



## **National Unit specification: general information**

**Unit title:** Narrative and Genre in Computer Games (SCQF level 5)

**Unit code:** H1TG 11

**Superclass:** CE

**Publication date:** October 2012

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 02

### **Summary**

This Unit provides candidates with an understanding of the underlying concepts of the various types of game (genre) and the different ways in which the story of the game can be told (narrative). Candidates will develop knowledge and skills in the analysis, description and development of narrative sequences and knowledge and skills in identifying and analysing different genres in computer games.

This is an optional Unit within the National Certificate in Creative Industries at SCQF level 5 but is also available as a freestanding Unit.

The Unit is suitable for candidates who have an interest in computer games and interactive media and those who wish to pursue a career in the creative industries.

### **Outcomes**

- 1 Demonstrate an understanding of narrative and genre in computer games.
- 2 Analyse computer games in terms of narrative and genre.
- 3 Design a narrative sequence for a computer game in a specified genre.

### **Recommended entry**

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, it would be beneficial if candidates possessed basic IT skills, as evidenced by Information and Communication Technology (F3GC 10) or equivalent.

## General information (cont)

**Unit title:** Narrative and Genre in Computer Games (SCQF level 5)

### Credit points and level

1 National Unit credit at SCQF level 5: (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.*

### Core Skills

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following Core Skills component:

Complete Core Skill                      None

Core Skill component                      Critical Thinking at SCQF level 5

There are also opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills which are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit specification.

## **National Unit specification: statement of standards**

### **Unit title:** Narrative and Genre in Computer Games (SCQF level 5)

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**

Demonstrate an understanding of narrative and genre in computer games.

##### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) Identify narrative structure and narrative elements.
- (b) Identify game genres.
- (c) Identify viewpoints in terms of genre.
- (d) Identify the influence of genre on how different games look.

#### **Outcome 2**

Analyse computer games in terms of narrative and genre.

##### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) Identify specific styles of narrative and genre used within a computer game.
- (b) Explain the effects of narrative and genre.
- (c) Critically compare and contrast games of the same genre.

#### **Outcome 3**

Design a narrative sequence for a computer game in a specified genre.

##### **Performance Criteria**

- (a) Create a brief for a narrative sequence in a specified genre.
- (b) Identify the narrative requirements for a sequence.
- (c) Identify the defining features of genre for a sequence.

## **National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)**

**Unit title:** Narrative and Genre in Computer Games (SCQF level 5)

### **Evidence Requirements for this Unit**

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

Written and/ or oral recorded evidence is required to demonstrate that candidates have achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. Evidence can be produced holistically or Outcome by Outcome.

Evidence for the Unit should be generated under supervised, open-book conditions.

For Outcome 1, candidates must provide written or oral evidence to show that they can:

- ◆ identify narrative structure and narrative elements in a computer game
- ◆ identify a minimum of three different game genres
- ◆ identify a minimum of two different character and player viewpoints, in terms of genre
- ◆ identify the influence of genre on how different games look, through comparison of a minimum of two different games, each from a different genre

For Outcome 2, candidates must provide evidence to show that they can

- ◆ identify specific styles of narrative and genre used within a computer game
- ◆ explain the effects of narrative and genre within a computer game, in terms of their impact on the user
- ◆ critically compare and contrast a minimum of two games of the same genre

For Outcome 3, evidence must be presented in the form of a brief for a narrative sequence of no less than two minutes' duration, for a computer game in a specified genre. The brief can be presented as a written report or oral presentation of no less than 300 words. The brief must have the following minimum requirements:

- ◆ identification of the defining features of the computer game's genre
- ◆ explanation of the implementation of these features within the computer game
- ◆ identification of the narrative requirements of the sequence
- ◆ explanation of the implementation of the narrative requirements

## **National Unit specification: support notes**

### **Unit title:** Narrative and Genre in Computer Games (SCQF level 5)

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 Unit is broadly aligned to the following Creative Skillset National Occupational Standards (NOS):

- ◆ IM3 Prepare Assets for Use in Interactive Media Products
- ◆ IM8 Determine the Implementation of Designs for Interactive Media Products
- ◆ IM20 Design Electronic Games
- ◆ IM29 Direct Asset Production for Interactive Media Products

This is an optional Unit in the National Certificate in Creative Industries at SCQF level 5, but it can also be taken as a freestanding Unit. It is possible that this Unit could be integrated with other practical Units

This Unit should introduce candidates to the basics of narrative and genre in computer games. It is primarily concerned with equipping candidates with an understanding of the core concepts and defining features of narrative and genre in computer games. The emphasis should be on analysing existing game sequences with a view to designing a narrative for an original game sequence.

### **Guidance on learning and teaching approaches for this Unit**

While no prior experience is required, it would be beneficial for candidates to have gained some computer competencies before taking this Unit.

The Unit is primarily intended as an introduction to narrative and genre and is designed to introduce candidates to ways of analysing and understanding computer games they may not have considered. As such, candidates should have access to a wide range of computer game genres and narrative sequences.

Due to the length of some computer games, it is recommended that game sequences, rather than entire games, should be utilised. A wide range of games are available, ranging from no cost (open source) to premium, to online or recently released titles. Mobile/tablet app based games include retro games and brand new products. There is also a thriving trade in pre-owned games at various prices. Although the primary focus of the Unit is Computer Games, the ability of later generation games consoles may well provide some titles worth including in those considered for this Unit. This Unit should initially include a series of demonstrations and exercises.

## **National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

**Unit title:** Narrative and Genre in Computer Games (SCQF level 5)

### **Guidance on approaches to assessment for this Unit**

Assessor observation checklists should be used to record that all tasks have been successfully undertaken.

The Unit may be linked/integrated with suitable Units in the National Certificate in Creative Industries at SCQF level 5 and a thematic or holistic approach could be adopted for both delivery and assessment. An integrated assessment approach across several Units is encouraged where appropriate.

Candidates should be able to complete the Unit using basic presentation tools. There is no requirement to produce a completed computer game sequence. The emphasis of the Unit should be on achieving a broad knowledge of the features, and an understanding of a limited range of core concepts of narrative and genre in computer games.

Outcome 1 aims to engage candidates in the analytical skills required to identify and classify games. A study of the early and classic computer games may prove a foundation for the defining features of a genre. A number of games, both classic and current, should be explored to fully illustrate the range of narrative structures and defining features of computer games.

Outcome 2 requires candidates to critically analyse and evaluate computer games in terms of narrative and genre. Candidates at this level will require careful preparation to allow them to perform these activities.

One approach that may yield benefits is to lead candidates through a number of prepared reviews. These can be either centre devised reviews, or carefully selected magazine and on-line reviews. A wide range of resources may be used to support this task. It may be useful to clarify the difference between critical analysis and being overly critical.

Candidates could be asked to produce a 300 word report as an online game review and a more detailed 500 word report as a mock magazine review. Language for each should reflect the medium used.

Note that the word count limits reflect industry standards. The web page review is intended to be able to be accommodated on one page and avoid scrolling, and the mock magazine review is set to the strict word count limit imposed by print editors.

Outcome 3 requires candidates to design a narrative sequence for a computer game in a specified genre. Centres may wish to allow candidates some scope for the exact genre in which the sequence is to be prepared, with a corresponding range of features. Some genres may require significantly more effort to fully implement a two minute sequence, so centres may wish to advise on the choices that candidates make.

## National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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### 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 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 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)*.

### Opportunities for developing Core Skills

In this Unit candidates will learn about narrative and genre in computer games. Candidates will:

- ◆ develop critical skills
- ◆ analyse different computer games
- ◆ use ICT
- ◆ produce reports

As candidates are doing this Unit they may develop aspects of the Core Skills of *Communication, Problem Solving* and *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)*.

In addition, aspects of the following Core Skill could be developed where particular learning and teaching approaches are adopted:

- ◆ *Working with Others* — through group work, eg discussions on analysis of works

This Unit has the Critical Thinking component of Problem Solving embedded in it. This means that when candidates achieve the Unit, their Core Skills profile will also be updated to show they have achieved Critical Thinking at SCQF level 5.

### Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website [www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements)

## History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Core Skills Component Critical Thinking at SCQF level 5 embedded.	09/10/2012

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