particular, it provides some of the conceptual ground work for HN Unit (D7M9 35): Critical Analysis of Texts and HN Unit (D7MC 35): Narrative in Fiction and Film.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

The emphasis of the Unit is on the development of the candidate's analytical skills in relation to how advertisements work. The candidate should be encouraged always to refer to the evidence and provide detailed descriptive accounts of visual, audio and written elements of the advertisement, before going on to analyse the relationships between such elements and cultural and ideological values.

It is recommended that formative work for Outcome 1 is used to develop the candidate's awareness of the technical elements of the advertisement in print or electronic form. Particular attention should be paid to technical elements such as colour, lighting, focus, and composition. The functions of text should be unpacked by examining the uses of different word groups such as, for example, commands, exclamations and questions. The ways in which these technical elements are structured should be explained in terms of anchorage, montage and narrative.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Media Analysis: Advertisements

Once the importance of close reading has been established, the concept of encoding and decoding cultural values should be introduced. This may be done using straightforward examples such as the ways in which advertisements convey cultural values concerning 'youth', 'fun' or 'romance'. An important point here is that the candidate recognises the logical relationships that enable reasonable statements to be made about the meanings of advertisements. It must be stressed that this kind of decoding is not based upon personal intuition or inclination but that it is based upon commonly shared expectations and understandings.

The links between cultural values and ideological content will require some discussion concerning the concept of ideology and may cover a range of subjects such as class, race and nation. One of the most useful ways of introducing the relationships between advertising and ideology is through a discussion of representations of masculinity and femininity. Whilst it is vital that the candidate is offered clear examples of well-defined ideological content, it is also important to present complex and ambiguous representations that suggest a range of ideological readings.

Open learning

This Unit lends itself to open learning. The Assessment Exemplar pack will act as a useful basis for a self-study distance learning pack.

For further information and advice, please see Assessment and Quality Assurance for Open and Distance Learning (SQA, February 2001 – publication code A1020).

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 Arrangements* (SQA, 2001).

General information for candidates

Unit title: Media Analysis: Advertisements

This Unit is concerned with the ways in which advertisements communicate ideas and values to audiences. The Unit looks specifically at advertisements. It encourages you to develop analytical skills that can be applied to most aspects of mass media communication including cinema, television and music. Consequently, you will find that the work you do for this Unit will also be very useful for your studies in the future.

You will learn how to analyse the key aspects of advertisements. For example, you will develop your understanding of how different colours suggest certain ideas or how sound creates atmosphere and mood. You will look at how advertisements tell stories and how they communicate values concerning ourselves and our societies. You will analyse examples of print, electronic, television and radio advertisements.

Your understanding and skills will be assessed by your written and/or oral responses to essay topics and/or written questions.

There may be three assessments for this Unit or they may be linked so that you can follow a campaign across media and compare and contrast the different approaches.

Before you are assessed you will have the opportunity to discuss and develop these skills and ideas with case study material to illustrate concepts.

1. You will be asked to analyse a print or electronic advertisement. The evidence may be written (about 500 words) or oral (5 minutes).
2. You will be asked to analyse a television advertisement. The response may be written (about 500 words) or oral (5 minutes).
3. You will be asked to analyse a radio advertisement. The response may be written (about 500 words) or oral (5 minutes).

On completion of the Unit you should be able to:

1. Analyse the ways in which print and electronic advertisements communicate meaning and values
2. Analyse the ways in which television advertisements communicate meaning and values
3. Analyse the ways in which radio advertisements communicate meaning and values