

National 4 Media Course Support Notes



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Please refer to the note of changes at the end of this document for details of changes from previous version (where applicable).

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Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the National 4 Media Course. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering the Course and its Units. They should be read in conjunction with the *Course Specification*, the *Added Value Unit Specification*, and the *Unit Specifications* for the Units in the Course.

General guidance on the Course

Aims

The main purpose of this Course is to analyse and create media content. The Course enables learners to understand and develop their media literacy skills and appreciate the opportunities and challenges that occur within the media industry. This Course provides learners with opportunities to develop both theoretical knowledge of the media and the ability to create media content.

The National 4 Media Course offers learners opportunities to develop and extend a wide range of skills. In particular, this Course aims to enable learners to develop:

- ◆ the ability to analyse and create media content, appropriate to purpose, audience and context
- ◆ knowledge of the key aspects of media literacy
- ◆ knowledge of the role of media within society
- ◆ the ability to plan and research when creating media content, as appropriate to purpose, audience and context
- ◆ the ability to evaluate the learner's practice

Progression into this Course

Entry to this Course is at the discretion of the centre. However, learners would normally be expected to have attained the skills and knowledge required by the following or by equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

- ◆ National 3 Media Course or relevant component Units

Experiences and outcomes

New National Courses have been designed to draw on and build on the curriculum experiences and outcomes as appropriate. Qualifications developed for the senior phase of secondary education are benchmarked against SCQF levels. SCQF level 4 and the curriculum level 4 are broadly equivalent in terms of level of demand although qualifications at SCQF level 4 will be more specific to allow for more specialist study of subjects.

Learners who have completed Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes will find these an appropriate basis for doing the Course.

In this Course, experiences and outcomes from the English and Literacy, and the Expressive Arts curriculum areas may provide an appropriate basis for entry to the Course. Centres wishing to establish the suitability of learners without prior qualifications and/or experiences and outcomes may benefit from carrying out a review of prior life and work experiences. This approach may be particularly useful for adult returners to education.

Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Course

This section provides further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding that could be included in the Course.

Note: teachers and lecturers should refer to the *Added Value Unit Specification* for mandatory information about the skills, knowledge and understanding to be covered in this Course.

The skills, knowledge and understanding stated in the *Course Specification* will be developed throughout the Course.

Learners should develop knowledge and understanding of the six key aspects of media literacy which are central to analysing and creating media content. These are:

- ◆ categories
- ◆ language
- ◆ representation
- ◆ narrative
- ◆ audience
- ◆ institution

Appendix 1: An illustrative guide to the key aspects provides further information on the related concepts which are appropriate to National 4 Media.

Progression from this Course

This Course or its component Units may provide progression to:

- ◆ National 5 Media
- ◆ Skills for Work: Creative Digital Media (SCQF level 5)
- ◆ NC in Media (SCQF level 6)
- ◆ NPA in Journalism (SCQF level 6)
- ◆ NPA in Digital Production Skills (SCQF level 5)
- ◆ NPA in Radio Broadcasting (SCQF level 5)
- ◆ NPA in Television Production (SCQF level 5)

and ultimately, for some, to employment.

Hierarchies

Hierarchy is the term used to describe Courses and Units which form a structured sequence involving two or more SCQF levels.

It is important that any content in a Course and/or Unit at one particular SCQF level is not repeated if a learner progresses to the next level of the hierarchy. The skills and knowledge should be able to be applied to new content and contexts to enrich the learning experience. This is for centres to manage.

The National 4 Media forms a hierarchy with the Media Course (National 3), Media Course (National 5) and the Higher Media Course. The Courses at National 3, National 4, National 5 and Higher follow a similar structure in terms of Outcomes and Assessment Standards but differ in the degree of difficulty and complexity from one level to the next. This structure aims to facilitate bi-level teaching and enables learners to gain recognition for their best achievement. Learners may achieve and be certificated for Courses or Units at the level above or below.

The hierarchical relationship between the Courses and Units is shown in the table below:

National 3	National 4	National 5	Higher
Analysing Media Content	Analysing Media Content	Analysing Media Content	Analysing Media Content
Creating Media Content	Creating Media Content	Creating Media Content	Creating Media Content
	Added value — assignment	Course assessment	Course assessment

Approaches to learning and teaching

Effective learning and teaching will draw on a wide variety of approaches to enrich the experience of learners. In particular, practical approaches to learning and teaching which provide opportunities for personalisation and choice will help to motivate and challenge learners.

Learning about Scotland and Scottish culture will enrich the learners' learning experience and help them to develop the skills for learning, life and work they will need to prepare them for taking their place in a diverse, inclusive and participative Scotland and beyond. Where there are opportunities to contextualise approaches to learning and teaching to Scottish contexts, teachers and lecturers should consider this.

The combined theoretical and practical skills-based focus of Media lends itself to a variety of delivery methods. Central to these should be the key aspects of media:

- ◆ categories
- ◆ language
- ◆ representation
- ◆ narrative
- ◆ audience
- ◆ institutions

The key aspects are interrelated and it is important that learners develop knowledge and understanding of them from the outset of the Course. These key aspects are a starting point for the analysis of any text, and are central to the creation of media content.

In analysing media content, teaching and learning should focus on the development of skills in describing ways in which appropriate key aspects are evident in or can be applied to media content. Learners should also be able to describe the relationship between at least one content-based and one context-based key aspect. Content-based key aspects are normally considered to be categories, language, narrative and representation; context-based key aspects are normally considered to be audience and institutions.

In creating media content, teaching and learning should focus on skills in planning, making and evaluating straightforward media content and production processes, using the key aspects to inform each stage. Key aspects can provide structuring elements for learners to explore and develop their creativity, as well as develop understanding of the opportunities and constraints presented by audience, purpose and institutional contexts.

In delivering the National 4 Media Course a variety of approaches to learning and teaching should be used. As far as possible, learner preferences should be considered to allow for personalisation and choice, balanced with a degree of teacher support. Learners should feel confident to engage in discussions and to assert themselves in both analytical and practical activities, applying the key aspects to their existing knowledge of the media.

Further information about possible approaches to learning and teaching for each Unit can be found in the *Unit Support Notes*.

Sequencing and integration of Units within the Course

Sequencing and integration of the delivery and assessment of the Units is at the discretion of the centre. There is no set way of delivering the Units and their sequence and/or integration may be dependent on available resources, time and staff expertise.

Developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

Learners are expected to develop broad generic skills as an integral part of their learning experience. The *Course Specification* lists the skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work that learners should develop through this Course. These are based on SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work* and must be built into the Course where there are appropriate opportunities. The level of these skills will be appropriate to the level of the Course.

Examples of how the skills for learning, skills for work and skills for life could be developed in each Unit are given in the *Unit Support Notes*.

During the delivery and assessment of the Course, there may also be opportunities for learners to develop their literacy skills. Literacy skills are particularly important for learners as these skills allow them to access, engage in and understand their learning and to communicate their thoughts, ideas and opinions.

Approaches to assessment

Guidance on approaches to assessment and gathering evidence for the Units within the Course can be found in the *Unit Support Notes*.

Exemplification of assessment is provided in the *Unit Assessment Support*.

Added value

Courses from National 4 to Advanced Higher include assessment of added value. At National 4 the added value will be assessed in the Added Value Unit.

Information given in the *Course Specification* and the *Added Value Unit Specification* (National 4 Courses) about the assessment of added value is mandatory.

For the Added Value Unit, the learner will undertake an assignment that assesses the learner's ability to analyse and create straightforward media content. An example of how to approach the Added Value Unit assessment is given below.

Learners are given a series of tasks to complete which leads them through the process of planning, making and evaluating media content. Analysis is incorporated into the planning stage. The tasks can be applied to almost any creative brief, and in this respect there is considerable scope for personalisation and choice, and to link to media content used in the analysing and creating units.

For example, the sector of advertising is useful in providing opportunities for learner engagement and choice.

Learners can be shown various examples of straightforward media content which form part of an advertising campaign for a specific product: posters, television ads, web-based campaigns and radio ads. Learners draw upon their skills in analysing media content to look at these texts in terms of the six key aspects. Discussing the success of the campaign with regard to target audience and purpose encourages learners to evaluate.

Learners are then given the following brief:

*Create a new advertisement for this same product which specifically targets a **different** target audience (for example age or gender).*

Learners then follow the planning tasks given, making some decisions on which sources to use for research, for example looking at similar campaigns, sales figures and direct competitors. The concept of the unique selling point could help learners generate an idea for their own advertisement. Conducting some primary research on their target audience would be a useful activity, and this could be presented in either written or digital form, or as a short presentation.

Learners should now be ready to use this research to develop their ideas into a clear plan which they would then use to make their final advert and complete the evaluation tasks given in the assignment.

Through the Added Value assignment, learners develop their analytical and creative skills by:

- ◆ demonstrating good interpersonal skills
- ◆ showing awareness of how to use resources
- ◆ being aware that the target audience and the purpose of creating a media text will have an impact on the key aspects used
- ◆ demonstrating good research skills
- ◆ responding to individual and group feedback
- ◆ demonstrating an understanding of the importance of deadlines
- ◆ showing an understanding of how creating and analysing are linked

Combining assessment across Units

If the Units are delivered as part of the Course, assessment can be combined.

The pattern of combined assessment can mirror that for integrated delivery, suggested in the 'Approaches to learning and teaching' section.

Using an integrated approach to assessment is recommended because it has the potential to:

- ◆ enrich the assessment process for both learners and teachers/lecturers by bringing together elements of different Units
- ◆ avoid duplication of assessment
- ◆ be cost effective
- ◆ allow more time for learning
- ◆ allow centres to manage the assessment process more efficiently

When assessment is combined across Units, teachers/lecturers should take particular care to track learners' achievement of the Outcomes and Assessment Standards. Tracking will assist with identifying any necessary reassessment and will also provide evidence of achievement for those learners who do not achieve the whole Course.

Equality and inclusion

It is recognised that centres have their own duties under equality and other legislation and policy initiatives. The guidance given in these *Course Support Notes* is designed to sit alongside these duties but is specific to the delivery and assessment of the Course.

It is important that centres are aware of and understand SQA's assessment arrangements for disabled learners, and those with additional support needs, when making requests for adjustments to published assessment arrangements. Centres will find more guidance on this in the series of publications on Assessment Arrangements on SQA's website: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html.

Appendix 1: Reference documents

The following reference documents will provide useful information and background.

- ◆ Assessment Arrangements (for disabled learners and/or those with additional support needs) — various publications are available on SQA's website at: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html.
- ◆ [*Building the Curriculum 4: Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work*](#)
- ◆ [*Building the Curriculum 5: A framework for assessment*](#)
- ◆ [*Course Specifications*](#)
- ◆ [*Design Principles for National Courses*](#)
- ◆ [*Guide to Assessment \(June 2008\)*](#)
- ◆ [*Overview of Qualification Reports*](#)
- ◆ Principles and practice papers for curriculum areas
- ◆ [*SCQF Handbook: User Guide*](#) (published 2009) and SCQF level descriptors (to be reviewed during 2011 to 2012): www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/4595.html
- ◆ [*SQA Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*](#)
- ◆ [*Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work: Using the Curriculum Tool*](#)

Appendix 2: An illustrative guide to the key aspects

Key aspect	General definition	Things to consider at National 4 – select as appropriate to content
Categories	The way in which a text is described.	Purpose, genre
Language	How the text is constructed	Denotation and connotation of technical and cultural codes
Narrative	How the text is organised	View point, structure, plot, enigma and action codes
Representation	How people and places are constructed within the text	Stereotypes and non-stereotypes, other representations
Audience	Who the text is made for and how they react to the text	Target audience, different audience reactions
Institutions	The factors both internal and external that effect the production of the text	Ownership, internal control, external control, personnel

Administrative information

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History of changes to Course Support Notes

Course details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
	2.0	Corrections, clarifications and expanded advice throughout.	Qualifications Development Manager	August 2013

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Unit Support Notes — Analysing Media Content (National 4)



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Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the Analysing Media Content Unit. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering this Unit. They should be read in conjunction with:

- ◆ the Unit Specification
- ◆ the Course Specification
- ◆ the Added Value Unit
- ◆ the Course Support Notes
- ◆ appropriate assessment support materials

If the *Unit Support Notes* have been developed for a Unit which is not part of a Course, then it is only necessary to read them in conjunction with the *Unit Specification*.

General guidance on the Unit

Aims

The general aim of this Unit is to provide learners with the opportunity to develop the skills needed to analyse media content. This Unit provides learners with the opportunity to develop knowledge of the key aspects of media literacy central to the straightforward analysis of media content.

Learners who complete this Unit will be able to:

- ◆ Carry out straightforward analysis of media content

Progression into this Unit

Entry to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. However, learners would normally be expected to have attained the skills, knowledge and understanding required by one or more of the following or equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

- ◆ National 3 Media Course or its component Units

Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Unit

Information about skills, knowledge and understanding is given in the National 4 *Media Course Support Notes*.

If the Unit is being delivered on a free-standing basis, teachers and lecturers are free to select the skills, knowledge, understanding and contexts which are most appropriate for delivery in their centres.

Progression from this Unit

This Unit may provide progression to:

- ◆ National 5 Media or any relevant component Units
- ◆ further study or training

Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment

The purpose of this section is to provide general advice and guidance on approaches to gathering assessment evidence within the Media: Analysing Media Content (National 4) Unit.

Naturally occurring evidence

Assessment approaches should aim to help learners progress through the Unit at their own pace and enable them to demonstrate their achievements in a range of ways. Teachers and lecturers should explore opportunities in the day-to-day delivery of the Unit to observe learners providing evidence which satisfies the Unit, completely or partially. This is naturally occurring evidence.

Possible approaches to learning and teaching

An engaging and supportive learning environment should be provided to encourage active learner involvement where a range of media texts across medium and genre are studied. Learners should be encouraged to apply the knowledge they have gained through led analysis to media content that they experience as part of their life.

Learning and teaching approaches should be informed by the straightforward analysis of the following key aspects as they apply to particular examples of media content:

- ◆ categories
- ◆ language
- ◆ narrative
- ◆ representation
- ◆ audience
- ◆ institution

Learners will benefit from studying media content which they can easily understand and make sense of using these key aspects. In particular, content which can be easily categorised in terms of genre and purpose, and which makes conventional use of media codes, is recommended. Analysing a mixture of extracts, complete texts and groups of texts which are linked in some way (eg by genre, topic or institution) will enhance learners' understanding of media content in context, and the role of media.

The application of key aspects in the learning and teaching should be interconnected. For example, language readily flows in to representation as it is the means by which representation is constructed. Institution can be the making of the text but it also can deal with institutional experience of watching the text via the medium and therefore flows naturally into audience. Audience has a link with narrative via the expectations of categories. Audiences now often experience multi-media (or multi-modal) viewing of content which institutions are keen to exploit.

Two examples of possible learning and teaching approaches are given below:

Example one

Comparing the front pages of a tabloid and broadsheet newspaper from the same day is an activity that introduces the six key concepts of media. This activity

also introduces the relationship between the familiar media context (print) and society.

After examining the differences in terms of the key aspects, learners can then be given a different broadsheet front page and asked to produce a mock-up of the tabloid version, thus integrating with the Creating Media Content (National 4) Unit. (This could be done individually, in groups or in pairs.) Appropriate critical terminology can be introduced in the context of print. Learners could also examine newspaper front pages from online editions to look for key differences. Straightforward questions on categories, language, audience and representation could be given as prompts.

Alternative forms of print analysis could be between different genres of magazine. Gender bias for audiences could be focused on, which opens up the ideas of representation and the language by which this is achieved. The obvious opportunity to include and contrast the interests of different learners to generate discussion and opinion makes this a motivating focus. This could expand into magazine programmes on television and radio, as well as the websites for print publications.

Example two — how media content works in society

Learners could examine one example of straightforward media content, for example a television programme like Doctor Who, and then consider it in the contexts of:

- ◆ radio
- ◆ interviews of stars
- ◆ DVDs
- ◆ merchandising
- ◆ Facebook
- ◆ Twitter
- ◆ newspaper and magazine features
- ◆ blogs
- ◆ podcasts
- ◆ web pages

Learners could repeat this example with reference to their own favourite content.

A class blog could be set up for learners to post comments on the media content they are accessing — for example film and television reviews, links to newspaper articles and so on. This activity will encourage debate on audience and representation, and the role of media in society.

Assessment

Assessment evidence can take any appropriate form. Assessors should use their professional judgement, subject knowledge and experience, and understanding of their learners, to determine the most appropriate ways to generate evidence and the conditions and contexts in which they are used.

Approaches to the assessment of Units when they form part of a Course may differ from approaches to assessing the same Unit when it is not being delivered as part of a Course. Where Units are delivered on a free-standing basis, teachers/lecturers will have more flexibility to develop approaches to delivering and assessing the Units which are not related to Course assessment.

Evidence for this Unit is likely to include a combination of written, oral and/or recorded evidence. The work can be presented for assessment in a variety of formats depending on the preferences of centres and learners, as long as this covers all essential requirements for the Unit.

The Assessment Standards can be achieved over a number of different occasions, and with reference to a single example of media content, or a number of different examples.

Equality and inclusion

It is recognised that centres have their own duties under equality and other legislation and policy initiatives. The guidance given in these *Unit Support Notes* is designed to sit alongside these duties but is specific to the delivery and assessment of the Unit.

Alternative approaches to Unit assessment to take account of the specific needs of learners can be used. However, the centre must be satisfied that the integrity of the assessment is maintained and that the alternative approaches to assessment will, in fact, generate the necessary evidence of achievement.

Appendix 1: Reference documents

The following reference documents will provide useful information and background.

- ◆ Assessment Arrangements (for disabled learners and/or those with additional support needs) — various publications on SQA’s website:
<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14976.html>
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- ◆ [*SQA Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*](#)
- ◆ [*Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work: Using the Curriculum Tool*](#)
- ◆ SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools
- ◆ SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education
- ◆ SQA e-assessment web page: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/5606.html

Administrative information

Published: August 2013 (version 2.0)

Superclass: KA

History of changes to Unit Support Notes

Unit details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
	2.0	Support and advice clarified and expanded throughout.	Qualifications Development Manager	August 2013

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Unit Support Notes — Creating Media Content (National 4)



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Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the Creating Media Content (National 4) Unit. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering this Unit. They should be read in conjunction with:

- ◆ the Unit Specification
- ◆ the Course Specification
- ◆ the Added Value Unit
- ◆ the Course Support Notes
- ◆ appropriate assessment support materials

If the *Unit Support Notes* have been developed for a Unit which is not part of a Course, then it is only necessary to read them in conjunction with the *Unit Specification*.

General guidance on the Unit

Aims

The *Creating Media Content* (National 4) Unit is a mandatory Unit in the National 4 Media Course. The Unit is also available as a free-standing Unit and is designed to meet the needs of a broad range of learners who may choose to study it.

The general aim of this Unit is to provide learners with the opportunity to develop the skills needed to create straightforward media content and to comment on production processes. Learners also develop knowledge of the key aspects of media literacy central to creating straightforward media content.

Learners who complete this Unit will be able to:

- ◆ Create straightforward media content

Progression into this Unit

Entry to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. However learners would normally be expected to have attained the skills, knowledge and understanding required by one or more of the following or equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

- ◆ National 3 Media Course or relevant component Units

Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Unit

Information about skills, knowledge and understanding is given in the National 4 *Media Course Support Notes*.

If this Unit is being delivered on a free-standing basis, teachers and lecturers are free to select the skills, knowledge, understanding and contexts which are most appropriate for delivery in their centres.

Progression from this Unit

This Unit may provide progression to:

- ◆ National 5 Media or any relevant component Units
- ◆ further study or training

Approaches to learning and teaching

The purpose of this section is to provide general advice and guidance on approaches to gathering assessment evidence within the Media: Creating Media Content (National 4) Unit.

Naturally occurring evidence

Assessment approaches should aim to help learners progress through the Unit at their own pace and enable them to demonstrate their achievements in a range of ways. Teachers and lecturers should explore opportunities in the day-to-day delivery of the Unit to observe learners providing evidence which satisfies the Unit, completely or partially. This is naturally occurring evidence.

Possible approaches to learning and teaching

An engaging and supportive learning environment should be provided to encourage active learner involvement. There are many opportunities for personalisation and choice in this Unit, and many opportunities for learners to develop their creativity in response to negotiated briefs. Learners could benefit from being given a range of creative tasks which enable them to develop planning and production skills prior to assessment, as well as an understanding of the constraints or opportunities that time, technology and any other institutional factors may present for production processes.

The Unit focuses on the skills, knowledge and understanding required to create straightforward media content relevant to particular purposes, audiences and contexts. In order to provide the learners with a confident grasp of the technologies and process of creating a media product, it may be advisable to teach the skills in a progressive manner that reinforces these processes:

- ◆ pre-production, when the product is researched and planned
- ◆ production, when the component parts of the product are made
- ◆ post-production, when the product is edited and finished

Teachers/lecturers should offer a structured approach that enables learners to concentrate on one stage at a time, ensuring a greater degree of success and understanding among learners.

Assessment

Assessment evidence can take any appropriate form. Assessors should use their professional judgement, subject knowledge and experience, and understanding of their learners, to determine the most appropriate ways to generate evidence and the conditions and contexts in which they are used.

Approaches to the assessment of Units when they form part of a Course may differ from approaches to assessing the same Unit when it is not being delivered as part of a Course. Where Units are delivered on a freestanding basis, teachers/lecturers will have more flexibility to develop approaches to delivering and assessing the Units which are not related to Course assessment.

Evidence for this Unit is likely to include a combination of written, oral and/or recorded evidence. The work can be presented for assessment in a variety of

formats depending on the preferences of centres and learners, as long as this covers all essential requirements for the Unit.

The Assessment Standards can be achieved over a number of different occasions, and with reference to a single production brief, or a number of different briefs or tasks. An individual or collaborative approach can be taken; if the latter, each learner in a group setting must have opportunities to generate evidence for Assessment Standards.

The following are suggested ways to generate evidence for the Unit:

- ◆ a print or electronic production diary containing research findings with plans generated as a result
- ◆ production of mock-ups with annotations, mood boards, storyboards, scripts and so on as part of planning
- ◆ a presentation of research and/or ideas in a production meeting context
- ◆ the completion of a production log which contains questions/headings provided by the teacher to guide the planning process
- ◆ finished media content as specified by a brief
- ◆ an evaluation that uses appropriate terminology to demonstrate understanding of key aspects of media literacy in creating media content

Equality and inclusion

It is recognised that centres have their own duties under equality and other legislation and policy initiatives. The guidance given in these *Unit Support Notes* is designed to sit alongside these duties but is specific to the delivery and assessment of the Unit.

Alternative approaches to Unit assessment to take account of the specific needs of learners can be used. However, the centre must be satisfied that the integrity of the assessment is maintained and that the alternative approaches to assessment will, in fact, generate the necessary evidence of achievement.

Appendix 1: Reference documents

The following reference documents will provide useful information and background.

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Administrative information

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Superclass: KA

History of changes to Unit Support Notes

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