

## **SUB-EDITOR'S LOGBOOK - GUIDELINES FOR CANDIDATES, TRAINERS AND MARKERS**

The logbook records details of the trainee and training progress, including evidence of regular in-house assessments and a selection of cuttings demonstrating that the trainee has satisfactorily covered a range of key tasks.

It must be available to the editor at all times. It is the joint responsibility of the editor and the trainee that it is kept up to date and submitted, fully completed, to the NCTJ for assessment when the trainee sits the NCE.

### **SUBMISSION**

Logbooks should be handed in to the exam organiser on NCE day. Logbooks will only be accepted after this date if they are submitted within the next seven days and are accompanied by an acceptable explanation by the candidate's editor/trainer.

The logbook should be submitted in the light-weight folder with a label showing the candidate's name and newspaper in the top right-hand corner of the front cover and on the spine.

Logbooks will be returned free of charge. Candidates are reminded that they will need their Logbook back if they fail this section of the NCE and have to re-submit it.

### **PRESENTATION**

All logbook pages should be submitted, including any blank or incomplete. They should be clean, legible, and in the correct order.

Candidates who want to alter the information on the introductory pages or change Key Task cover page details about their stories are advised to complete new pages rather than submit ones that have information crossed out or amended. Candidates may find it advisable to make photocopies of these pages before starting the logbook in case replacements are needed later. The NCTJ can supply substitute pages to candidates upon request.

There is no need to put all the introductory and assessment pages in plastic wallets.

### **Introductory pages**

The candidate's name, newspaper and NCTJ reference number should be entered on the title page and Page 1 should be fully completed. Candidates will be penalised if information is missing or if these pages are not completed satisfactorily.

### **Assessment pages**

The pages recording in-house assessments should be submitted even if some or all have not been completed. These pages are not marked as part of the NCE but their content (or lack of it) may assist examiners to judge other sections of the logbook.

### **Further comments and additions**

The Further Comments page that follows the final assessment page should be submitted even if it has been left blank.

Any letter(s) from an editor or trainer explaining deficiencies in logbook presentation or content should be inserted into the logbook after the Further Comments page.

### **Key task pages**

The Key Task cover pages should be completed and signed by the trainer. Key Tasks will not be marked if these pages are not completed satisfactorily, and logbooks will be failed as a result. Candidates have failed the logbook because they swapped cuttings but forgot to amend the cover sheets. Others have failed because trainers failed to sign them off.

The cover pages, cuttings and original copy for each Key Task should be submitted in three plastic wallets, as follows:

1. First plastic wallet containing the Key Task cover page, facing forward, and the first cutting behind it, facing back
2. Second plastic wallet containing the original copy for the first cutting, facing forward, and the second cutting behind it, facing back
3. Third plastic wallet containing the original copy for the second cutting, facing forward

This allows each cutting and its original copy to be seen facing each other.

Where additional material is required, such as the original handout for Key Task 1, it should be stapled to the appropriate original copy.

Cuttings may be cut out and pasted onto A4 paper or thin card for insertion into the plastic wallets. Photocopies of cuttings, full-size or scaled down within readable limits, will be accepted.

Candidates should ensure they submit the whole of their stories. If stories are continued from one page to another, it must be clear which cuttings go together. If original copy covers more than one sheet of paper, sheets should be stapled together.

### **Summary pages and additions**

Page 26 should be submitted even if it has been left blank.

Any letter(s) from an editor or trainer explaining deficiencies in logbook presentation or content should be inserted into the logbook after Page 26.

## **CONTENT**

### **Cuttings**

Two appropriate cuttings must be submitted for each Key Task. A Key Task without one or both cuttings will result in the logbook failing.

Varied cuttings should be submitted wherever possible. Different cuttings must be submitted for each submission in the Key Task section. Cuttings must be long enough to be assessed. Stories of fewer than 80 words are unlikely to be accepted except for Key Task 1, for which there should be at least four nibs in each submission but individual stories can be shorter than 80 words. Some short stories in the design Key Tasks such as News Spread may also have individual stories that are shorter than 80 words.

Examiners will take into account at which stage of a candidate's training copy has been produced. The more recent the copy, the higher the standard expected.

It must be clear from the accompanying original copy which parts of the published story were sub-edited by the candidate. If it is unclear, the Key Task will not be marked and the logbook will fail.

### **Original copy**

Each cutting must be accompanied by a print-out of the pre-subbed original copy from the reporter. If there is more than one story, each piece of copy must be clearly identified. Examiners will assess what the candidate actually subbed and what appeared in the paper.

Print-outs should be endorsed as original copy by the candidate's editor/trainer. If print-outs do not have this endorsement the logbook will fail.

Key Task cuttings without a print-out will not be marked and the Logbook will fail. Print-outs of subbed copy or of copy re-typed after publication will not be accepted.

Candidates who have subbed copy that was written directly to screen by phone or other means which created no original copy should submit an explanatory letter from their editor or trainer. This will only be accepted in special circumstances (eg election nights, on-the-spot news reports on deadline).

Examiners will only accept computer failure as an excuse for missing original copy if (a) the computer problem was short-lived, (b) all the missing original copy clearly relates only to the time computers were creating problems, and (c) there are very good reasons why the candidate was unable to substitute fresh stories, with original copy.

Long periods of 'computer failure' will not be accepted. If candidates print out original copy at the time stories are published, problems should not arise or should be rapidly identified and corrected. If regular three-monthly assessments take place, the absence of original copy should soon become apparent to trainers, and substitute stories should be found.

## **KEY TASKS**

### **Cover sheets**

These should include headlines, publication dates and a brief explanation by the trainee of how stories were handled. It will do no harm to let examiners know that a story was re-written from a correspondent or to a short deadline. Each story must be endorsed by the candidate's editor/trainer. Logbooks will fail if endorsements are missing.

### **1 Flight of nibs**

Submissions should have an appropriate mix of subject matter, will be tightly subbed and headlines will be appropriate and engaging. The nibs – there should be at least four in each submission – may have been drastically cut or merely trimmed for tone and fit. As there is more than one story for each submission each piece of copy must be clearly identified. Submissions for this Key Task are marked for intro; structure and quotes; balance and tone; use of English, punctuation and house style; headline flair, appropriateness, accuracy and fit.

### **2 Family events**

The candidate's ability to sub stories about people is being tested. Typical submissions are stories about such family events as births, marriages, anniversaries, retirements and deaths. Hard news stories (car crashes, for example) in which the impact upon families is only incidental are not appropriate. The story may have been drastically cut or merely trimmed for tone and fit. The headline will be appropriate and engaging. Submissions for this Key Task are marked for intro; structure and quotes; balance and tone; use of English, punctuation and house style; headline flair, appropriateness, accuracy and fit.

### **3 Picture story**

Good submissions should demonstrate the candidate's ability to sub a story with the picture in mind. A good test is whether the stories would be severely diminished without the illustration.

The story may have been drastically cut or merely trimmed for tone and fit. The headline will be appropriate and engaging. Submissions for this Key Task are marked for intro; structure and quotes; balance and tone; use of English, punctuation and house style; headline flair, appropriateness, accuracy and fit.

### **4 Listings**

The listings may be for an entertainment guide, cinemas, sports matches, exam results, flower show results etc. Good submissions will pay particular attention to detail, ensuring that house style has been adhered to on all words, abbreviations and punctuation. Submissions for this Key Task are marked for tone; use of English; punctuation; house style; accuracy and fit.

### **5 Page lead**

Submissions should have a good headline on an engaging story. The story may have been heavily re-written to bring out the best angle but this is not necessary to attract a good mark. A lighter subbing hand may have enhanced the story in a more subtle way. The story may have been drastically cut or merely trimmed for tone and fit. Submissions for this Key Task are marked for intro; structure and quotes; balance and tone; use of English, punctuation and house style; headline tone, accuracy and fit.

### **6 Court/Inquest/Council**

Examiners recognise that not all newspapers cover Court, Inquests and Council but good submissions will have a mix of stories. Scottish candidates who cannot offer copy from Fatal Accident Inquiries instead of Inquests can substitute stories relating to the activities of the Scottish Parliament. The story may have been drastically cut or merely trimmed for tone and fit. The headline will be appropriate and engaging. Submissions for this Key Task are marked for intro; structure, quotes, balance and tone; use of English, punctuation and house style; legal, ethical and/or political awareness; headline tone, accuracy and fit.

## **7 Light-hearted stories**

Any story that has a light-hearted element may be submitted for this category. It may have a picture or pictures, it may be short or long but submissions should be more than 100 words. The story may have been drastically cut or merely trimmed for tone and fit. The headline will be appropriate and engaging. Submissions for this Key Task are marked for intro; structure and quotes; balance and tone; use of English, punctuation and house style; headline tone, accuracy and fit.

## **8 Sensitive/controversial stories**

Any story that has a sensitive or controversial element – like ‘death knocks’ – may be submitted for this category. It may have a picture or pictures, it may be short or long but submissions should be more than 100 words. The story may have been drastically cut or merely trimmed for tone and fit. The headline will be appropriate and engaging. Submissions for this Key Task are marked for intro; structure and quotes; balance and tone; use of English, punctuation and house style; headline tone, accuracy and fit.

## **9 Single news page**

At least three stories and one picture should be included for each submission. The candidate should have subbed all the stories, written all the headlines and also designed the page. As there is more than one story for each submission each piece of copy must be clearly identified. The stories may have been drastically cut or merely trimmed for tone and fit. The headlines will be appropriate and engaging. Submissions for this Key Task are marked for intros, structure and quotes; balance and tone; use of English, punctuation and house style; headline tone, accuracy and fit; design and use of pictures.

## **10 Leisure spread**

At least five stories and two pictures should be included for each submission. The candidate should have subbed all the stories, written all the headlines and also designed each of the two-page spreads. As there is more than one story for each submission each piece of copy must be clearly identified. The stories may have been drastically cut or merely trimmed for tone and fit. The headlines will be appropriate and engaging. Submissions for this Key Task are marked for intros, structure and quotes; balance and tone; use of English, punctuation and house style; headline tone, accuracy and fit; design and use of pictures.

## **11 Double-page news spread**

At least five stories and two pictures should be included for each submission. The candidate should have subbed all the stories, written all the headlines and also designed each of the two-page spreads. As there is more than one story for each submission each piece of copy must be clearly identified. The stories may have been drastically cut or merely trimmed for tone and fit. The headlines will be appropriate and engaging. Submissions for this Key Task are marked for intros, structure and quotes; balance and tone; use of English, punctuation and house style; headline tone, accuracy and fit; design and use of pictures.

## **12 Splash**

Examiners are sympathetic to candidates on newspapers in isolated areas where major incidents are rare, and stories will be judged in their context. The style of the newspaper will also be taken into account. The story may have been drastically cut or merely trimmed for tone and fit. The headline will be appropriate and engaging. Submissions for this Key Task are marked for intro; structure and quotes; balance and tone; use of English, punctuation and house style; headline tone, accuracy and fit.

## **13 Tasters**

Examiners will take into account the different design styles of newspapers. Cut-outs or Photoshop may be used but it is not a requirement. Submissions for this Key Task are marked for design; use of images; typography; colour; words.

## **14 Use of pictures in design**

The original pictures (or a printout/photocopy) should be submitted. Submissions will demonstrate the candidate’s ability to import a picture and use it imaginatively on a page by cropping the subject matter, by creating an interesting shape or by its placing within the design. Cut-outs or Photoshop may be used but it is not a requirement. The page should be designed by the candidate. Submissions for this Key Task are marked for cropping; shape; placing; overall design.

### **15 Features page/spread**

At least two stories and two pictures should be included for each submission. The candidate should have subbed all the stories, written all the headlines and also designed each submission. As there is more than one story for each submission each piece of copy must be clearly identified. The stories may have been drastically cut or merely trimmed for tone and fit. The headlines will be appropriate and engaging. Submissions for this Key Task are marked for intros, structure and quotes; balance and tone; use of English, punctuation and house style; headline tone, accuracy and fit; design and use of pictures.

### **16 Supplement**

Good submissions will include an entire supplement. This may only have been four run-of-paper pages or it may be more substantial, even a separate format publication. If submissions include only part of a supplement there should be a clear indication of what is included. The stories may have been drastically cut or merely trimmed for tone and fit. The headlines will be appropriate and engaging. Submissions for this Key Task are marked for intros, structure and quotes; balance and tone; use of English, punctuation and house style; headline tone, accuracy and fit; design and use of pictures.

### **17 Bills**

Two cuttings are required, with the original copy. Submissions should include the published story cutting on the left hand page and an A4 copy of the bill on the right hand page. The A4 copy should be signed by the trainer.

Submissions for this Key Task are marked for how well the story is encapsulated; words chosen; impact; appropriateness; and house style.

### **18 Trainee's choice**

This is an opportunity to show off submissions that do not fit into any of the previous categories because of the Key Task heading or the candidate already having enough copy. Good submissions will be substantial pieces of work. Submissions for this Key Task are marked for intro; structure and quotes; balance and tone; use of English, punctuation and house style; headline(s) and design (if applicable).

## **MARKING**

Logbooks are marked by senior journalists under the guidance of the NCTJ. Examiners do not assess the work of trainees they employ. They take into account at which stage of a candidate's training stories were produced and expect a higher standard from candidates at the end of their training than at the start.

Ten of the 100 marks available are awarded for presentation. The other 90 are awarded for the Key Tasks, up to five for each one. The pass mark is 60 per cent.

If the presentation or any Key Task is judged unmarkable or unacceptable, the logbook will fail regardless of the total number of marks.

Marked logbooks are subjected to rigorous moderation to ensure consistency of marking.

Exam reports are issued when logbooks fail to reach the required standard. These can be found at the front of the logbook upon its return. The Key Tasks which required attention may be resubmitted at any time. It is not normally necessary to send the whole logbook.

After each NCE the NCTJ publishes an Examiners' Report which includes advice for future candidates. This is available on the NCTJ website, and trainees are strongly urged to read it and note its recommendations.