



Higher National Unit specification

General information

Unit title: Journalism: News Writing Advanced

Unit code: H4WY 35

Superclass: KD

Publication date: August 2013

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

Unit purpose

The purpose of this Unit is to develop the necessary skills and knowledge to enable learners to research and write news stories of varying lengths. The learner will develop key journalistic skills in news writing of a complex nature across a wide variety of subjects, styles and media. This Unit is aimed at those wishing to pursue a career in journalism.

The Unit builds on the ground work of *Journalism: News Writing* and asks learners to test those skills in real life and in more demanding situations. Learners should work towards producing a folio of news content of varying lengths, styles and types, which they can include in a folio for interviews in the future.

Outcomes

On successful completion of the Unit the learner will be able to:

- 1 Produce different styles of news content from given materials.
- 2 Produce news leads from original sources.
- 3 Produce an in-depth package of news stories from a detailed briefing.
- 4 Work as a member of a team to produce an in-depth news package.

Credit points and level

2 Higher National Unit credits at SCQF level 8: (16 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8)

Higher National Unit specification: General information (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: News Writing Advanced

Recommended entry to the Unit

Learners should have competence in *Communication Skills* at SCQF level 7 or equivalent. This could be demonstrated by achievement of one or more of the following:

- ◆ H4WX 34 *Journalism: News Writing*
- ◆ F1RD 34 *Journalism: Research and Interview Skills*
- ◆ Relevant work experience

Core Skills

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes for this Unit specification.

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this Unit.

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 an optional Unit within the HND *Practical Journalism*. Progression from *Journalism: News Writing* is recommended.

The Assessment Support Pack (ASP) for this Unit provides assessment and marking guidelines that exemplify the national standard for achievement. It is a valid, reliable and practicable assessment. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the ASP to ensure a comparable standard. A list of existing ASPs is available to download from SQA's website (<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/46233.2769.html>)

Equality and inclusion

This Unit specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements

Higher National Unit specification: Statement of standards

Unit title: Journalism: News Writing Advanced

Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

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. Learners 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 content from given materials.

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

Outcome 2

Produce news leads 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 is 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

Higher National Unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: News Writing Advanced

Outcome 3

Produce an in-depth package of news stories from a detailed briefing.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Generation of story ideas
- ◆ Primary and secondary information sources
- ◆ Preparation of appropriate questions
- ◆ Identification of appropriate interview source(s)
- ◆ Importance of meeting deadlines

Outcome 4

Work as a member of a team to produce an in-depth news package.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Generation of story ideas
- ◆ Co-ordination of work
- ◆ Identification of primary and secondary information sources
- ◆ Identification of appropriate interview sources
- ◆ Identification of secondary stories and information
- ◆ Ensuring that the assignment is completed to set deadlines

Higher National Unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: News Writing Advanced

Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Learners will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills across all Outcomes by showing that they can:

Outcome 1

The learner must produce:

- ◆ Four news-in-brief items at 40–50 words from various supplied materials.
- ◆ Four short stories at 80–90 words from various supplied materials.
- ◆ Two news leads at 300 words from various supplied materials.

The assessment will be taken under closed book, controlled and supervised conditions within an agreed timeframe.

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 copy presentation conventions currently practised within the industry. The quality of the work will be such that it is suitable for publication.

Outcome 2

The learner will produce news leads for different media. There should be a minimum of five news leads (approximately 300 words per article, or two minutes' script for television, or 30 seconds' script for radio) which should include at least three of the following:

- ◆ Human interest story
- ◆ Court report
- ◆ Council report
- ◆ News lead created from a follow-up
- ◆ News lead generated from a press conference
- ◆ News lead generated from social media

The assessment will be undertaken under open-book conditions within an agreed time frame.

The quality of the work must be such that it is suitable for publication or broadcast. The learner 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.

Outcome 3

The learner will be asked to produce an in-depth package of news stories from a complex briefing or event. This will take the form of a news lead (700 words approximately) with complete research material and real-life quotes, and side panels and a secondary-angle news story. The total word count for the assignment is 1,500 words approximately.

Higher National Unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: News Writing Advanced

Television script — this will take the form of an introduction of 15–20 seconds, followed by a package of 3–5 minutes, which will include interview(s), a piece to camera and voiceover.

Radio script — this will include a minimum of one interview, an introduction of 15–20 seconds, a package of 3–5 minutes. The introduction should form part of the final product.

The assessment will be undertaken under open-book conditions within an agreed timeframe.

Copy should demonstrate accuracy in the use of grammar, spelling and punctuation to a level expected in professional finished copy. The quality of the work will be such that it is suitable for publication or broadcast.

Outcome 4

The team will produce a total print/online package of 2000–3000 words or broadcast/radio package of approximately 5 minutes. The assessment will be undertaken under open-book conditions within an agreed timeframe.

The quality of the work will be such that it is suitable for use in a national publication or broadcast.

Content should demonstrate accuracy in the use of grammar, spelling and punctuation to a level expected in professional finished copy. All items should adhere to conventions for copy currently practised within the industry.

Each learner, working as part of a group of two to four, will contribute to the total package of work of 2000–3000 words. He/she must show evidence of their contribution to the completed package, including written copy, individual research and at least one interview.



Higher National Unit Support Notes

Unit title: Journalism: News Writing Advanced

Unit Support Notes are offered as guidance and 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

The purpose of this unit is to provide learners with sufficient knowledge and skills in writing complex news stories. The learners will be encouraged to develop an extended folio of news stories for different types of media using real-life sources and interviews.

Learners should be encouraged to develop and propose their own news ideas in building their folio and should be encouraged to work to an industry standard by conducting interviews and showing a clear understanding of the need for objective news stories.

The format allows for creation of a news folio and encourages work on real time stories and many of the formats with which editors will expect them to be familiar.

This Unit is designed to be delivered alongside other HND *Practical Journalism* Units such as F1N3 35 *Journalism: Feature Writing Advanced*.

On completion of this unit, progression may be made to further qualifications at BA Degree and NCTJ/BJTC Diploma level.

Guidance on approaches to delivery of this Unit

Teaching should be focused on helping learners to understand and apply the principles of complex news writing and to encourage learners to develop skills in the generation and development of ideas. It is recommended that the Outcomes for this Unit are delivered in numerical order to ensure that learners have the necessary Skills and Knowledge to progress.

Close liaison with other tutors teaching on the HNC/HND *Practical Journalism* award is recommended in order to enhance subject integration.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: News Writing Advanced

Outcome 1

This is designed to give learners an introduction to multi-angled stories. The news-in-brief, news shorts and news leads are to be produced from supplied materials to a given brief. It may be that centres would wish to set a time frame over several weeks to allow sufficient time for the learners to develop ideas.

Outcome 2

Learners will come face-to-face with different real-life sources of news and experience the different demands. The demand for a human interest story will require the learner to exercise his/her interview skills, while the requirements for a story from a court and a council press conference will test the learner's ability to follow a narrative presentation or a debate. The requirement for a news lead generated from a press conference should increase skills needed to develop new angles.

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.

Outcome 3

Learners should be asked to explore one major issue and break it down into several component parts — a news lead, side panels and a secondary-angle. Real life quotes should be included in the copy.

Outcome 4

Learners should be encouraged to tackle a major issue by working in teams. Centres may wish to emphasise the need to co-ordinate efforts between learners in order to achieve a well-written and well-produced finished assignment.

Additional Guidance

Some input from guest speakers who work in the industry would add to the learning experience, as would class visits to media operations.

Anything that gives the learner real-life experience would also be beneficial, so visits to council committee meetings and courts of justice should be encouraged. These types of activity will also increase the learner's employability skills, as knowledge and experience of court and council reporting are often regarded as essential by news editors.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: News Writing Advanced

Guidance on approaches to assessment of this Unit

Evidence can be generated using different types of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education.

Outcome 1

This Outcome should be assessed to demonstrate the learner's skills in handling complex stories and producing them to the required word count. The materials supplied should vary to test the ability of the learner to analyse and edit different sources.

Outcome 2

Learners should be encouraged to use their own resources to produce each of the five news leads, especially the assignment dealing with a human-interest story.

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

The assessment will be undertaken under open-book conditions within an agreed time frame.

Outcome 3

Learners may wish to follow an unfolding event in real time. This could take the form of a council's decision on an important local matter, such as school closures, or increases in the council tax.

On a national level, learners could be asked to preview the Budget in the morning, record the Chancellor's speech in shorthand, then write all of the stories to meet a complex brief.

The assessment will be undertaken under open-book conditions within an agreed timeframe.

Outcome 4

Learners should work in teams to conduct a series of interviews and carry out research to create an in-depth news lead, side bars, info boxes, secondary stories, vox pops, etc. This should be aimed at a specific publication, website or programme.

Research can take place over a period of several months. Topics could, for example, cover Scottish, UK, European or local elections, involving preview or coverage; major events in culture, sports or politics.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: News Writing Advanced

Each learner, working as part of a group of two to four, will contribute to the total package of work of 2000–3000 words. He/she must show evidence of their contribution to the completed package, including written copy, individual research and at least one interview.

The assessment will be undertaken under open-book conditions within an agreed timeframe.

Opportunities for e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)*, such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all learner evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

This Unit provides a range of opportunities for developing the Core Skills of *Working with Others* and *Communication* at SCQF level 6 and *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* and *Numeracy* at SCQF level 5 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components. It can also support the development of other transferable skills, such as, essay writing, referencing, citation and bibliography skills and thinking, analytical and critical skills. The extent of development will depend on the learning opportunities chosen by the learner or the delivery and assessment methods selected by the tutor.

For the Core Skill of *Working with Others* at SCQF level 6, the skills are 'Working Co-operatively with Others' and 'Review Co-operative Contribution'.

Learners will be involved in complex interactions. The assessment for Outcome 4 involves a group task, with each learner making a significant contribution to the final product. It would be appropriate to encourage candidates to reflect on their own contribution to the group task.

It is possible to develop *Communication* at SCQF level 6 if the assessment takes the form of an essay or oral presentation. For written communication at SCQF level 6 the skill is: produce well-structured written communication on complex topics. To develop this skill learners can be encouraged in both formative and summative assessment to present all essential ideas/information and supporting detail in a logical and effective order; use a structure that is organised and use paragraphing to make distinctions between facts, opinions, arguments and conclusion, use a format, layout, and word choice which are appropriate to the content and context, and use spelling, punctuation, vocabulary and sentence structures which are consistently accurate.

The learners could be tasked with producing a written communication which presents, analyses, and evaluates a substantial body of information. These skills can be developed through formative activities, without being formally assessed for certification of the Core Skill.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: News Writing Advanced

For Oral Communication at SCQF level 6 the skill is: produce and respond to oral communication on a complex topic. In both formative and summative assessment the learner could be encouraged to give a detailed oral presentation on a complex topic. The specific skills of using an appropriate level of vocabulary, consistent spoken language structures and formality, conveying all essential information, opinions, or ideas with supporting detail accurately and coherently, and with varied emphasis as appropriate and responding to others, taking account of their contributions would be developed in an oral presentation. Although a summative assessment would require individual work and individual presentation, a formative assessment could be constructed that would encourage learners to work in a small group, with a few people contributing to the presentation. This may allow a learner to experience the demands of oral presentation before choosing this as an option for summative assessment of the Unit.

For the Core Skill of *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* the skills are: 'Accessing Information, use ICT independently, effectively, and responsibly to access information within a range of tasks' and 'Providing/Creating Information, use ICT independently, effectively, and responsibly to carry out a range of processing tasks'.

This Unit can help to develop such skills as accessing information using Internet searches or VLE use. Providing and creating information can also be developed. Creating a Blog or a website for formative assessment is another way in which this Core Skill can be developed. This could be used where learners (and their lecturer) have particular skills and interest in ICT.

The *Numeracy* Core Skill component *Using Graphical Information* at SCQF level 5 could be developed in this Unit.

The specific skills for this 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 learner should be able to interpret information which has either been presented as a number of related, straightforward forms; or in one complex form. Interpreting information must go beyond simply extracting information and include, where appropriate, interpolation and extrapolation.

The learner will be familiar with a range of common graphical forms, and must choose an appropriate form in which to convey particular information.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: News Writing Advanced

The learner must be able to:

- ◆ Communicate information in an appropriate form using tables, graphs, charts or diagrams.
- ◆ Interpret information presented in a complex graphical form, eg qualitative graphs; graphs where part of the axis has been omitted; histograms; graphs showing concepts/relationships such as cumulative frequency or complex variables.

or

- ◆ Interpret information from a series of straightforward, interconnected tables, graphs, charts or diagrams.

There is ample opportunity to develop other essential skills as well as employability skills in this Unit given the requirement to produce writing of a complex nature that would be suitable for different media outlets and within freelance journalism.

In general, employability skills can be seen as a set of achievements, understanding and personal attributes that make individuals more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupation. Employability includes areas such as effective time management, planning and organising, the ability to work with others and achieve a common goal and to manage and be managed by others.

Many of the skills being developed in this Unit and across the HNC/HND in *Practical Journalism* will help to develop candidates as prospective employees.

Whilst studying for this unit and in general across the HNC/D in *Practical Journalism*, candidates should be assisted in developing the following skills and attributes:

1 Self-Management

- ◆ Management, goal setting, punctuality and meeting deadlines.
- ◆ Personal effectiveness.
- ◆ Ability to take responsibility for one's own learning.

2 Team working

- ◆ Respecting others, co-operating and contributing to discussions.
- ◆ Negotiating/persuading to achieve common goals.
- ◆ Awareness of interdependence with others.
- ◆ Opportunity to manage or be managed.

3 Problem Solving

- ◆ Analysis of facts and situations.
- ◆ Apply creative and critical thinking to develop appropriate, imaginative and informed solutions.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: News Writing Advanced

4 Communication and Literacy

- ◆ Ability to produce clear, structured written work.
- ◆ Oral communication, including listening and questioning.

5 Numeracy

- ◆ Manipulation of numbers.
- ◆ General mathematical awareness and its application in practical contexts.

6 Information and Communication Technology

- ◆ Basic IT skills.

7 Research Skills

- ◆ Evaluating and interpreting information.

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2013

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged.

Additional copies of this Unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Please contact the Business Development and Customer Support team, telephone 0303 333 0330.

General information for learners

Unit title: Journalism: News Writing Advanced

This section will help you decide whether this is the Unit for you by explaining what the Unit is about, what you should know or be able to do before you start, what you will need to do during the Unit and opportunities for further learning and employment.

This Unit is a double credit Unit (80 hours) designed to give you hands-on experience of the varied demands of complex news writing. It will encourage you to create an extended folio of diverse news reports on a wide variety of topics for local and national media.

Outcome 1

This is designed to give you an introduction to news stories. You will be given guidance on how to write news-in-brief items, news shorts and news leads from supplied materials to a given brief in a given deadline.

Outcome 2

Here you will come face-to-face with different real-life sources of news and experience the different demands. You will be asked to write, for example your own human interest story based on a real-life interview. The requirements for a story from a court and council will take you into the heart of real issues, while a press conference will test your ability to follow a narrative. The final task is to produce a follow up for one of the earlier stories. This will test your news sense.

Outcome 3

You will be asked to explore one major issue and break it down into several component parts — a news lead, side panels and a secondary-angle. Real life quotes should be included in the copy. This will develop your skills in analysing issues.

Outcome 4

You will be encouraged to tackle a major issue by working in a team to produce a variety of articles which will make up the complete assignment. Here you will learn the skills of coordinating your efforts with other team members in order that the complex topic is thoroughly explored.

The Unit may allow you the opportunity to develop the Core Skills of *Communication and Working with Others* at SCQF level 6 and the Core Skill of *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* at SCQF level 5. The *Numeracy* component *Using Graphical Information* at SCQF level 5 may also be developed.

There is ample opportunity to develop other essential skills as well as employability skills in this Unit given the requirement to produce writing of a complex nature that would be suitable for different media outlets and within freelance journalism.

In general, employability skills can be seen as a set of achievements, understanding and personal attributes that make individuals more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupation. Employability includes areas such as effective time management, planning and organising, the ability to work with others and achieve a common goal and to manage and be managed by others.

General information for learners (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: News Writing Advanced

Many of the skills being developed in this Unit and across the HNC/D in *Practical Journalism* will help to develop your skills as a prospective employee.

Whilst studying for this unit and in general across the HNC/HND in *Practical Journalism*, you should be assisted in developing the following skills and attributes:

1 Self-Management

- ◆ Management, goal setting, punctuality and meeting deadlines
- ◆ Personal effectiveness
- ◆ Ability to take responsibility for one's own learning

2 Team working

- ◆ Respecting others, co-operating and contributing to discussions
- ◆ Negotiating/persuading to achieve common goals
- ◆ Awareness of interdependence with others
- ◆ Opportunity to manage or be managed

3 Problem Solving

- ◆ Analysis of facts and situations.
- ◆ Apply creative and critical thinking to develop appropriate, imaginative and informed solutions.

4 Communication and Literacy

- ◆ Ability to produce clear, structured written work.
- ◆ Oral communication, including listening and questioning.

5 Numeracy

- ◆ Manipulation of numbers.
- ◆ General mathematical awareness and its application in practical contexts.

6 Information and Communication Technology

- ◆ Basic IT skills.

7 Research Skills

- ◆ Evaluating and interpreting information.