National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT   Media Production (Intermediate 2)

NUMBER   DF16 11

COURSE   NQ Media Studies (Intermediate 2)

SUMMARY

This Unit is designed to develop the skill of contributing to the planning, producing and evaluating of a group media production from a brief. The centre can select the medium: for example, print, audio, video, animation, multimedia. The Unit is suited to those who have an interest in, and wish to pursue an analytical approach to the media. It is suitable both for those who wish to pursue further study and a career in the communications industries as well as those whose interest is more generalised.

OUTCOMES

1.   Contribute to planning a group production from a brief.
2.   Contribute to implementing a group production from a brief.
3.   Review and evaluate a group production.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally have been expected to have attained the Course or Units in Media Studies at Intermediate 1, or possess equivalent experience.

National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

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CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Intermediate 2 (6 SCQF credits points at SCQF level 5*)

*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

This Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skills for the Unit   Problem Solving   Intermediate 2
                                               Working With Others   Intermediate 2

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 the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

OUTCOME 1

Contribute to planning a group production from a brief.

Performance Criteria

The candidate will:
a)   Contribute effectively in terms of explaining the brief, expressing useful ideas and allocating tasks through negotiation
b)   Contribute effectively to planning the product in terms of the brief and the allocated tasks
c)   Carry out effective research on a topic
d)   Use technical terms appropriate to the medium and task correctly.

Evidence Requirements

(See Evidence Requirements for the Unit at the end of the Statement of Standards).

OUTCOME 2

Contribute to implementing a group production from a brief.

Performance Criteria

The candidate will:
a)   Contribute effectively in terms of co-operation and sharing ideas and information including negotiating working methods and rules for managing the group production.
b)   Demonstrate production skills which are effective in terms of the brief and allocated tasks.
c)   Use technical terms appropriate to the medium and task correctly.

Evidence Requirements

(See Evidence Requirements for the Unit at the end of the Statement of Standards).

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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OUTCOME 3

Review and evaluate a group production.

Performance Criteria

The candidate will:
a)   Explain the strengths and weaknesses of the production in relation to the brief.
b)   Explain the strengths and weaknesses of his/her own performance in relation to individual and co-operative planning and implementation.
c)   Suggest appropriate strategies for improvement.
d)   Explain clearly what has been learned about media production technologies, practices and contexts.
e)   Select appropriate evidence to justify their conclusions.
f)   Cover evaluation criteria relevant to the chosen medium.

Evidence Requirements

(See Evidence Requirements for the Unit at the end of the Statement of Standards).

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE UNIT

Observation checklist which records the effective contribution of the individual candidate to planning and implementation. The observation checklist should ensure that for Outcome 1 PC (a) the candidate negotiates roles and responsibilities with others, taking account of own strengths and weaknesses as well as those of colleagues.

Individual evaluation report to be completed under controlled conditions within one hour. Candidates can refer to production notes.

See NABs for observation checklist.

The checklist and the evaluation report should reflect the given brief.

At Intermediate 2 the production should involve:
♦   a topic which requires supported research
♦   the clear targeting of an audience
The brief should:
♦   be on a sufficiently challenging topic to require some research
♦   specify the medium, purpose, target audience, form, genre, length, deadline, internal and external institutional controls
♦   be medium specific and reflect professional practice, emphasising deadlines, budgetary and time constraints, (eg a maximum of one minute for a broadcast commercial; two minutes for broadcast news bulletin)

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT   Media Production (Intermediate 2)

Research and planning should involve:
♦ identification of sources
♦ topic research
♦ audience and product research
♦ identification of constraints
♦ plan of format
♦ content
♦ style
♦ resources requirements
♦ production stages and schedule
♦ task allocation

The Content Tables at the end of the Unit Specification provide an indication of the complexity of content at Intermediate 2. It should be noted that not every detail in a particular table will be relevant to the chosen product.

National Unit Specification: support notes

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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 main focus of this Unit is on the contribution to a structured group production which involves the design of a media product with a specific audience in mind and on a topic which is relatively unfamiliar. Candidates should be given personal and practical experience of some of the issues which face media professionals. The effectiveness of the candidates contribution is more important than the polish of the finished product.

For further details about the content to be covered in this Unit, please refer to the Content Tables which follow. Candidates are not expected to know all the terminology; however, they should be able to use the correct terminology within the context of their particular tasks.

Productions chosen could be from a variety of media eg advert, cartoon, dramatic production, documentary/news and/or current affairs, music, news paper, magazine or web page.

The brief should be on a sufficiently challenging topic to require supported research; it should specify the medium, purpose, target audience, form, genre, length, deadline, internal and external institutional controls. The guidelines should be medium specific and reflect professional practice, emphasising deadlines, budgetary and time constraints. For example, a maximum of one minute for a broadcast commercial; two minutes for broadcast news bulletin; seven minutes for dramatic video or audio piece; eight page magazine.

Research and planning should involve:
♦ identification of sources
♦ topic research
♦ audience and product research
♦ identification of constraints
♦ plan of format
♦ content; style
♦ resources requirements
♦ production stages and schedule
♦ task allocation

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

Candidates should be introduced to the main stages involved in production in the chosen medium. Assessors and candidates should then collaborate in a series of collective production activities of gradually increasing complexity. The technical terms should not be taught as separate from production activities but should be used as an integral part of these activities.

The assessor should assist candidates to develop their planning, production and evaluation skills by offering hints, reminders, feedback and 'tricks of the trade' and by continuing to support candidates in terms of promoting understanding of the production process and encouraging effective teamwork. As candidates gain experience the assessor should give more responsibility for the production process to the candidates and adopt the observer role in order to complete the checklist. At Intermediate 2, the role of the assessor is likely to be consultative and interventionist. In other words, candidates will be expected to consult the assessor for advice or technical help and the assessor will monitor progress and intervene as necessary to ensure completion of the productions.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

The recommended instruments of assessment for this Unit are: an observation checklist; an evaluation report.

Throughout the Unit, individual candidate performance should be recorded by the assessor by means of a tutor observation checklist. This should record the effectiveness of the individual to the planning and implementing of the media production.

Candidates should also be encouraged to take notes during the production process (this could be in the format of a logbook), both from their own point of view and that of the group. These details could then be used to form the basis of the evaluation response. At Intermediate 2 the evaluation should refer to decision-making processes and constraints in planning, production and post-production. It should explain the production processes and products by describing how the institutional and audience contexts affected the processes and products. Candidates are required to make recommendations for improvements to the product or process and/or the need for further practical work and/or alternative strategies that could have been followed.

Their production notes should be used as an aide memoire in the assessment and might cover the following in no more than one side of A4:

♦ Review the final product in terms of content, eg would the target audience appreciate the product, did constraints (time, lack of money/resources) restrict the production, etc. Was the brief met?
♦ Review the product in terms of language, eg use technical terms accurately. Were choices made appropriate and successfully executed both individually and as a group? Discuss both technological and non-technological strengths and weaknesses.
♦ As an individual and part of the group explain contribution during both planning and implementation.
♦ Explain what has been learned in terms of institutional contexts (deadlines, resources, copyright, taste, etc) and audience contexts.
♦ Suggest improved strategies.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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Individual media specific evaluation criteria are in the support notes.

The evaluation should be completed within one hour under controlled conditions. Candidates can refer to their production notes.

For checklists see NABs.

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, September, 2003).

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CONTENT FOR PRINT

Stages
Planning and research, layout design, production of copy and images, selection of copy and images, editing and sub-editing, production, distribution, debriefing, evaluation.

Planning and Research
- ♦ category: purpose, medium, form, genre, target audience, content, tone
- ♦ narrative: story and narration (structure, viewpoint)
- ♦ representations of social groups/issues; news values, balance
- ♦ competition, readership, advertiser research
- ♦ identification of resources and constraints:
    - i) institutional: editorial policy, house style, purpose, layout, number of pages, deadline, budget, health and safety
    - ii) technical: hardware, software, file backup
    - iii) external: legal and voluntary controls, audience interest
- ♦ identification of roles and remits: non-technological (production editor, advertising manager, reporter, researcher, writer, proof-reader), technological (copy editor, photographer, sub-editor, picture editor, layout editor). Roles may be both technological and non-technological, eg a reporter might enter her/his copy and email it
- ♦ identification of sources (where relevant): reporter, press agencies, press release, other media, reference materials (cuttings, encyclopaedias, archives, internet)
- ♦ remits and production schedule

Technical Terms
- ♦ hardware: microcomputer system, printer, digital camera, SLR camera, scanner, photocopier
- ♦ software: DTP, word processing, drawing, painting, image manipulation, type manipulation, scanning, spreadsheet
- ♦ page formatting: size, orientation, margins, columns, gutter, grid, dummy
- ♦ text elements: masthead, headline, subhead, copy, caption, header, footer, byline, photo credit, index, jump line
- ♦ character formatting: font (serif, sans serif, script, decorative), size, style (plain, italic, bold, underline), colour, tracking
- ♦ paragraph formatting: indentation, leading, alignment, line length
- ♦ graphic elements: photograph, mug shot, logo, diagram, box, rule, colour, cropping, white space

Use of Codes
Technical and cultural codes and text and graphic content; their connotations; anchorage.
Genre conventions and style.
News language.

Evaluation Criteria
Brief, legibility, spelling and grammar, variety, visual impact, originality, audience interest, use of words and pictures, news values, balance, narrative, representations.

UNIT   Media Production (Intermediate 2)

CONTENT FOR AUDIO

Stages
Planning and research, scripting, rehearsing, recording, editing, broadcasting, debriefing, evaluation.

Planning and Research
♦   category: purpose, medium, form, genre, target audience, subject matter, tone
♦   narrative: story and narration (structure, plot, viewpoint)
♦   representations of social groups/issues; news values, balance
♦   competition, listener, advertiser research
♦   identification of resources and constraints:
    iv) internal: editorial policy, house style, purpose, length, deadline, budget, health and safety
    v)   technical: studio, location, live, pre-recorded, tape editing, sound effects
    vi) external: legal and voluntary controls, audience interest
♦   identification of roles and remits: non-technological (programme editor, reporter, scriptwriter, interviewer, interviewee, performer, presenter); technological (location recorder, sound engineer, editor). Roles may be both technological and non-technological, eg location interviewing
♦   identification of sources (where relevant): reporter, interview, vox pop, news sources, other media, reference materials (encyclopedias, archives, internet), recordings of sound effects, music and interviews
♦   remits and production schedule

Technical Terms
♦   hardware: cassette recorder, reel-to-reel recorder, microphones (omni-directional, uni-directional, bi-directional), splice editor, microcomputer system, printer
♦   software: word processor, spreadsheet
♦   voice: accent, speed, volume, delivery, tone
♦   music: station/programme jingles, links, mood music
♦   sounds: sound effects, silence, ambient noise
♦   script: voice piece, interview, dialogue, sound effects, transitions (links, intros, outros)
♦   recording: location, live, pre-recorded
♦   edits: paper edits, dub edits, splice edits

Use of Codes
Sound codes; their connotations; anchorage.
Genre conventions and style.
Radio language.

Evaluation Criteria
Brief, recording quality, editing, variety, originality, audience interest, use of words, voice, music, sound effects and transitions, news values, balance, dramatic effect, narrative, representations.

UNIT Media Production (Intermediate 2)

CONTENT FOR VIDEO

Stages
Planning and research, treatment, script, storyboard, rehearsing, shooting, editing, sound dubbing, screening, debriefing, evaluation.

Planning and Research
♦ category: purpose, medium, form, genre, target audience, subject matter, tone
♦ narrative: story and narration (structure, plot, viewpoint)
♦ representations of social groups/issues; news values, balance
♦ identification of resources and constraints:
   i)   internal: editorial policy, house style, purpose, deadline, length, budget, health and safety
   ii) technical: hardware and software
   iii) external: legal and voluntary controls, representation issues
♦ identification of roles: non-technological (producer, production assistant, front-of-camera performers, scriptwriter, storyboard artist, make-up, continuity, props); technological (director, camera operator, sound recordist, editor)
♦ identification of sources (where relevant): reporter, press agency, press release, other media, reference materials (encyclopaedias, archives, internet), archive recordings
♦ remits and production schedule

Technical Terms
♦ hardware: video cameras, tripod, lighting, omni-directional and uni-directional microphones, video editing suite, microcomputer system, printer
♦ software: word processor, spreadsheet
♦ mise-en-scene: set, props, costume, make-up, performance
♦ lighting: high-key, low-key, three-point lighting
♦ framing: shot distance (ELS, LS, MLS, MS, MCU, CU, ECU), establishing shot
♦ focus: shallow, deep, pull focus
♦ angle: straight, high, low, canted
♦ editing: cut, dissolve, fade in, fade out, wipe, standard wipes, shot/reverse shot,shot length, continuity editing
♦ camera movement: pan, tilt, track, crane, handheld
♦ sound: speech, voice-over, music, sound effects, background sound
♦ titles: opening titles, end titles, font (serif, sans serif, script, decorative), size, style, colour

Use of Codes
Codes, text, images, sounds and music; their connotations; polysemy and anchorage.
Genre conventions and style.

Evaluation Criteria
Brief, titling, mise-en-scene, quality of camerawork, sound, editing, variety, originality, audience interest, news values, balance, dramatic effect, narrative, representations.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT   Media Production (Intermediate 2)

CONTENT FOR COMPUTER ANIMATION

Stages
Planning (eg action first or sound first), research, treatment, script, storyboard, creation
of characters, backgrounds and foregrounds, titles, sound dubbing, screening, debriefing, evaluation.

Planning and Research
♦ category: purpose, medium, form, genre, target audience, subject matter, tone
♦ narrative: story and narration (structure, plot, viewpoint)
♦ representations: stereotypes
♦ identification of resources and constraints:
      i)   internal: purpose, deadline, length, budget, health and safety
      ii)   technical: hardware and software, file backup
      iii) external: legal and voluntary controls, audience interest, representation issues
♦ identification of roles: non-technological (producer, director, scriptwriter, storyboard artist);
  technological (animator, artist, sound recordist). Certain roles may combine technological and
  non-technological roles, eg the storywriter might also record the soundtrack
♦ identification of sources, eg clip art, study of real-life movement
♦ remits and production schedule

Technical Terms
♦ hardware: microcomputer systems, printer, microphones
♦ software: painting, animation, sound recording, type manipulation, CD-ROM clip art collections
♦ character: key positions, in-betweens, cycles
♦ settings: background, foreground, perspective
♦ actions: head-turn, walk, special effects, squish, squash, stretch, drag, energisers
♦ framing: shot distance (ELS, LS, MLS, MS, MCU, CU, ECU), establishing shot
♦ editing: cut, dissolve, fade in, fade out, standard wipes
♦ sound: speech, music, sound effects
♦ titles: opening titles, end titles, font (serif, sans serif, script, decorative), size, style, colour,
  animated

Use of Codes
Technical and cultural codes, text, images, words, sounds and music; their connotations; polysemy
and anchorage.
Animation conventions and style.
Genre conventions and style.

Evaluation Criteria
Brief, titling, characters, setting, quality of animation, sound, editing, originality, special
effects, audience interest, narrative, dramatic effect, representations.