Higher National Unit specification

General information

Unit title: Scriptwriting for Radio (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: H9DY 34

Superclass:	KC
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Source:	Scottish Qualifications Authority
Version:	01

Unit purpose

This Unit will ensure that the learner is able to understand the characteristics and radio script conventions and create radio scripts in different styles which reflect the requirements of the medium. The Unit may be delivered as a free-standing Unit or as part of a Group Award.

Outcomes

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

1   Explain common characteristics of radio and conventions of radio scriptwriting.
2   Create radio scripts in a variety of styles or formats.

Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7)

Recommended entry to the Unit

Access to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. This Unit can be undertaken by learners who have no previous experience of creative writing. However, English at SCQF level 6 or equivalent would be the preferred entry level as evidenced by Higher English or equivalent.

It would also be beneficial if the learner was familiar with genre and forms as shown by possession of at least one of the following: Higher National Unit *Creative Writing for Vocational Purposes* or Higher National Unit *Creative Writing: Generating and Pitching Ideas* or any equivalent Unit of study.

Higher National Unit specification: General information (cont)

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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.

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

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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.

Outcome 1

Explain common characteristics of radio and conventions of radio scriptwriting.

Knowledge and/or Skills

♦ Characteristics of the radio medium that influence scriptwriting
♦ Script formatting conventions and industry standards
♦ Impact of music and sound effects
♦ Suitability for target audience
♦ Output factors

Outcome 2

Create radio scripts in a variety of styles or formats.

Knowledge and/or Skills

♦ Research as appropriate to the programme(s)
♦ Scripting a range of programmes of different types and formats
♦ Use of industry-standard formatting conventions as appropriate to programme type
♦ Use of speech, music and sound effects to create impact

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:

♦ list a minimum of three characteristics of radio and outline their influence on scriptwriting.
♦ explain the main conventions governing the format of radio scripts, including reference to the use of speech, music and sound effects. This must include:
  — intros and outros
  — voice parts
  — technical directions and cues
  — appropriate annotation for introduction of speech, music, sound effects and pre-recorded items and components.
♦ explain how target audience influences scriptwriting and production. This must include the following:
  — reference to demographics
  — scheduling
  — public service, commercial, or other focus as appropriate
  — station identity
♦ create three radio scripts for distinctly different radio formats.

Higher National Unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

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One of these scripts will be short-form (30–60 seconds) while the other two will be a minimum of five minutes.

In each case, an original script containing all appropriate technical, musical, sound effect and speech cues must be submitted.

Higher National Unit Support Notes

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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 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

The Unit may be suitable for learners on a course of study related to radio, media or creative writing, for example *HNC Radio, HNC Creative Industries: Media and Communication* or *HNC Professional Writing Skills.*

Outcome 1 introduces factors which influence the process of ideas generation and the creation of scripts to suit radio audiences and markets. Learners should become aware of the characteristics of the medium that influence and present challenges to writing radio scripts. Radio is a medium unsupported by visual cues therefore requiring the writer to approach subject matter in a manner suited to audio delivery, maximising the impact of the three key components of radio scripts: speech, music and sound effects to create the required atmosphere in what is often referred to as the 'theatre of the mind'. Whereas this can be seen as a limitation of radio, it should be emphasised that it also creates opportunities for a medium that is more intimate than others.

Radio is used by many listeners as a 'background medium' and this should be acknowledged by writers, with scripts written accordingly where appropriate. This is a challenge in radio formats where listeners are required to engage fully and writers must use the conventions of scriptwriting in an appropriate manner to seek and hold the attention of listeners. Radio writing typically requires concise language and an awareness of natural speech patterns. There are typical conventions in radio script layout and format which the learner should become familiar with, including standard annotation for the introduction of speech, music, sound effects and pre-recorded items; technical directions and cues, intros and outros, in-words and out-words, etc.

Tutors are encouraged to provide learners with a variety of scripts in standard formats to enable them to appreciate how to interpret styles and produce scripts in an appropriate form. Exemplar scripts and blank templates may be provided by the centre. Practice of writing segments of original copy should be undertaken before the main scripting tasks are attempted. Radio output is often determined by factors such as station branding and identity, demographics, scheduling and slots, listener profiles, and public service versus commercial focus. Learner should be encouraged to listen to different types of output and should become familiar with, and able to recognise, the 'profile' of the output: young audiences, public service or commercial stations or a certain radio station style.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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The importance of contextualising copy for radio output is the main theme of Outcome 2. This requires the learner to produce original scripts appropriate to identified target audiences, programme formats and station types.

It is recommended that learners produce scripts for three distinctly different programme formats since they use scriptwriting conventions differently. For example: commercials (audience, product, USPs); drama (dialogue as opposed to presenter narrative, themes, setting, time); feature or documentary (research, structured narrative, pre-recorded items, contributors); news (headlines, readers, voicers, wraps, vox pops, etc). Formative study of genres could instil a firm grasp of techniques and conventions. However, learners should still remain flexible enough in their approach to subvert or mix forms and genres to suit a target audience or interpret a given brief.

Methods used to source information for generation of ideas may be introduced using directed 'search and find' task. Secondary research techniques could be discussed and tried. Listening to different radio stations, attending live readings and peer-led discussions will also broaden the learner's experience of genre and are effective ways of introducing the learner to different styles of copy appropriate to the audience.

Conventions for referencing sources, classification systems eg Harvard classification and internet referencing should be introduced early in the Unit and learners should be encouraged to reference their material.

The learner will, in the first instance, be guided to produce copy but as the Unit progresses, more emphasis will be placed on generating copy ideas for specific listeners or audiences. Tutor-led discussions/ peer discussion and review and individual tutorials will all encourage exchange of ideas.

Guidance on approaches to delivery of this Unit

If this Unit delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it be taught early on in the course so the learner can consolidate skills required to produce quality copy which can continue throughout the course.

Peer and assessor discussion and constructive criticism should be engaged in frequently to accustom the learner to receiving feedback. A workshop approach is useful to introduce topics, encourage discussion, develop ideas and receive and give objective comment.

Outcome 2 should be introduced by lecturer led sessions/tutor exposition to explain basic concepts and this underlying knowledge then applied using practical exercises.

The use of specific skills and techniques to fulfil a specific radio output brief mirrors the types of professional demands experienced by freelance writers, prepares the learner for 'disciplined creativity' and engenders objectivity in assessment of copy. The assessment tasks undertaken are excellent preparation for employment as the evidence generates creative copy for specific purposes.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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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.

Outcomes may be assessed separately, integrated in a holistic manner or delivered as part of a project as appropriate to support the centre's overall delivery model. It may be appropriate for learners to present for assessment scripts that are required in the assessment of other Units within the relevant Group Award. Outcomes 1 and 2 may also be integrated.

Outcome 1 requires explanations and could be assessed by way of learner responses relating to the main conventions governing radio scripting. Information about the type of evidence required could be given out to the learner one week prior to completing responses in an open-book, supervised environment.

The learner is expected in the week prior to assessment to engage the necessary research to source information required to undertake the assessment tasks. Whilst the learner may bring in notes and reference material to assist with answers, all assessment evidence should be produced and submitted at the end of the assessment period of two hours.

All evidence must be generated by the learner alone. Responses may be in written or oral form.

Outcome 2 requires the learner to create three scripts for different given target audiences. All three tasks may be given out at the same time. Adequate time must be allowed for sufficient research to be undertaken to underpin the scripting tasks. A completed original script containing all speech, technical, musical and sound effects should be submitted to pre set deadlines to replicate industry demands.

Learners are required to write three radio scripts for distinctly different radio formats. One of these scripts should be short-form (30–60 seconds) while the other two should be a minimum of five minutes.

The form or genre chosen will normally govern the length of assessment evidence, therefore these are guidelines only.

In each case, an original script containing all appropriate technical, musical, sound effect and speech cues should be submitted.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Formats could include: commercials, comedy sketches, features, news bulletins, drama or other fictional formats, music programmes, documentary, etc.

It may be useful to integrate Outcomes 1 and 2, for example using scripts written by the learner for Outcome 2 as case studies to explain and illustrate the concepts assessed in Outcome 1. This may be more useful to learners than describing the characteristics of radio and conventions of scriptwriting in an abstract manner. The tasks required in this Unit could also be integrated with required scriptwriting tasks in other Units or as part of a holistic project-based delivery. These models of integration will reduce learner workload and reinforce the skills and connections between Units. The setting of deadlines and submission of work in a format and to the standard appropriate to the medium in which it will be delivered will stimulate in the learner a practical and businesslike approach to creativity, and reinforce the importance of scripting conventions and formatting.

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

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skill of *Communication* at SCQF level 6 and the component Critical Thinking of the Core Skill of *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 6 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

Working to briefs and deadlines, for identified target audiences and in industry-standard formats also support employability skills, while topics chosen and researched in the writing of scripts may naturally develop citizenship.

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

General information for learners

Unit title: Scriptwriting for Radio (SCQF level 7)

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 will ensure that you are able to write radio scripts in different styles which reflect the different requirements of the medium of radio. The purpose of this Unit is to encourage you to perceive creative writing as a craft to be learned and developed.

This Unit is designed to help you to develop an approach to writing original radio copy by thinking of writing not just as inspiration but more of a skill which can be learned, practised and honed. These are specific skills which underpin effective and affective writing for radio.

Much of the Unit delivery is undertaken using a workshop type approach as this delivery style is useful to introduce topics, encourage discussion, develop ideas and learn how to receive and give objective comment. Thus peer and assessor discussion and constructive criticism will be engaged in frequently to accustom you to receiving feedback.

Outcome 1 introduces the production of scripts to suit target radio audiences and markets, the details of which are often set in a working brief. You will be afforded the opportunity to read a variety of scripts in conventional formats to enable you to appreciate how to interpret and produce standard radio scripts.

Outcome 2 requires you to produce original radio scripts in styles appropriate to identified target listeners/audiences. You will therefore write three distinctly different scripts, for different programme formats and target audiences.

The setting of deadlines and submission of work in a format and to the standard appropriate to the medium in which it will be delivered will stimulate in you a practical and businesslike approach to creativity.

The use of specific skills and techniques to fulfil a specific radio output brief mirrors the types of professional demands experienced by freelance writers, prepares you for 'disciplined creativity' and engenders objectivity in the assessment of your copy. The assessment tasks undertaken are excellent preparation for employment as the evidence generates a range of creative copy for specific purposes.

Whilst there are no embedded Core Skills in this Unit, there are opportunities to broaden and develop elements of some Core Skills. There are opportunities to develop the Core Skill of *Communication* at SCQF level 6 and *Problem Solving* (Critical Thinking component) at SCQF level 6. You will be encouraged to develop a dialogue of constructive commentary during class time which will involve you in *Problem Solving* (Critical Thinking) in order to supply solutions to briefs for creative copy purposes.

A number of different styles and techniques for producing creative ideas should be covered in this Unit.

Working to briefs and deadlines for identified target audiences and in industry-standard formats also supports employability skills, while topics chosen and researched in the writing of scripts may naturally develop citizenship.