National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Media Production (Advanced Higher)

CODE DF16 13

COURSE Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

SUMMARY

This Unit is designed to enable individual candidates to contribute to all stages of two related media productions created for a client. Candidates will research, create, review and evaluate the productions.

The centre can select the media from a broad range including print, audio, video, multimedia.

The Unit is suited to those who have an interest in, and/or wish to pursue further study and a career in the communications industries as well as those whose interest is more general.

This is a mandatory Unit of the Advanced Higher Media Studies Course, but may also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

OUTCOMES

1 Contribute to planning two related media productions from a brief.
2 Contribute to implementing the two related media productions from a brief.
3 Review and evaluate the two related media productions.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained the following, or equivalent:

♦ Higher Media Studies or the Unit DF16 12 *Media Production* (Higher)

Administrative Information

Superclass: KA

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Additional copies of this Unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. The cost for each Unit specification is £2.50. (A handling charge of £1.95 will apply to all orders for priced items.)

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CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Higher (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7*).

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

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill	Problem Solving at SCQF level 6
Core Skills component	None

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 two related media productions from a brief

Performance Criteria

(a)   Contribute effectively to devising the brief, expressing useful ideas and allocating roles and tasks through negotiation.
(b)   Carry out relevant research effectively.
(c)   Contribute effectively to devising the production schedule.
(d)   Use technical and analytical terms accurately.
(e)   Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between media theory and practice.

OUTCOME 2

Contribute to implementing the two related media productions from a brief

Performance Criteria

(a)   Contribute effectively to the organisation of the productions, including negotiating working methods and rules for managing the production.
(b)   Communicate ideas and information effectively.
(c)   Contribute effectively in terms of technical and non-technical skills in accordance with the brief, allocated role and production schedule.
(d)   Use technical and analytical terms accurately, demonstrating understanding of the relationship between media theory and practice.

OUTCOME 3

Review and evaluate the two related media productions

Performance Criteria

(a)   Analyse the strengths and weaknesses of each production in relation to the brief.
(b)   Analyse the strengths and weaknesses of own performance.
(c)   Recommend and justify appropriate improved or alternative strategies.
(d)   Use technical and analytical terms accurately, demonstrating understanding of the relationship between media theory and practice.
(e)   Use evaluation criteria appropriate to the medium of each of the two media products.

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EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE UNIT

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

An observation checklist which records the performance of the individual candidate is required for Outcomes 1 and 2. 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 and those of colleagues.

For Outcome 3, candidates must produce an individual evaluation report. This may be written or oral and should be completed within one hour under controlled conditions and be open book. Candidates can have access to their production notes/materials. Oral evidence should be recorded on audio or videotape.

In the case of a single candidate taking Advanced Higher, there should be the opportunity for this candidate to work with the teacher/lecturer as a client and, on occasion, collaborator.

An example of an observation checklist is provided in the National Assessment Bank item for this Unit.

At Advanced Higher, the production should involve:

♦   negotiating with a client
♦   a topic which requires primary and secondary research
♦   the products not exceeding the length/size detailed in brief
♦   adherence to deadline as detailed in brief
♦   adherence to relevant internal and external controls

The checklist and the evaluation should relate closely to the brief which should:

♦   be challenging, requiring extensive research involving both primary and secondary sources
♦   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. For example, a maximum of one minute for a broadcast commercial

Research and planning should involve:

♦   negotiating with the client
♦   identification of sources
♦   topic research
♦   audience and product research
♦   identification of constraints
♦   plan of format
♦   content
♦   style
♦   resources requirements

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♦   production stages and schedule
♦   task allocation

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 focus of this Unit is on the planning, creation and evaluation of two related media productions. Advanced Higher demands more of the candidate than Higher, in that candidates must complete productions in different media forms. The two products must be related. In other words, the second production might incorporate (where appropriate) text, images and sounds associated with the first production.

For example candidates might use desktop publishing technology to create a newspaper or magazine. The second product could advertise the first and could be produced using audio, video or Web page technologies.

Alternatively, both products could be advertisements for the same product or service. These would be related as they would be conceived as part of the same cross-media advertising campaign.

Detailed exemplars on each of the media are contained in the content tables (Print, Audio, Video, Web Page Design) which are provided in the Appendix to this unit.

The brief should be written by the candidate(s) after consultation with the client. For example, a suitable client might be the local health centre and the topic could be the dangers of sunbathing. Regardless, the brief must require research - for example, statistics on skin cancer, interviews with medical experts, questionnaires or vox pops with target audience. One production could be a 10 minute information video on the dangers of sunbathing for older teenagers including a music video, links, interviews and statistical graphics with voice over. The second could be a print public service advert warning of the dangers of the sun to young children.

Some centres might locate a client within the centre — for example an enterprise group or guidance counsellor. In some cases it might be necessary for the teacher/lecturer to take on the role of client but the topic must require in depth research.

The brief should specify the medium, purpose, target audience, form, genre, length, deadline, internal and external institutional controls.

Research and planning should involve:

♦   negotiation with client
♦   identification of sources
♦   topic research
♦   audience and product research
♦   identification of constraints
♦   plan of format; content; style
♦   resources requirements
♦   production stages, working methods schedule
♦   negotiation of production roles and tasks

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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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.

Internal and external controls must be adhered to — for example: it should avoid causing offence to the target audience and must observe the laws of copyright, libel, discrimination.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

Candidates should first be introduced to the main stages involved in production in the chosen medium. The technical terms involved should not be taught as separate from production activities but should be used as an integral part of these activities and should be employed consistently and confidently. Candidates should expand their knowledge of technical terms by investigating the application of techniques not available to them – for example in creating a video they might investigate the use of chromakey even if they do not have the technology to apply it to their own production. This knowledge could then be used in their evaluation to improve their product and in analysing professional products and in the creation of a hypothetical production in the exam. In this way candidates build skills across Units.

If candidates are doing this Unit as part of the Advanced Higher Media Studies Course, they should be encouraged to apply the methods of analysis examined in the *Media Analysis* Unit - for example they might apply audience theories in their research of the target audience for their productions. Clear links should be made between theory and practice at all times.

In the case of a single candidate taking Advanced Higher, there should be the opportunity for this candidate to work with the teacher/lecturer as a client and, on occasion, collaborator.

The teacher/lecturer 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 the candidates gain experience the teacher/lecturer should gradually give more responsibility for the production process to the candidates. This is an opportunity for assessors to complete observation checklists (see below). At Advanced Higher it should be possible for the teacher/lecturer to move to the roles of observer, technical consultant and production manager, ensuring that the candidate attends to the internal and external institutional constraints.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

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

Throughout the Unit, individual candidate performance should be recorded by the assessor by means of an observation checklist. This should record the effectiveness of the individual in the planning and implementation of the media production.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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Candidates should also be encouraged to take notes during the production process (this could be in the format of a logbook). These details could then be used to form the basis of the evaluation response. At Advanced Higher the evaluation should be detailed and refer to decision-making processes and constraints in planning, production and post-production. It should analyse 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 or research and/or alternative strategies that could have been followed. They should also show that they are aware of their own strengths and weaknesses and make suggestions as to how they could improve their individual contribution in future.

Some of the following may be helpful. Candidates could:

♦   Review the research and end product in terms of analytical theories.
♦   Review the final product in terms of categories eg were choices made appropriate to target audience, constraints. Was the brief met?
♦   Review the product in terms of language ie 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.
♦   Review the product in terms of narrative and representation.
♦   Review the production process in individual and co-operative activities during both planning and implementation.
♦   Review what has been learned in terms of institutional contexts (deadlines, resources, copyright, taste etc) and audience contexts.
♦   Review the response of the client and any response from the target audience.
♦   Recommend and justify improved or alternative strategies.

The evaluation must be completed within one hour under controlled conditions.

CANDIDATES WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

This Unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. 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. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs (SQA, September 2004).*

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Media Production (Advanced Higher)

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, subject matter, style, target audience.

♦ Narrative: story, narration and structure; narrative codes; dramatic effect.

♦ Representations: (where relevant) news values and balance; representation of individuals/social groups and social and political issues; relation to target audience and internal and external contexts.

♦ Identification of resources and constraints:
  — Institutional: economic (budget, sales, advertising), editorial policy, house style, layout, deadline, self-censorship, health and safety
  — Technical: available hardware and software
  — External: legal and self-regulatory controls, censorship, ethical and representation issues

♦ Identification of roles and remits: non-technological (production editor, advertisement manager, reporter, writer, researcher, proof-reader, legal adviser), technological (copy editor, photographer, sub-editor, picture editor, layout editor). Certain roles may combine technological and non-technological roles, eg a reporter might enter her/his copy and email it.

♦ Product research, readership research, research on potential advertisers.

♦ Identification of sources: primary, secondary and alternative sources; reporter, stringer, press agencies, press release, public relations, pressure groups, lobby correspondents, experts, leaks, other media, use of reference materials (cuttings, encyclopedias, archives, internet).

♦ Remits and production schedule.

Technical Terms

♦ Hardware: microcomputer system, printer, digital camera, SLR camera, scanner, photocopier, offset-litho.

♦ Software: desktop publishing, word processing, drawing, painting, image manipulation, type manipulation software, scanning, spreadsheet.

♦ Page formatting: size (A4, tabloid, broadsheet), orientation, margins, columns, gutter, grid, dummy.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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♦   Text elements: masthead, headline, subhead, copy, caption, sidebar, pull quote, byline, photo credit, header, footer, index, jump line.

♦   Character formatting: font (serif, sans serif, script, decorative), size, style (roman, italic, bold, underline), tracking (normal, loose, tight), colour.

♦   Paragraph formatting: indentation, leading, alignment, line length.

♦   Graphic elements: photograph, mug shot, logo, promo, diagram, box, rule, colour, white space, cropping, digital manipulation.

Use of Codes

Technical codes and text and graphic content.
Connotations of words and images, anchorage and polysemy, print product conventions, breaking conventions.

Evaluation Criteria

Brief, spelling and grammar, legibility, visual impact, unity, variety, originality, audience interest, use of words and pictures (where relevant), news values and balance, narrative (where relevant), dramatic effect, legality, ethical issues, representation issues.

Audio

Stages

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

Planning and Research

♦   Category: purpose, medium, form, genre, target audience, subject matter, tone.

♦   Narrative: story, narration and structure; narrative codes; dramatic effect.

♦   Representations: (where relevant) news values and balance; representation of individuals/social groups and social and political issues; relation to target audience and internal and external contexts.

♦   Identification of resources and constraints:- internal: economic (budget, sales, advertising), editorial policy, house style, deadline, health and safety
   —   technical: studio/location, live, pre-recorded, tape editing, sound effects, mixing
   —   external: legal and self-regulatory controls, self-censorship, censorship, ethical, copyright, representation issues

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♦ Identification of roles and remits: non-technological (producer, reporter, programme editor, scriptwriter, interviewer, interviewee, performer, presenter, legal adviser), technological (location recorder, sound engineer, editor). Certain roles may combine technological and non-technological roles, eg location interviewing.

♦ Research of competition, audience research, seeking advertisers.

♦ Identification of sources (where relevant): reporter, interview, vox pop, news sources, other media, use of reference materials (encyclopedias, archives, internet), past recordings of sound effects, music, interviews.

♦ Remits and production schedule.

Technical Terms

♦ Hardware: microcomputer system, printer, cassette recorder, reel-to-reel recorder, omni directional, bi-directional and uni-directional microphones, mixer, splice editor.

♦ Software: digital sound editing software, word processor, spreadsheet.

♦ Words: appropriateness to genre, register, mode of address.

♦ Voice: tone, accent, speed, volume, delivery.

♦ Music: station/programme jingles, links, mood music, actuality.

♦ Sounds: ambient noise, sound effects, silence.

♦ Script: voice piece, vox pop, interview, dialogue, sound effects, transitions (intros, outros, links).

♦ Recording: studio, location, live, pre-recorded.

♦ Edits: paper edits, dub edits, splice edits, electronic edits.

Use of Codes

Connotations of sound codes, use of sound codes.
Denotation and connotation of words and sounds, anchorage of words, sounds and music, polysemy, audio product conventions, breaking conventions.
Genre conventions and style.
Radio language.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT   Media Production (Advanced Higher)

Evaluation Criteria

Brief, quality of recording, mixing and editing, audience interest, use of language, voice, music, sound effects and transitions, unity, variety, originality, narrative, (where relevant) news values and balance, dramatic effect, (where relevant), issues of legality, ethics, representation.

Video

Stages

Planning and research, treatment, script and/or storyboard, location recce and resources check, shooting script, shooting schedule, call sheets, floor plans, rehearsing, shooting, editing, screening, debriefing, evaluation.

Planning and Research

♦   Category: purpose, medium, form, genre, target audience, subject matter, tone.

♦   Narrative: story, narration and structure; narrative codes; dramatic effect.

♦   Representations: (where relevant) news values and balance; representation of individuals/social groups and social and political issues; relation to target audience and internal and external contexts.

♦   Identification of resources and constraints:
    —   internal: economic (budget, sales, advertising), editorial policy, deadline, health and safety
    —   technical: available hardware and software
    —   external: legal and self-regulatory controls, self-censorship, censorship, ethical, copyright, representation issues

♦   Identification of roles: non-technological (producer, performer, production assistant, scriptwriter, storyboard artist, continuity person, location/floor manager, make-up); technological (director, camera operator, sound recordist, editor).

♦   Research of competition, audience research.

♦   Identification of sources: reporter, stringer, press agency, press release, other media, use of encyclopaedias, archives, internet.

♦   Remits and production schedule.

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Technical Term

♦   Hardware: microcomputer system, printer, video cameras, tripod, lighting, omni-directional and uni-directional microphones, vision mixer, video editing suite.

♦   Software: digital video editing software, word processor, spreadsheet.

♦   Mise-en-scene: setting, props, costume, make-up, performance.

♦   Lighting: high-key, low-key.

♦   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, parallel editing, shot/reverse shot, shot length.

♦   Camera movement: pan, tilt, track, crane, handheld.

♦   Sound: diegetic and non-diegetic speech, music, sound effects.

♦   Titles: font (serif, sans serif, script, decorative), size, style (roman, italic, bold, underline), colour.

Use of Codes

Connotations of technical codes, use of technical codes, words and sounds, denotation and connotation of text, images, words, sounds and music, anchorage and polysemy, moving image genre conventions, breaking conventions.

Evaluation Criteria

Brief, quality of camerawork, sound, editing, graphics, mise-en-scène, variety, originality, audience interest, narrative, (where relevant) news values and balance (where relevant), dramatic effect, issues of legality, ethics, representation.

WEB Page Design

Stages

Agree on design principles and user-friendliness issues.
Plan navigation map, home page, core page, linked pages.
Create text and graphic files in appropriate file formats.
Design page using HTML page mark-up language, templates, WYSIWYG package or standard application package, (eg, word processor, DTP).

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Checking of content, format and links, validation, testing with images off and with different browsers/platforms.
Debriefing, evaluation.

Planning and Research

♦   Category: purpose, medium, form, subject matter, style, target audience.

♦   Narrative: story, narration and structure; narrative codes; dramatic effect.

♦   Representations: (where relevant) news values and balance; representation of individuals/social groups and social and political issues; relation to target audience and internal and external contexts.

♦   Identification of resources and constraints:
   —   internal: economic (budget, advertising), editorial policy, house style, layout design, deadline
   —   technical: available hardware and software, hardware and software of clients
   —   external: legal, ethical, copyright, representation issues

♦   Identification of roles: non-technological (managing editor, writer, production director, artist); technological (copy editor, photographer, art director, HTML editor). Certain roles may combine technological and non-technological roles, eg an artist might design images using a graphics package.

♦   Research of competition, audience research, search for advertisers.

♦   Identification of sources: primary and secondary news sources, other media, use of encyclopaedias, archives, Internet.

♦   Establishment of remits and production schedule.

Technical Terms

♦   Hardware: microcomputer system, printer, digital camera, scanner.

♦   Software: HTML editor, WYSIWYG web page editor, web browser, word processing, drawing, painting, image manipulation, type manipulation software.

♦   Navigation: navigation map, home page, core page, linked pages, visual metaphor.

♦   Page formatting: layout, dummy, grid, tables, frames.

♦   Text elements: nameplate, contents, contact, headline, subhead, copy, caption, lead-in, pull quote, byline, photo credit, teaser, jump line, page numbers, type as image files, text links.

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♦   Character formatting: font (serif, sans serif, script, decorative), size, style (roman, italic, bold), colour.

♦   Paragraph formatting: indentation, leading, alignment, line spacing, line length.

♦   Graphic elements: images, animations, logo, icons, graphic links, colour, background tiles, cropping, resolution, thumbnails, file format.

Use of Codes

Use of technical codes, text and graphic content, connotations of text, images, colour, anchorage, visual metaphors.

Evaluation Criteria

Criteria for assessing web page products: original brief, spelling and grammar, legibility, visual impact, unity, variety, audience interest, content, navigability, consistency and linkage, visual metaphor, originality, loading time, testing, issues of legality, ethics, representation.