



National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Media: News Writing for Print (SCQF level 5)

CODE F57R 11

SUMMARY

This Unit is designed to introduce candidates to the process of news writing for print with reference to a range of newspaper types. It will enable the candidate to understand the way in which news is gathered and presented in newspapers. Candidates will have the opportunity to produce their own basic news story for print.

This Unit is suitable for candidates with no prior knowledge of news writing for print.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Describe the news gathering process.
- 2 Explain the key features of selected print news.
- 3 Produce a basic news story for print.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Whilst entry is at the discretion of the centre, it would be beneficial for candidates to have achieved the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ D01B 10 – Communication (Intermediate 1)

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Intermediate 2 (6 SCQF credit 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.*

Administrative Information

Superclass: KD

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

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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

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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

Describe the news gathering process.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe the sources of news.
- (b) Describe the stages of a news gathering operation.
- (c) Explain the selection and production processes of a news gathering operation.

OUTCOME 2

Explain the key features of selected print news.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Identify and explain the language used in a range of newspaper news stories.
- (b) Explain the narrative structure of a chosen news story.
- (c) Identify and explain the layout of a range of newspaper news stories.

OUTCOME 3

Produce a basic news story for print.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Identify a topic and select material for a news story.
- (b) Identify an appropriate target audience and type of newspaper for a news story.
- (c) Use language and narrative structure effectively to produce a news story.
- (d) Produce a news story using newspaper conventions.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Evidence is required which demonstrates that candidates have achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

Outcomes 1 — Written and/or Oral Evidence

For Outcome 1 candidates are required to show that they can:

- ◆ describe primary sources of news including eyewitness accounts; interviews and journalists' contacts
- ◆ describe secondary sources of news including press releases and news agency reports
- ◆ describe the stages of a news gathering operation — including the key steps of editorial meetings, gathering news, write-up, presentation to sub editor, and final production process
- ◆ explain the way that news is selected for a newspaper
- ◆ explain the reasons for the placement of a news story (including page selection and position on the page)

This evidence will be gathered under open-book conditions at appropriate points throughout the Unit.

Outcome 2 — Written and/or Oral Evidence

Candidates are required to show that they can:

- ◆ identify and explain the language used in a minimum of two newspaper news stories
- ◆ explain the narrative structure of a chosen news story
- ◆ identify and explain the layout of a minimum of two different types of newspaper news stories (including the physical layout, use of headlines and straplines, the relationship between text and illustrations, and length and style of news items)

This evidence will be gathered under open-book conditions at appropriate points throughout the Unit.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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Outcome 3 — Written and/or Oral Evidence

Candidates are required to produce a basic news story of at least 100 words using the following newspaper conventions. The story:

- ◆ uses appropriate narrative structure and language in terms of the target audience
- ◆ is word processed using double spacing and margins
- ◆ is generally grammatically correct with mainly correct spelling and punctuation
- ◆ contains a headline

Written and/or oral evidence is also required to show that candidates can:

- ◆ identify topic and select material for a news story
- ◆ identify the target audience and type of newspaper for a news story

This evidence will be gathered under open-book conditions at appropriate points throughout the Unit.

The assessor must authenticate that the evidence produced is the candidate's own work.

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

This is an optional Unit within the National Certificate Group Award in Media (SCQF level 6), but can be taken as a free-standing Unit.

The purpose of this Unit is to provide candidates with the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills in writing news for print.

Outcome 1

Candidates should be aware of the many ways in which news can be gathered using both primary and secondary sources. These can include: eyewitness accounts; interviews; news agencies' reports; journalists' contacts and accident scene witness accounts and press releases. Candidates should be aware of the limitations of print news in comparison to 'immediate' news from broadcast media. Candidates should also be aware how news is selected for inclusion in a newspaper and how it is placed in the newspaper according to its importance and news worthiness. The role of journalists in gathering news should be examined as well as other roles such as editors and sub-editors.

Outcome 2

Newspaper language and terminology is best taught by examining current news items from a range of newspapers. Examples of headlines and length of news stories will inform candidates of the range of language used in newspapers. This detailed examination of newspapers will inform candidates of where news items are placed in the newspaper according to their news value. A detailed examination of how a news item is structured, that is how the news is described and developed within a particular news story, will give candidates an insight into news writing and will inform their writing of a news story in Outcome 3.

Outcome 3

The underpinning knowledge gained in Outcomes 1 and 2 will inform candidates in the writing of a basic news story. At this level the story should be at least 100 words and should follow newspaper news story conventions. The information for the news story could be taken from a press release but centres may wish to integrate this Outcome with F57S 12 *Media: Research and Interview Skills for Journalism* (SCQF level 6). Conventions of newspaper formats should be observed and the story should be word processed.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

For Outcome 2 a range of newspaper can be used to compare and contrast as well as providing a text for analysis of news writing styles, house styles, language, register, headlines, straplines etc. This can be done by examining newspapers with classroom discussion.

Candidates could divide into groups to examine newspapers and then report back and this could form the basis for further discussion.

In Outcome 3 candidates may need some tutor guidance in identifying and selecting material for a news story but writing a story on a subject in which they have some personal interest should be encouraged.

Where possible a visit to a newspaper office would be invaluable or a talk from a newspaper journalist or editor. While it may be difficult to visit national newspaper offices there are many local newspaper offices around the country.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CORE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Candidates will be producing written and/or oral communication evidence as part of the assessment. This offers ideal opportunities to develop aspects of the Core Skill of *Communication*.

During Outcome 3 candidates will be required to word process a news story for print. This offers ideal opportunities to develop aspects of the Core Skill of *Information Technology*.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

The following approach to assessment is suggested:

Outcome 1	Short Report or annotated newspaper
Outcome 2	Short Report or annotated newspaper story
Outcome 3	Practical exercise

Time should be allowed for any necessary re-assessment.

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)*.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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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).