



Higher National Unit specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Journalism Skills: Advanced

Unit code: F7PX 35

Unit purpose: This Unit allows the candidate to build on and develop their basic journalistic skills and understanding, with a practical focus on researching and writing varying articles to meet the specific demands of differing media, publications and audiences.

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

- 1 Produce different styles of news stories from given material
- 2 Produce a lead news item from original sources
- 3 Produce a feature from original sources
- 4 Write a variety of articles for online media and other new media platforms

Credit points and level: 2 HN credit(s) at SCQF level 8: (16 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 is recommended that the candidate should have achieved HN Unit *F7PW 34 Journalism Skills: Introduction to Industry and Practice*, or have similar qualifications or work experience.

Core Skills: There are opportunities to develop the Core Skill of *Communication* in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill 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. If it is taught as part of the HNC/HND Creative Industries: Media and Communication, it is strongly recommended that it should be delivered following completion of the Unit *F7PW 34: Journalism Skills: Introduction to Industry and Practice*.

Assessment: The recommended approach to the Unit should encourage a focus on analytical examination and reflection on the features and trends of journalistic work, but work on practical writing tasks should be the main focus of the Unit, should start early and continue throughout the Unit. A portfolio approach may be beneficial in emphasising the creation of a diverse body of journalistic work. Assessment should be carried out in conditions that have been put in place to be satisfied of the authenticity of the candidate's work and to emphasise the importance of deadlines. Assessments will be open book candidates may have access to their own notes, information and course work, with the exception of Outcome 1, where candidates will be assessed closed book from given material.

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

Produce different styles of news stories from given material

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ News angles to reflect news values
- ◆ Comprehensive news coverage
- ◆ Importance of primary and secondary research skills
- ◆ Importance of house style
- ◆ Importance of following a given brief
- ◆ Importance of news story structure

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can produce the following:

- ◆ One news-in-brief item at 40–50 words from supplied material
- ◆ One short story at 80–90 words from supplied material
- ◆ One page lead at 300 words from supplied material

The assessment will be undertaken under closed book, controlled and supervised conditions within an agreed time frame, emphasising the importance of journalistic deadlines. The quality of the work will be such that it is suitable for publication in a newspaper. Copy should demonstrate accuracy in the use of grammar, spelling and punctuation to a level expected in professional finished copy. All items should adhere to layout conventions for copy currently practised within the industry.

Assessment Guidelines

The Outcome should be assessed to demonstrate the candidate's skills in handling complex stories and producing them to the required word count. The material supplied should vary to test the ability of candidates to analyse and edit different sources. The ability of candidates to produce their own news leads from original sources will test their ability to develop their own ideas. The Outcome is suitable to meet the needs of both print and broadcast journalists.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Journalism Skills: Advanced

Outcome 2

Produce a lead news item from original sources

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Generation of story ideas
- ◆ Primary and secondary information sources
- ◆ Preparation of appropriate questions in terms of purpose of interview
- ◆ Appropriate interview source
- ◆ News angles to reflect news values
- ◆ Comprehensive news coverage
- ◆ Accurate news coverage in terms of the briefing
- ◆ Importance of primary and secondary research
- ◆ Importance of house style
- ◆ Importance of following a given brief
- ◆ Importance of news story structure
- ◆ Importance of meeting deadlines

Evidence Requirements

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

Produce an original piece of work for a specific named newspaper or broadcast. The article, which should be approximately 300 words, could include the following:

- ◆ human interest story
- ◆ court report
- ◆ council report
- ◆ news report created from a follow-up
- ◆ news lead generated from a press conference

The assessment will be undertaken under open book conditions within an agreed time frame and should include at least one original interview. The quality of work must be such that it is suitable for inclusion in a newspaper or use in a broadcast.

The candidate must write leads to industry standard by showing recognition of the demands of house style, word count and deadlines, as well as meeting industry demands for accuracy in terms of spelling, punctuation, grammar, facts, and legal issues.

Assessment Guidelines

Candidates will be encouraged to use their own resources to produce this news lead article, especially if they opt to deal with a human-interest story. Local authorities may be able to assist centres by co-operating to arrange access to council meetings; local authorities could also prove useful for providing leads for follow-ups, and press conferences.

Candidates could be tasked with covering a variety of events and given ample opportunities to create a variety of material.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Journalism Skills: Advanced

Outcome 3

Produce a feature from original sources

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

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

Generate a feature idea, undertake research, conduct interviews and then write a feature article for a named publication. A minimum of one interview should be conducted in preparation for writing the finished article, which ideally should be specifically targeted at a relevant publication such as a broadsheet Sunday supplement.

The article, generated in open book conditions but to a specific deadline, should be a minimum of 500 words.

Assessment Guidelines

Candidates will be encouraged to use their own resources and to arrange their own interviews and research to produce this feature article. While a clear deadline should be set, candidates should be given ample opportunity to conduct primary and secondary research which can be used to develop the article.

Candidates should be encouraged to develop relevant, specific examples by pitching ideas to an 'editor' in the form of a synopsis or pitch.

Candidates could be tasked with covering a variety of events and given ample opportunities to create a variety of material.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Journalism Skills: Advanced

Outcome 4

Write a variety of articles for online media and other new media platforms

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Structuring news stories for websites
- ◆ Writing and structuring for news tickers, SMS messages and e-mail bulletins
- ◆ Writing effective 'head' for a story
- ◆ Writing effective 'sell' intro, including traditional intro sell and summary sell for news stories
- ◆ Using appropriate quotes
- ◆ Importance of 'evergreen' copy and search engine optimisation
- ◆ Choosing appropriate topic for a blog
- ◆ Setting up and maintaining a blog
- ◆ Grammatical accuracy
- ◆ Accurate use of spelling and punctuation

Evidence Requirements

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

- 1 Write a news lead for online use on a news website. The lead article should take into consideration key conventions of online journalism as well as news writing, make use of an effective 'sell' intro, 'head' and appropriate, effective quotes. The article should be a minimum of 275 words.
- 2 Write 'sell' intros for use in, for example, SMS services. The candidate should provide a specific 'sell' for a minimum of five news stories.
- 3 Identify an appropriate topic for a blog and write and maintain a blog over a period of time. The blog should contain a minimum of four entries and should be at least 750 words in total.

Assessment should be conducted under open-book conditions to deadlines and word limits to be agreed with tutor. The candidate should be encouraged to begin writing from an early stage in the Unit, particularly when developing an ongoing blog.

Assessment Guidelines

For task one, candidates may wish to choose an article which they are working on for, for example, a newspaper article such as Outcome 2, which has been edited to be suitable for web production, or it may be a specifically written article. Candidates should then develop the story by incorporating 'calls to action', polls, reader feedback, etc.

For task two, candidates should write a series of 'sell' intros which illustrate a clear awareness of the demands for SMS news services etc, and which can be edited for use on a news ticker.

For task three, candidates should identify a theme and topic for a blog, and should be encouraged to begin this task at an early stage in the Unit, to allow for it to be updated and maintained over a period of time. For example, candidates may choose to maintain a blog over half or even all of the Unit's delivery time.

Administrative Information

Unit code: F7PX 35
Unit title: Journalism Skills: Advanced
Superclass category: KD
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Version	Description of change	Date

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Journalism Skills: Advanced

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 80 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This is an optional Unit in the HNC/HND Creative Industries: Media and Communication, following on from the Unit *F7PW 34: Journalism Skills: Industry and Practice* and provides a development of the key journalistic writing skills of news writing and feature writing as well as writing for online and new media production. As a result of this, candidates should be encouraged to consume as much journalistic media as possible, including newspapers and magazines, internet, television, radio and all relevant new media.

In this Unit the emphasis should be on the production of journalism in a practical manner for an increasingly convergent and the multi-platform media. There should be an opportunity to develop news and feature articles on a regular, ongoing, formative basis to develop an advanced portfolio of journalistic articles.

Candidates should be encouraged to conduct their own research and interviews as much as possible, with the importance of original, journalist-generated content, in addition to deadlines, being emphasised throughout.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

For **Outcome 1**, the tutor should provide information from, for example, press releases, emails, letters to editor, and direct quotations, to construct news articles of varying lengths from NIBs to page leads. Candidates should then be expected to, for example, construct articles to a set deadline in class.

For **Outcome 2**, candidates are expected to research and develop an idea for a relevant news story then to conduct all necessary secondary and primary research including conducting interviews to ensure accuracy and balance. Candidates could, for example, pursue a story relevant to their college or local community.

For **Outcome 3**, candidates are expected to research and develop an idea for a relevant feature article then to conduct all necessary secondary and primary research including conducting interviews to ensure accuracy and balance. Accuracy and deadlines as well as appropriate writing style and tone should be encouraged throughout.

For **Outcome 4**, candidates are encouraged to consider online and multi-media presentation of journalism. For task one, candidates could, for example, edit their Outcome 2 article for online use, developing calls to action, polls etc. In addition candidates should be encouraged, in task two, to write news intros from given material appropriate to SMS news, while in task three ongoing production of a blog should emphasise the possibilities of online news and information presentation.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Journalism Skills: Advanced

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

The Core Skill component Produce Well Structured Written Communication on Complex Topics could be developed in this Unit at SCQF level 6.

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 audiences 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 audiences

The Core Skill component Produce and Respond to Oral Communication on a Complex Topic could be developed in this Unit at SCQF level 6.

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, opinion 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

Open learning

This Unit could be delivered by distance learning. However, it would require planning by the centre to ensure the sufficiency and authenticity of candidate evidence.

Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements

General information for candidates

Unit title: Journalism Skills: Advanced

This is a two credit Unit designed to develop your skills and awareness of the features and key techniques of writing in a journalistic style, developing your ability to inform readers in a consistently strong style over a variety of important types of article. You will be encouraged to produce news stories from available material, before developing these skills, as well as your research and interview skills, by researching, planning and developing your own news and feature articles, with particular emphasis on developing your own interviews and meeting journalistic deadlines. In addition, you will be introduced to some of the key techniques used for journalistic writing for online and new media presentation.

Outcome 1 provides a development of the skills that you may have first began to develop in the Unit *Journalism Skills: Industry and Practice*. You will be asked to develop your ability to spot an angle, key facts and quotes and to structure a variety of new stories of different lengths, from ‘news in brief’ (NIBs) through to page-lead news stories.

Outcome 2 encourages you to use and develop these news writing skills, as well as cultivating your own research skills and eye for a relevant objective news story by asking you to propose and research a real news story of your own, including conducting interviews, meeting deadlines and using quotes in an appropriate manner.

Outcome 3 continues to ask you to focus on pitching your own story ideas, conducting primary and secondary research, including interviews, and writing in a journalistic style, this time by developing and writing your own feature article, from pitch through to final production.

Outcome 4 examines some of the key introductory skills employed by the journalist when writing for online presentation and new media. You will be asked to develop your own news story (perhaps that completed in Outcome 2) for online presentation, making use of online conventions and techniques as well as employing calls to action such as encouraging reader comment, polls etc. In addition, you will be asked to present news information for new media such as SMS, and to develop, write and maintain your own blog.

The Core Skill components Produce Well Structured Written Communication on Complex Topics and Produce and Respond to Oral Communication on a Complex Topic could be developed at SCQF level 6.