Higher National Unit Specification

General information

Unit title: Journalism: Feature Writing (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: J129 34

Superclass: KD

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Unit purpose

This unit is designed to allow the learner to attain the key skills that a journalist needs for writing features — researching, structuring and writing feature articles for newspapers, magazines, websites and other online sources.

Outcomes

On successful completion of the unit the learner will be able to:

1 Write and pitch feature synopses.
2 Research and write articles based on secondary sources.
3 Research and write articles based on primary and secondary sources.

Credit points and level:

1 HN credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7)

Recommended entry to the unit

Access to this unit is at the discretion of the centre. However, learners would normally be expected to have competence in *Communication* skills at SCQF level 6 or equivalent. This could be demonstrated by achievement of one of the following:

- Higher English (C824 76)
- Communication (FA1W 12) and Literature 1 (FA58 12)
- Relevant work experience

Higher National Unit Specification: General information (cont)

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Core Skills

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

Core Skill component	Critical Thinking at SCQF level 5 Planning and Organising 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.

Context for delivery

If this unit is delivered as part of a group award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the group award to which it contributes.

This unit is mandatory in HNC/HND Practical Journalism. If this unit is taught within the HNC/HND Practical Journalism framework, progression to *Journalism: Feature Writing Advanced* is recommended. It is also recommended that this unit is delivered alongside the unit *Journalism: Research and Interview Skills* where significant opportunity for cross assessment is presented.

The Assessment Support Pack (ASP) for this unit provides assessment and marking guidelines that exemplify the national standard for achievement. It is a valid, reliable and practicable assessment. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the ASP to ensure a comparable standard. A list of existing ASPs is available to download from SQA's website (http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/46233.2769.html).

Equality and inclusion

This unit specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence. Further advice can be found on our website **www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements**.

Higher National Unit Specification: Statement of standards

Unit title: Journalism: Feature Writing (SCQF level 7)

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

Write and pitch feature synopses.

Knowledge and/or skills

- What is meant by the terms synopsis and pitch
- Purpose and value of pitches in feature writing
- How to identify feature ideas and their angles
- Use of industry-required specifics in a pitch
- Relevance and importance of target audiences

Outcome 2

Research and write articles based on secondary sources.

Knowledge and/or skills

- Use of secondary research, including data and/or statistics
- Generating story ideas for feature articles
- Writing features
- Using appropriate style, tone and word count for named publication
- Accurate use of grammar, spelling and punctuation

Outcome 3

Research and write articles based on primary and secondary sources.

Knowledge and/or skills

- Use of primary and secondary research
- Planning and structuring an interview
- Question types, including open, closed, factual, leading
- Conducting an interview
- Using appropriate style, tone and word count for target population
- Accurate use of grammar, spelling and punctuation

Evidence requirements for this unit

The learner will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills across all outcomes by meeting all the evidence requirements for this unit.

Higher National Unit Specification: Statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: Feature Writing (SCQF level 7)

For Outcome 1

The learner must show that they can accurately describe pitches and their use in terms of proposing and selling feature ideas. The learner should also present one pitch and write a second for a different publication.

The learner's response should be two pitches (one verbal, one written) which should be concise, industry-standard definitions of the feature, with key information such as angle, research and interviews. Each pitch should be for a different publication.

The pitches should be produced, on an ongoing basis, to a format and deadline approved by the tutor.

The assessment for this outcome is open-book.

For Outcome 2

The learner must generate feature ideas and undertake appropriate secondary research to write features to industry standard.

The learner should produce a folio containing the following:

- an article based on secondary research aimed at a tabloid newspaper (300–400 words)
- an article based on secondary research including the use of data and/or statistical analysis (600–800 words)

The assessment will be undertaken under open-book conditions and work submitted to a series of deadlines set by the tutor.

For Outcome 3

The learner must generate feature ideas and undertake appropriate primary and secondary research to write features to industry standard.

The learner should produce a folio containing the following:

- an article based on primary and secondary research from one interview (600–800 words)
- an article based on at least two primary sources plus secondary research (1,000 words)

Both articles should be written for chosen publications.

The assessment will be undertaken under open-book conditions and work submitted to a series of deadlines set by the tutor.

Higher National Unit Support Notes

Unit title: Journalism: Feature Writing (SCQF level 7)

Unit support notes are offered as guidance and 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 purpose of this unit is to provide the learner with sufficient knowledge of how to write a feature for a variety of different broadsheet and tabloid newspapers, magazines and online sources. In addition, the learner should be encouraged to read and research the style and structure of different types of feature and to plan, research and write a variety of features from secondary and primary research sources.

This unit is aimed at the learner with an interest in entering the journalism industry or progressing to related studies at a higher level. This unit is designed to be delivered alongside other HNC/HND Practical Journalism units such as *Journalism: Research and Interview Skills* and *Magazine Journalism*. Progression to *Journalism: Feature Writing Advanced* is recommended for learners interested in entry to this aspect of the industry.

Guidance on approaches to delivery of this unit

This is a mandatory unit within the HNC/HND Practical Journalism group award.

Teaching should be focused on helping the learner to understand and apply the principles and main provisions of the relevant areas of feature writing. When delivering this unit, it is best to deliver it alongside *Journalism: Research and Interview Skills* and to encourage the learner to see and become practised in the clear links between research, interviewing and feature writing.

An ongoing folio-based approach should be encouraged to allow the learner to begin work early on planning, researching, structuring and writing a series of feature articles employing various research skills.

Work done is likely to develop research and interview work from *Journalism: Research and Interview Skills.* This will allow the learner to work on features from inception through primary and secondary research through to writing. In the early stages the learner should also be encouraged to read a wide variety of features from tabloid, broadsheet newspapers, magazines and online sources to become familiar with different styles and types of feature.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: Feature Writing (SCQF level 7)

Guidance on approaches to assessment of this unit

Evidence can be generated using different types of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners.

For Outcome 1 it is recommended that the written pitch take the form of an e-mail to an editor, while the verbal pitch of 2–3 minutes is recorded. The learner should also describe the purpose of pitches and their use in proposing and selling feature ideas. An observation checklist could also be used.

For Outcome 2 the learner should identify appropriate secondary sources for a tabloid newspaper such as press releases, government reports, NHS findings, charities.

For Outcome 3 the primary source for the feature should be an interview conducted face to face or by telephone or using FaceTime. It should not be by e-mail or Messenger. It is recommended that the interview is recorded.

For the second feature it is recommended that the primary sources could be two different sources from either an interview, survey, review, personal diary or observation.

Secondary sources could be statistics, internet data, social media, academic papers or press releases. It is recommended that assessors do not accept other media articles as secondary sources.

Tutors should set deadlines for individual features allowing time for research and to build a portfolio. Work submitted to deadline provides learners with the opportunity to appreciate the importance of working to deadlines in the industry.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education.

Opportunities for 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 learner evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the evidence requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at **www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment**.

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

The *Communication* Core Skill component, Written Communication at SCQF level 6, could be developed in this unit. The skill is to produce well-structured written communication on complex topics.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: Feature Writing (SCQF level 7)

The specific skills for this core skill component are:

- present all essential ideas/information and supporting detail in a logical and effective order
- use a structure which takes account of purpose and audience and links the major and minor points in ways which assist the clarity and impact of the writing
- use conventions which are effective in achieving the purpose and adapted as necessary for the target audience
- use spelling, punctuation and sentence structures which are consistently accurate
- vary sentence structure, paragraphing and vocabulary to suit the purpose and target audience

The *Communication* Core Skill component, Oral Communication at SCQF level 6, could be developed in this unit. The skill is to produce and respond to oral communication on a complex topic.

The specific skills for this core skill component are:

- use vocabulary and a range of spoken language structures consistently and effectively at an appropriate level of formality
- convey all essential information, opinions or ideas with supporting detail accurately and coherently and with varied emphasis as appropriate
- structure communication to take full account of purpose and audience
- take account of situation and audience during delivery
- respond to others, taking account of their contributions

It is possible to develop the *Information and Communication Technology* Core Skill at SCQF level 5 in this unit.

The general skill for the component Accessing Information is: Use ICT independently, effectively, and responsibly to access information within a range of tasks.

The specific skills for this Core Skill component are:

- Make effective, independent, and responsible use of ICT
- Carry out searches for information using a range of digital sources
- Evaluate results of a search strategy

The general skill for the component Providing/Creating Information is: Use ICT independently, effectively, and responsibly to carry out a range of processing tasks.

The specific skills for this Core Skill component are:

- make effective, independent, and responsible use of ICT
- carry out a range of processing tasks using ICT
- locate and integrate data from a range of sources
- evaluate information

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Journalism: Feature Writing (SCQF level 7)

The *Numeracy* Core Skill component, Using Graphical Information at SCQF level 5, could be developed in this unit.

The specific skills for this core skill component are:

- interpret information from tables, graphs, charts or diagrams
- select an appropriate form of tables, graphs, charts or diagrams and communicate information in that form

The Core Skills could be developed without formal certification.

The Critical Thinking and Planning and Organising component of Problem Solving at SCQF level 5 is embedded in this unit. When a learner achieves the unit, their Core Skills profile will also be updated to include this component.

History of changes to unit

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Core Skills Components Critical Thinking and Planning and Organising at SCQF level 5 embedded.	17/12/18

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General information for learners

Unit title: Journalism: Feature Writing (SCQF level 7)

This section will help you decide whether this is the unit for you by explaining what the unit is about, what you should know or be able to do before you start, what you will need to do during the unit and opportunities for further learning and employment.

This is a one credit unit designed to give you a practical understanding of the importance of feature writing in the production of newspapers, magazines and on line sources. It is designed to give you a working knowledge of the structure of a variety of types of features. In addition, it is designed to encourage you to begin to create a folio of journalistic work through researching and writing a series of feature articles. It is also a mandatory unit in the HNC/HND Practical Journalism course.

Outcome 1 provides an introduction to the key concept of the pitch — used to outline the content of a feature and to promote the idea or sell a feature to a potential publication. You will be encouraged to generate ideas and create pitches for the features you will research and write.

Outcome 2 provides an introduction to feature writing, with a focus on different types of feature using secondary research.

Outcome 3 assists you with the progression from idea development through planning, secondary and primary research through to actually writing features. You will be encouraged to begin to develop your own folio of feature articles.

Outcome 1 will be assessed by an instrument of assessment suitable for testing knowledge and understanding. Outcomes 2 and 3 will be integrated in a practical exercise testing your ability to research and write feature articles for a variety of publications.

There are opportunities to develop the *Communication* Core Skill at SCQF level 6. The Core Skill of *Information and Communication Technology* at SCQF level 5 and the *Numeracy* component, Using Graphical Information at SCQF level 5 may also be developed.

The Critical Thinking and Planning and Organising component of Problem Solving at SCQF level 5 is embedded in this unit. When a learner achieves the unit, their Core Skills profile will also be updated to include this component.