The Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) was set up as a statutory body on 11 June 2001 by the Minister for Education and Science. Under the Qualifications (Education & Training) Act, 1999, FETAC now has responsibility for making awards previously made by NCVA.

Module Descriptor

Writing Skills for Journalism

Level 5   E20078

www.fetac.ie
# Level 5 Module Descriptor

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<tr>
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<th>Describes how the module functions as part of the national vocational certificate framework.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Module Title</td>
<td>Indicates the module content. This title appears on the learner’s certificate. It can be used to download the module from the website <a href="http://www.fetac.ie">www.fetac.ie</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module Code</td>
<td>An individual code is assigned to each module; a letter at the beginning denotes a vocational or general studies area under which the module is grouped and the first digit denotes its level within the national vocational certificate framework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Indicates where the module is placed in the national vocational certificate framework, from Level 3 to Level 6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit Value</td>
<td>Denotes the amount of credit that a learner accumulates on achievement of the module.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Describes in summary what the learner will achieve on successfully completing the module and in what learning and vocational contexts the module has been developed. Where relevant, it lists what certification will be awarded by other certification agencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred Entry Level</td>
<td>Recommends the level of previous achievement or experience of the learner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Requirements</td>
<td>Usually ‘none’ but in some cases detail is provided here of specific learner or course provider requirements. There may also be reference to the minimum safety or skill requirements that learners must achieve prior to assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Aims</td>
<td>Describe in 3-5 statements the broad skills and knowledge learners will have achieved on successful completion of the module.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Units</td>
<td>Structure the learning outcomes; there may be no units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Learning Outcomes</td>
<td>Describe in specific terms the knowledge and skills that learners will have achieved on successful completion of the module.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio of Assessment</td>
<td>Provides details on how the learning outcomes are to be assessed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Candidate Marking Sheets</td>
<td>List the assessment criteria for each assessment technique and the marking system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module Results Summary Sheet</td>
<td>Records the marks for each candidate in each assessment technique and in total. It is an important record for centres of their candidate’s achievements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary of Assessment Techniques</td>
<td>Explains the types of assessment techniques used to assess standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Principles</td>
<td>Describes the assessment principles that underpin FETAC approach to assessment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

A module is a statement of the standards to be achieved to gain a FETAC award. Candidates are assessed to establish whether they have achieved the required standards. Credit is awarded for each module successfully completed.

The standards in a module are expressed principally in terms of specific learning outcomes, i.e. what the learner will be able to do on successful completion of the module. The other elements of the module - the purpose, general aims, assessment details and assessment criteria - combine with the learning outcomes to state the standards in a holistic way.

While FETAC is responsible for setting the standards for certification in partnership with course providers and industry, it is the course providers who are responsible for the design of the learning programmes. The duration, content and delivery of learning programmes should be appropriate to the learners’ needs and interests, and should enable the learners to reach the standard as described in the modules. Modules may be delivered alone or integrated with other modules.

The development of learners’ core skills is a key objective of vocational education and training. The opportunity to develop these skills may arise through a single module or a range of modules. The core skills include:

- taking initiative
- taking responsibility for one’s own learning and progress
- problem solving
- applying theoretical knowledge in practical contexts
- being numerate and literate
- having information and communication technology skills
- sourcing and organising information effectively
- listening effectively
- communicating orally and in writing
- working effectively in group situations
- understanding health and safety issues
- reflecting on and evaluating quality of own learning and achievement.

Course providers are encouraged to design programmes which enable learners to develop core skills.
Module Title  Writing Skills for Journalism

Module Code  E20078

Level  5

Credit Value  1 credit

Purpose  This module has been designed to develop the writing skills of learners of journalism. The units within this module have been selected to cover the range of writing undertaken by print journalists. The learner will be expected to show mastery of the different language conventions appropriate to the form being worked in. It is one of the mandatory vocational modules for the Level 5 Certificate in Print Journalism award.

Preferred Entry Level  Level 4 Certificate, Leaving Certificate or equivalent qualifications and/or relevant life and work experiences.

Special Requirements  None.

General Aims  

Learners who successfully complete this module will:

8.1 understand the ways in which the reading public is offered information
8.2 develop writing skills that answer the editorial needs of newspapers, radio or television
8.3 write in different registers
8.4 work to pre-defined, tight deadlines
8.5 spot a potential story
8.6 demonstrate an understanding, in writing, of the difference between fact and comment
8.7 understand the legal framework within which journalists operate.
The specific learning outcomes are grouped into 5 units.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit 1</td>
<td>Writing News Stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 2</td>
<td>Writing Editorials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 3</td>
<td>Writing Reviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 4</td>
<td>Writing Feature Articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 5</td>
<td>The Law and the Journalist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 Specific Learning Outcomes

**Unit 1 Writing News Stories**

*Learners should be able to:*

10.1.1 write hard news and human interest stories, court reports and news interviews
10.1.2 demonstrate different house styles (e.g. quality: tabloid, Radio/TV)
10.1.3 show how different house styles determine the structure of news stories
10.1.4 use the 5 Ws+H scheme and employ the inverted pyramid construction i.e. least important matter to be left to the last.

**Unit 2 Writing Editorials**

*Learners should be able to:*

10.2.1 research the information necessary to write an editorial
10.2.2 demonstrate an impersonal style
10.2.3 express an awareness of other points of view
10.2.4 put forward a clear opinion from a pre-determined point of view.

**Unit 3 Writing Reviews**

*Learners should be able to:*

10.3.1 present practical information (e.g. location, date, author, publisher) about the work being reviewed
10.3.2 write a critical assessment of different pieces of work (e.g. book, film, play, exhibition, music, concert).
Unit 4 Writing Feature Articles

Learners should be able to:

10.4.1 research an article on a topical subject
10.4.2 plan and organise a coherent presentation of the material
10.4.3 present a background article on some event of current interest
10.4.4 write a column on an area of special interest.

Unit 5 The Law and the Journalist

Learners should be able to:

10.5.1 list the different courts with their powers and jurisdiction
10.5.2 explain the legal issues involved in court reporting
10.5.3 explain the protection which the constitution and legislation affords a person’s good name
10.5.4 distinguish between civil and criminal charges
10.5.5 distinguish between slander and libel
10.5.6 outline the law on libel and slander
10.5.7 illustrate the concept of defamatory words and innuendo
10.5.8 explain the main defences to an action for defamation i.e. consent, privilege, fair and accurate report, offer of amends
10.5.9 outline the law relating to malice and privilege
10.5.10 outline the law on copyright
10.5.11 outline the concept of contempt of court
10.5.12 analyse the limitations on freedom of expression arising from the following:


11 Portfolio of Assessment

Please refer to the glossary of assessment techniques and the note on assessment principles at the end of this module descriptor.
All assessment is carried out in accordance with FETAC regulations.
Assessment is devised by the internal assessor, with external moderation by FETAC.
Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collection of Work</th>
<th>75%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11.1 Collection of Work

The internal assessor will devise guidelines for candidates on gathering a collection of work that demonstrates evidence of journalistic writing skills.

The collection will include 5 pieces of writing in different forms:
- hard news story
- human interest story
- editorial
- review
- feature.

Each of these pieces will be 100 - 300 words in length and submitted within set deadlines. Use of spelling, grammar, punctuation and syntax conventions should be evident. Each piece should be targeted for a specific market eg local/national, newspaper/magazine, tabloid/broadsheet, general/specialist.

11.2 Assignment

The internal assessor will devise a brief that requires the candidate to produce evidence that demonstrates an understanding of the legal framework and key legal issues underpinning good journalistic practice.

The assignment should focus on one issue such as judicial process, copyright, censorship or defamation.

12 Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>50 - 64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merit</td>
<td>65 - 79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td>80 - 100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Candidate Name: _______________________________  PPSN: _________________________
Centre: __________________________________________________  Centre No.: __________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Criteria</th>
<th>Maximum Mark</th>
<th>Candidate Mark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collection of Work</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality of Writing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ideas/facts/opinions clearly and concisely expressed</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• articles well structured and careful drafting/redrafting evident</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• writing conventions correctly observed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• fact and opinion clearly differentiated and verified where appropriate</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• research thoroughly and systematically carried out</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Journalism Requirements</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• articles produced in 5 different forms</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• story clearly told</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• deadlines consistently met</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• articles fit for purpose – length, style, register, audience</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• legal considerations respected</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assignment</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• legalities clearly outlined</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• issues explored fully and objectively</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• findings presented clearly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• recommendations/conclusions show evidence of critical thinking and analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL MARKS</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This mark should be transferred to the Module Results Summary Sheet

**Internal Assessor’s Signature:** _______________________________  **Date:** __________

**External Authenticator’s Signature:** _______________________________  **Date:** __________
# FETAC Module Results Summary Sheet

**Module Title:** Writing Skills for Journalism  
**Module Code:** E20078  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate Surname</th>
<th>Candidate Forename</th>
<th>Total 100%</th>
<th>Grade*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Signed:**

**Internal Assessor:** ___________________________  
**Date:** __________

This sheet is for internal assessors to record the overall marks of individual candidates. It should be retained in the centre. The marks awarded should be transferred to the official FETAC Module Results Sheet issued to centres before the visit of the external Authenticator.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D: 80 - 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M: 65 - 79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P: 50 - 64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U: 0 - 49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W: candidates entered who did not present for assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Glossary of Assessment Techniques

Assignment
An exercise carried out in response to a brief with specific guidelines and usually of short duration.

Each assignment is based on a brief provided by the internal assessor. The brief includes specific guidelines for candidates. The assignment is carried out over a period of time specified by the internal assessor.

Assignments may be specified as an oral presentation, case study, observations, or have a detailed title such as audition piece, health fitness plan or vocational area profile.

Collection of Work
A collection and/or selection of pieces of work produced by candidates over a period of time that demonstrates the mastery of skills.

Using guidelines provided by the internal assessor, candidates compile a collection of their own work. The collection of work demonstrates evidence of a range of specific learning outcomes or skills. The evidence may be produced in a range of conditions, such as in the learning environment, in a role play exercise, or in real-life/work situations.

This body of work may be self-generated rather than carried out in response to a specific assignment eg art work, engineering work etc.

Examination
A means of assessing a candidate’s ability to recall and apply skills, knowledge and understanding within a set period of time (time constrained) and under clearly specified conditions.

Examinations may be:
- practical, assessing the mastery of specified practical skills demonstrated in a set period of time under restricted conditions
- oral, testing ability to speak effectively in the vernacular or other languages
- interview-style, assessing learning through verbal questioning, on one-to-one/group basis
- aural, testing listening and interpretation skills
- theory-based, assessing the candidate’s ability to recall and apply theory, requiring responses to a range of question types, such as objective, short answer, structured, essay. These questions may be answered in different media such as in writing, orally etc.

Learner Record
A self-reported record by an individual, in which he/she describes specific learning experiences, activities, responses, skills acquired.

Candidates compile a personal logbook/journal/diary/daily diary/record/laboratory notebook/sketch book.

The logbook/journal/diary/daily diary/record/laboratory notebook/sketch book should cover specified aspects of the learner’s experience.
**Project**

*A substantial individual or group response to a brief with guidelines, usually carried out over a period of time.*

Projects may involve:

- research – requiring individual/group investigation of a topic
- process – eg design, performance, production of an artefact/event

Projects will be based on a brief provided by the internal assessor or negotiated by the candidate with the internal assessor. The brief will include broad guidelines for the candidate. The work will be carried out over a specified period of time.

Projects may be undertaken as a group or collaborative project, however the individual contribution of each candidate must be clearly identified.

The project will enable the candidate to demonstrate: *(some of these – about 2-4)*

- understanding and application of concepts in (specify area)
- use/selection of relevant research/survey techniques, sources of information, referencing, bibliography
- ability to analyse, evaluate, draw conclusions, make recommendations
- understanding of process/planning implementation and review skills/planning and time management skills
- ability to implement/produce/make/construct/perform
- mastery of tools and techniques
- design/creativity/problem-solving/evaluation skills
- presentation/display skills
- team working/co-operation/participation skills.

**Skills Demonstration**

*Assessment of mastery of specified practical, organisational and/or interpersonal skills.*

These skills are assessed at any time throughout the learning process by the internal assessor/another qualified person in the centre for whom the candidate undertakes relevant tasks.

The skills may be demonstrated in a range of conditions, such as in the learning environment, in a role-play exercise, or in a real-life/work situations.

The candidate may submit a written report/supporting documentation as part of the assessment.

Examples of skills: laboratory skills, computer skills, coaching skills, interpersonal skills.
FETAC Assessment Principles

1. Assessment is regarded as an integral part of the learning process.

2. All FETAC assessment is criterion referenced. Each assessment technique has **assessment criteria** which detail the range of marks to be awarded for specific standards of knowledge, skills and competence demonstrated by candidates.

3. The mode of assessment is generally local i.e. the assessment techniques are devised and implemented by internal assessors in centres.

4. Assessment techniques in FETAC modules are valid in that they test a range of appropriate learning outcomes.

5. The reliability of assessment techniques is facilitated by providing support for assessors.

6. Arising from an extensive consultation process, each FETAC module describes what is considered to be an optimum approach to assessment. When the necessary procedures are in place, it will be possible for assessors to use other forms of assessment, provided they are demonstrated to be valid and reliable.

7. To enable all learners to demonstrate that they have reached the required standard, candidate evidence may be submitted in written, oral, visual, multimedia or other format as appropriate to the learning outcomes.

8. Assessment of a number of modules may be integrated, provided the separate criteria for each module are met.

9. Group or team work may form part of the assessment of a module, provided each candidate’s achievement is separately assessed.
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