

Feature Writing

Module title	Feature Writing
Module NFQ level (only if an NFQ level can be demonstrated)	8
Module number/reference	2
Parent programme(s) the plural arises if there are embedded programmes to be validated.	Higher Diploma in Arts in Journalism and New Media Content
Stage of parent programme	1
Semester (semester1/semester2 if applicable)	1
Module credit units (FET/HET/ECTS)	10
List the teaching learning and assessment modes	<p>The module will be delivered using lectures; problem-based learning; lab work; field work. Learners will work independently and autonomously and also in teams engaging in practice that is underpinned by theory, case study and best professional practice.</p> <p>Learners will be assessed on written feature articles (for publication in Reporting and Publication module in semester 2), press releases and corporate communications pieces.</p>
Entry requirements (statement of knowledge, skill and competence)	As per course entry requirements
Pre-requisite module titles	N/A
Co-requisite module titles	N/A
Is this a capstone module? (Yes or No)	No
Specification of the qualifications (academic, pedagogical and professional/occupational) and experience required of staff (staff includes workplace personnel who are responsible for learners such as apprentices, trainees and learners in clinical placements) If staff not in post at present, specify qualifications and experience required.	Module co-ordinator must have a minimum Level 9 qualification in a relevant subject and/or suitable teaching and/or professional experience in relevant or closely cognate areas.
Maximum number of learners per centre (or instance of the module)	20
Duration of the module	1 Semester
Average (over the duration of the module) of the contact hours per week (see * below)	3
Module-specific physical resources and support required per centre (or instance of the module)	Classroom; computer lab; VLE.
Analysis of required learning effort (much of the remainder of this table must also be presented in the programme schedule—take care to ensure consistency)	

*Effort while in contact with staff		Contact hours for the module								
Classroom and demonstrations		Mentoring and small-group tutoring		Other (specify)		Direct e-learning (hours)	Independent learning (hours)	Other hours (specify)	Work-based learning hours of learning effort	Total effort (hours)
Hours	Minimum ratio teacher/learner	Hours	Minimum ratio teacher/learner	Hours	Minimum ratio teacher/learner					
39							211			250
Allocation of marks (within the module)										
				Continuous assessment	Project	Practical	Final Exam	Total		
Percentage contribution				100%				100%		

Module aims and objectives

This module gives students experiential access to the modes and approaches to sourcing features and special interest stories and content for diverse audiences. Students learn to write in this long-format genre and manage relationships in the newsroom, freelance and digital firmaments.

Module learning outcomes

On completion of this module, learners should be able to:

1. Demonstrate an ability to source and develop features and niche stories
2. Write and file long format stories competently in the genre of features writing
3. Characterise the various relationships, roles and actions in the commissioning cycle
4. Manage workloads, deadlines and post-filing tasks to a high degree
5. Reflect on one's own experience of the values and ethics that underpin journalism

Rationale for inclusion of the module in the programme and its contribution to the overall proposed Programme Learning Outcomes

This is an important module in the programme since specialist and features writing underpins one of the most active genres in journalism. Features are distinct from other types of journalism because of their long-format, particular stance and topicality, and they tend to have a longer shelf-life than news items. Sourcing, researching, writing and interviewing for features also requires a distinct skillset from regular news items.

This module contributes to the achievement of the following programme learning outcomes:

PLO1	Demonstrate an understanding of theories, concepts and methods pertaining to Journalism and New Media content creation
PLO2	Demonstrate a detailed knowledge and understanding of the practice of Journalism and New Media content creation across digital and analogue platforms

PLO3	Employ specific skills in: News gathering & reporting; media law and ethics; writing for diverse platforms; self-reliance
PLO4	Show appropriate judgement in a range of situations which involves discovery, organisation, and delivery, in timely and resourceful ways
PLO5	Create high-quality media content that is underpinned by an ethical approach to journalistic values
PLO6	Work in peer-to-peer teams or under supervision to complete tasks and projects in flexible and changing circumstances
PLO7	Manifest intellectual nimbleness and critical adaptability to new journalistic and media contexts, changing technological innovations and employment opportunities

Information provided to learners about the module

Information on the module will appear in this format in the colleges' prospectus:

This module in Feature Writings will give students the chance to learn how to write for outlets beyond news but faithful to the professional standards of the industry. Students will practice feature and long-read writing, encompassing the experience of writing for diverse audiences, across a range of platforms and outlets.

Module content, organisation and structure

Content

Students will focus on the following areas:

Writing practice: Students build up a portfolio of writing work in features and communications genres.

Students will learn genres outside the daily news cycle. This involves:

- Sourcing stories long-format, long shelf-life stories
- Brainstorming and managing team content meetings for supplements and features
- Pitching long format stories to editors
- Researching content and narratives in long-format and topical feature stories
- Interviewing for long format feature pieces
- Writing in the house style of a given outlet with a 'voice'
- Delivering high quality work in a timely fashion
- Delivering:
 - o Features
 - o Speciality articles (sport, science, beauty, health, lifestyle)
- Understanding the ethics and values that underpin good journalism
- Interrogating one's own values in the context of the stories one writes or choses to write

Insight and reflection: Students interrogate their own work and approaches. Students engage with transformative and current research on the media and journalism and its role in society

Organisation and Structure

The learners will be supported by qualified staff in a practice setting, including industry professionals currently working in journalism. The emphasis being on the building up of a portfolio of work which showcases the learners' abilities as a features specialist. There will be opportunities to write for local newspapers in Carlow, Laois and Kildare where the learners will get real-life experience and see their world published.

Module teaching and learning and assessment strategy

The assessment strategy on this module leans on the hegemony of experiential learning in journalism. The best way to become a good writer is to write a lot and often. As a consequence, learners will be assigned regular writing tasks and will be assessed appropriately. Theory will be included as theory informs practice and leads to superior work. Problem-based learning will be important as a strategy

on this module as it provides ‘real-world’ scenarios appropriate to what is a ‘real-world’ and dynamic profession.

Module summative assessment strategy

This is a 100% writing module and students will be asked to write diverse long-format feature articles for the student newspaper that show flexibility and expertise across genres. Selected work may then become part of the students’ digital portfolio. Assessment consists of:

Assessment	MiMLO	Nature of Assessment
Feature Articles: 60% 2 X 30% Features for publication in the college magazine in semester 2 Word count: approx. 1,600 words	1 & 2	Individual
Specialist PR/Corporate Pieces: 20% 2 X 10%	1, 2, 3	Individual
Reflection: 20% - Student will reflect on roles and actions - Student will reflect on the feature writing experience - Student will reflect on her/his choices and the values that underpin those choices - 1,000 words (may be in written in 1,000 words, or video/audio format 5’00’')	3, 4, 5	Individual

Nature of assessment materials

The proposed assessment of this module will follow this format:

- Feature work contribution to campus newspaper (60%)
- Specialist/ PR/ Corporate pieces (20%)
- Reflection (20%)

Timetabling, learner effort and credit

Timetable	Learner Effort	Credit
3 hours one night per week for 13 weeks	250 hours, contact hours and independent learning, writing and assessment combined	10 ECTS

Work-based learning and practice-placement

Students will develop and write assessable content for a monthly campus newspaper that will service IT Carlow and Carlow College. Students will also, write for local news outlets if the work has reached the standard required for publication. Students will be responsible for the publication of the campus newspaper/magazine.

E-learning

Written articles will have to be delivered digitally and assessed online. Students will use Turnitin technology to deliver work and lecturers will use Turnitin to assess student work and give feedback.

Module physical resource requirements

Students will need access to computer labs and libraries to engage in writing and research

Reading lists and other information resources

Bernays, E. L. (2015), *Public Relations*. Brooklyn: N.Y. Ig Publishing.

Cornelissen, J. (2011), *Corporate Communications: A guide to theory and practice*. SAGE: London.

Garrison, B., (2010), *Professional Feature Writing*. New York: Routledge.

Hennessy, B., (2005), *Writing Feature Articles*. Burlington: Elsevier.

Ricketson, M. (2004), *1958– Writing feature stories: how to research and write newspaper and magazine articles*. Allen & Unwin: NSW, Australia.

Wolfe, T. (1973), *New Journalism*. London, Pan MacMillan

Ethical Considerations

Ethics are at the heart of journalism and media communications. Features writing, in particular, means often dealing with human and affecting stories. The fair treatment of the public/expert participants and the accuracy of information is primary. Teasing out issues relating to dealing with participants will be unpacked in this module and best practice will be taught.

Reassessment Procedures

All details regarding compensation, preponderance, penalties for late submissions, policy around repeat examinations/assessments, pass standards at programme, module, and assessment level, mitigation policy, max completion period are outlined in the Institute's Academic Standards and Assessment Regulations. Where a Learner does not successfully complete the module, they will have the opportunity to repeat the assessment in line with the Institute's Academic Standards and Assessment Regulations. This is available through Sharepoint here:

<https://staffportal.itcarlow.ie/functions/Quality/default.aspx>