



National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Media: Making a Radio Programme (SCQF level 6)

CODE F57X 12

SUMMARY

This is a practical Unit designed to enable candidates develop the skills and techniques which will allow them to make speech-based radio programmes of a quality suitable for a magazine type programme. Candidates will have the opportunity to develop knowledge and understanding of the different types of broadcasting and the different factors which affect broadcasting, and will also have the opportunity to use such equipment to record sound in both a live and studio environment, edit sound and mix pre-recorded sound with live sound. The emphasis of this Unit is on the technical aspects of the production process rather than programme content.

The Unit is suitable for candidates who have some experience and understanding of sound recording and editing, and who wish to develop their understanding of the radio production process.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Explain the technical and regulatory factors which affect the delivery of radio programmes.
- 2 Record radio programme content on location in accordance with a given brief.
- 3 Record radio programme content in a studio in accordance with a given brief.
- 4 Edit and mix radio programme content in accordance with a given brief.
- 5 Combine pre-recorded edited audio with live audio to create a final 'as live' recording in accordance with a given brief.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained the *Media: Making a Radio Programme* (SCQF level 5) Unit. Some experience of using IT would be an advantage.

Administrative Information

Superclass: KA

Publication date: February 2009

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Media: Making a Radio Programme (SCQF level 6)

CREDIT VALUE

2 credits at Higher (12 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6*).

**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.*

CORE SKILLS

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

There are opportunities for Core Skill development; these are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit Specification.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Media: Making a Radio Programme (SCQF level 6)

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 the technical and regulatory factors which affect the delivery of radio programmes.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Explain the technical advantages for a range of radio delivery.
- (b) Describe the legal requirements of radio broadcasting.
- (c) Describe the role of industry and regulatory bodies in radio broadcasting.

OUTCOME 2

Record radio programme content on location in accordance with a given brief.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Select appropriate locations in accordance with the given brief.
- (b) Select appropriate equipment in accordance with the given brief.
- (c) Correctly connect and adjust equipment to obtain optimum recording quality and monitor signal.
- (d) Appropriately save the recordings.
- (e) Satisfy health and safety requirements.

OUTCOME 3

Record radio programme content in a studio in accordance with a given brief.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Select appropriate equipment in accordance with the given brief.
- (b) Correctly operate studio equipment to achieve optimum recording quality.
- (c) Appropriately save the recordings.
- (d) Satisfy health and safety requirements.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Media: Making a Radio Programme (SCQF level 6)

OUTCOME 4

Edit and mix radio programme content in accordance with a given brief.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Effectively edit the duration of each audio recording to fit with the specified programme duration.
- (b) Effectively adjust the sound levels of each audio recording to create an acceptable/balanced signal level throughout the programme.
- (c) Remove any unwanted audio.
- (d) Select the order of the recordings within the programme to ensure programme flow and structure.
- (e) Save audio recordings appropriately.
- (f) Satisfy health and safety requirements.
- (g) Create an edited and mixed version of the programme which meets the requirements of the brief.

OUTCOME 5

Combine pre-recorded edited audio with live audio to create a final 'as live' recording in accordance with a given brief.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Prepare appropriate live audio for inclusion in the final programme.
- (b) Follow script and running order during the final recording.
- (c) Correctly use equipment to add in pre-recorded audio during the final recording.
- (d) Produce a final mixed recording that is well balanced and of acceptable technical quality.
- (e) Produce a transmission information sheet.
- (f) Satisfy health and safety requirements.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Media: Making a Radio Programme (SCQF level 6)

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Evidence is required to demonstrate that the candidates have achieved all of the Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

Outcome 1 — Written and/or Oral Evidence

Candidates are required to produce evidence which shows that they can:

- ◆ explain the technical advantages for a range of radio delivery with reference to:
 - Digital Audio Broadcasting
 - satellite and cable
 - audio streaming
 - podcasts
- ◆ describe the legal requirements of radio broadcasting with reference to licence requirements, station log and copyright
- ◆ describe the role of industry and regulatory bodies in radio broadcasting with reference to; PRS for Music, Phonographic Performance Limited, and The Office of Communication

This evidence should be gathered at appropriate points during the Unit under open-book conditions.

For Outcomes 2, 3, 4 and 5 candidates are required to work to a brief. This brief will specify that candidates are required to record, edit and mix the content for a speech-based radio programme containing interviews and links. The brief will specify:

- ◆ the subject matter of the ‘as live’ magazine programme
- ◆ the required duration of the completed programme
- ◆ the required format of the final mix

Outcome 2 — Performance and Product Evidence

For Outcome 2 candidates are required to produce product evidence in the form of a minimum of three original audio recordings made on location. One recording must be a single-voice recording, one a multiple-voice recording, and one a recording of sound effects.

This activity will be undertaken using digital recording equipment.

Each recording must be of an appropriate signal level and quality in terms of distortion and noise to signal ratio. Recordings will be distorted if recording levels are set too high. If recording levels are set too low the background noise will be too loud. Other noise factors that must be considered are; background noise, wind noise, popping, sibilance, breathing, paper rustling and microphone handling noise.

Each recording must be saved to a suitable medium for recall purposes.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Media: Making a Radio Programme (SCQF level 6)

Performance evidence for Outcome 2 must show that each candidate can:

- ◆ select a minimum of two appropriate locations for the recordings to take place on the basis of acoustic quality, production efficiency and personal safety
- ◆ select appropriate equipment in accordance with the given brief (including microphones, digital recording devices, meters and headphones)
- ◆ correctly connect and adjust equipment to achieve optimum recording quality and monitor signal
- ◆ appropriately save the recordings
- ◆ satisfy health and safety requirements

This evidence should be gathered under supervised conditions at appropriate points in the Unit.

Outcome 3 — Performance and Product Evidence

For Outcome 3 candidates are required to produce product evidence in the form of a minimum of two original audio recordings made in a studio.

One recording will be a single-voice recording and one will be a multiple-voice recording. This activity will be undertaken using digital recording equipment.

Each recording must be of an appropriate signal level and quality in terms of distortion and noise to signal ratio. Recordings will be distorted if recording levels are set too high. If recording levels are set too low the background noise will be too loud. Other noise factors that must be considered are; popping, sibilance, breathing, paper rustling and microphone handling noise.

Each recording must be saved to a suitable medium for recall purposes.

Performance evidence, supported by an assessor observation checklist, for Outcome 3 must show that each candidate can:

- ◆ select appropriate equipment in accordance with the given brief (including microphone, digital recording devices, meters and headphones)
- ◆ correctly operate studio equipment to achieve optimum recording quality
- ◆ appropriately save the recordings
- ◆ satisfy health and safety requirements

This evidence should be gathered under supervised conditions at appropriate points in the Unit.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Media: Making a Radio Programme (SCQF level 6)

Outcome 4 — Performance and Product Evidence

Product evidence is required for Outcome 4 in the form of an edited recording of the programme (ie multi-track session file containing a minimum of five audio recordings and links). The five recordings must consist of the three audio recordings made in Outcome 2 and the two audio recordings made in Outcome 3. This product evidence must show that candidates are able to carry out the following tasks for each recording:

- ◆ effectively edit to fit with the overall programme duration
- ◆ effectively adjust sound levels in the editing application to create an acceptable/balanced signal level throughout the programme
- ◆ remove any unwanted audio

This activity will be undertaken using digital editing equipment. The minimum level of equipment required is a computer capable of running a sound editing and mixing application.

Performance evidence, supported by an assessor observation checklist, is required to show that candidates can:

- ◆ select the order in which the recordings will appear in the programme to ensure programme flow and structure
- ◆ create an edited and mixed recording of the programme (ie multi-track session file containing a minimum of the three audio recordings made in Outcome 2 and the two audio recordings made in Outcome 3) which is appropriately titled and stored and meets the requirements of the brief
- ◆ satisfy health and safety requirements

This evidence should be gathered under supervised conditions at appropriate points in the Unit.

Outcome 5 — Performance and Product Evidence

Product evidence is required for Outcome 5 in the form of a final mixed ‘as live’ magazine programme recording containing pre-recorded audio recordings and live content which shows that candidates have:

- ◆ prepared appropriate items of live audio for inclusion in the programme
- ◆ produced a final mixed ‘as live’ recording that is well balance and of acceptable technical quality

This activity will be undertaken using a mixing desk in a radio studio.

Candidates are also required to produce product evidence in the form of a transmission information sheet which must record programme title, duration, producer’s name, any required transmission information and any required copyright information.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Media: Making a Radio Programme (SCQF level 6)

Performance evidence, supported by an observation checklist, is required to show that candidates can:

- ◆ follow script and running order during recording of final programme
- ◆ correctly use equipment to add in live audio at appropriate points
- ◆ satisfy health and safety requirements

All recordings will be of an acceptable technical quality. In practice it is very difficult to achieve recordings which are free from any defect. The occasional defect is acceptable.

This evidence should be gathered under supervised conditions at appropriate points in the Unit.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Media: Making a Radio Programme (SCQF level 6)

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 National Certificate Group Award in Media (SCQF level 6), but can also be taken as a free standing Unit.

In line with current industry practice it is expected that the production activity is undertaken using digital recording, editing and mixing equipment. Whilst good practice in the preparation of scripts and supporting paperwork should be encouraged the focus of this Unit is upon the practical tasks involved.

Outcome 1 is concerned with the variety of ways that radio programmes are delivered to listeners.

In Outcome 2 and 3 candidates should be encouraged to plan their recording schedule in response to the availability of sources and equipment. They may also apply risk assessment procedures to possible locations. The multiple-voice recordings may be in the form of interviews. The single-voice recordings may be in the form of links. The successful completion of Outcome 4 is dependent upon the successful completion of Outcomes 2 and 3.

In Outcome 4 editing and mixing can be conducted using a range of computer programs from industry standard applications to freeware applications which offer similar but less sophisticated functionality. Each candidate will require access to equipment in line with the demands of the brief.

The transmission information required depends upon the nature of the item. For simple items like jingles or packages correct entry into a computerised database might be all that is required, for more complex features transmission information, or Programme as Broadcast, sheet might also be produced.

Titling and saving files in Outcomes 2, 3, 4 and 5 should be done in accordance with centre policy and/or lecturer/teacher instruction. This will relate to the recording format and storage hardware.

Outcome 5 is the complex culmination of much of the work completed in Outcomes 2, 3 and 4. In essence, candidates must produce a magazine programme ‘as live’ in a studio. Prior to the ‘as live’ recording of the magazine programme candidates must produce at least one ‘item’ for inclusion in that programme. Items could range from jingles, beds and simple packages to more complex features. The live items could include:

- ◆ a menu
- ◆ links
- ◆ interviews
- ◆ discussions
- ◆ trails
- ◆ news
- ◆ credits

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Media: Making a Radio Programme (SCQF level 6)

Live audio will be mixed with the pre-recorded items to create a magazine programme.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

The practical Outcomes demand some appreciable skill. To achieve the required level of skill practice time will be required. Candidates should have the opportunity to practice using equipment and should review recordings under teacher/lecturer guidance before attempting assessment tasks.

Candidates would benefit from listening to professionally produced speech radio and should be encouraged to listen to a variety of programming.

At this level significant tutor support will be required in the organisation of programme content. It would be reasonable to supply running orders and scripts but more able candidates may prefer to generate their own content.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

There are opportunities for candidates to develop the Core Skill of *Problem Solving* during Outcomes 2, 3, 4 and 5 when they are planning and organising the production of the 'as live' magazine programme.

Candidates are required to use oral communication skills when conducting interviews in Outcomes 2 and 3. This provides ideal opportunities to develop aspects of the Core Skill of *Communication*.

Candidates are required to use graphical communication when monitoring sound levels using meters on recording equipment and in editing applications, either by on screen meters or waveform representation. In addition, candidates are required to use numbers in simple calculations relating the length of segments and finished programme. This provides opportunities to develop aspects of the Core Skill of *Numeracy*.

Candidates will be required to carry out complex processes using a sound editing and mixing application in depth. This provides opportunities to develop aspect of the Core Skill of *Information Technology*.

There are opportunities for candidates to develop aspects of the Core Skill of *Working with Others* during this Unit should they choose the work in a group to achieve Outcomes 2, 3, 4 and 5.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Media: Making a Radio Programme (SCQF level 6)

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

The following Instruments of Assessment are suggested:

Outcome 1	restricted response questions
Outcomes 2, 3, 4 and 5	a staged assignment (based on a given brief)

For Outcomes 2, 3, 4 and 5 candidates will be provided with a clear and unambiguous brief. Where possible, the subject of the brief should be kept simple and require a minimum of research so that the candidate has sufficient time to complete the practical tasks.

The production exercises in Outcomes 2 and 3 could be integrated with the F583 11 *Media: Scriptwriting* (SCQF level 5) Unit where research and scriptwriting activities are undertaken. These scripts (if considered appropriate by the teacher/lecturer) could be used at the basis for recordings within this Unit.

In general, the magazine programme is a complex piece of work and could be the culmination of a project carried out in another area of study or work carried out as a group. Magazine programmes can contain dramas and re-constructions and there are intriguing opportunities for integration. Where there is no integration, the subject of the programme should demand a minimum of research so that the candidate has sufficient time to complete the practical tasks. It would be reasonable for the teacher/lecturer to supply candidates with scripts.

As an example, for Outcomes 2, 3, 4 and 5 the brief could specify the production of a magazine programme of approximately thirty minutes duration. The pre-recorded items could include:

- ◆ signature tune
- ◆ opening
- ◆ package
- ◆ feature
- ◆ station imaging item (jingles, sweepers, etc)
- ◆ music bed
- ◆ discussion
- ◆ drama
- ◆ dramatized reading
- ◆ vox pop

This list is not exhaustive.

Titling and saving files in Outcomes 2, 3, 4 and 5 should be done in accordance with centre policy and/or teacher/lecturer instruction.

Time should be allowed for any necessary re-assessment.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Media: Making a Radio Programme (SCQF level 6)

Opportunities for the use of 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 communications technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or e-checklists. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all candidate evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. Further advice is available in *SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education (AA1641, March 2003)*, *SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools (BD2625, June 2005)*.

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).