GCE AS EXAMINERS' REPORTS

MEDIA STUDIES
AS

SUMMER 2018
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MEDIA STUDIES
GCE AS
Summer 2018
COMPONENT 1: INVESTIGATING THE MEDIA

General Comment
As this was the first Component 1 examination since the introduction of the reformed AS Media Studies qualification, it was encouraging to see how positively centres and candidates have responded to the demands of the new specification and how well candidates had been guided by centres. The candidates generally demonstrated a good level of familiarity both with the set products and with relevant aspects of the theoretical framework. They demonstrated a clear understanding of what was required in the different elements of the paper, showing that they had been well prepared for the demands of this component.

Question 1
How do visual elements create meaning in this music video? [10]

Assessment Objectives:
AO2 1: Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to analyse media products, including in relation to their contexts and through the use of academic theories.

The unseen product set for this question was an extract from the music video Shape of You (Ed Sheeran, 2017). This proved to be a rich product that was very accessible for some candidates who had been well prepared for this question through their study of the music video set products. However, it was of some concern that this question was completed less well than others on the paper, suggesting that there has been an over-teaching of theory at the expense of textual analysis. To prepare for the unseen product it is essential that candidates are given practice in applying their understanding of all elements of media language so that they are equipped to analyse a range of media products from the set forms.

It was encouraging to see that some candidates across the mark range were able to analyse the product in detail, employing various degrees of relevant media terminology. The more successful responses clearly addressed ‘visual elements’ and the expectation was that aspects of media language would be discussed, including:

- visual codes
- technical codes
- setting and iconography
- the codes and conventions of the music video form and of the ‘indie’ sub-genre
- the purpose of this music video in establishing the performer as part of the narrative
- the interpretation of the music video through visual elements
Responses in the higher bands were confident in discussing the codes and conventions of the music video form, were particularly strong when discussing technical codes and could, as expected, discuss the impact and effect of specific camera shots, angles and editing techniques. The unseen product allowed candidates to approach their response from a range of different starting points and there were very few purely descriptive answers. There was some excellent, detailed analysis demonstrating understanding of the theoretical framework and applying relevant theory. Candidates who produced more sophisticated responses also used the language of semiotics to develop their analysis further, which is to be encouraged.

Candidates in the middle of the mark range often recognised the connotations of the visual elements, but failed to then explore them in any detail. They produced a reasonable and straightforward analysis of the music video and tended not to cover a broad range of points. Several candidates failed to discuss the fact that the product was a music video and missed the opportunity to use the work they had done in class in their preparation of the music video set products. As the unseen resource is always taken from one of the forms studied for Section A, the expectation is that candidates will be able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework in relation to the selected form. Candidates awarded marks in the lower bands tended to produce a more descriptive response, telling the story of the music video. They were also less confident with the meaning of 'visual elements', focusing more on the discussion of the lyrics and audio codes. These responses showed limited understanding of the theoretical framework and limited use of subject-specific terminology.

Question 2

Compare how stereotypes are used in the film poster for Wonder Woman and the advertisement for Tide.

In your answer you must consider:

- the similarities and differences in how stereotypes are used in the products
- how the representations convey values and attitudes
- how far the representations reflect historical and cultural contexts.

Assessment Objectives:

AO2 1 and 2:

Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to:

- analyse media products, including in relation to their contexts and through the use of academic theories
- make judgements and draw conclusions.

This is an extended response question where candidates are assessed on the quality of their written response, including their ability to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, relevant, substantiated and logically structured.
In this response the bullet points were included in order to help candidates to structure their answer and to guide them in what to include. All of the bullet points must be covered but not necessarily in the same amount of detail. Better responses were able to address the focus of the question and to analyse both products, making relevant comparisons. It was essential for this response that candidates demonstrated effective essay writing skills and could employ subject-specific terminology. Candidates attaining marks in the higher bands effectively applied their knowledge of the theoretical framework and, in particular, representation.

These candidates were able to explore more detailed aspects of representation and showed clear engagement with the idea of the construction of stereotypes. At the higher levels, this was discussed in detail in both products, referring to visual codes, technical codes and highlighting both similarities and differences. To be placed in the higher bands, it was essential to compare the two products.

Responses in the middle band focused on more straightforward or obvious aspects of representation related to, for example, clothing and tended to focus more on one product. Less successful responses at times did not address the focus of the question and were largely undeveloped. There was a tendency to simply describe the key features of the two products and reference to relevant contexts was absent, or brief and undeveloped. Candidates who were less well prepared tended to rely on the analysis of the Wonder Woman poster as that was available in the exam. Some of these responses also made generalisations, particularly concerning the role of women in the 1950s.

With regard to the use of theory, it is important that the theory/theoretical perspective chosen is valid, relevant and can be used to support the points the candidate wishes to make about the product. There were several examples of candidates who tried to include theories which were, at worst, irrelevant and, at best, not applied appropriately.

Responses in the higher bands made perceptive comments about media contexts supported by specific examples from the products. They were able to effectively relate these to the construction of stereotypes and how this reflected the time in which the products were made. The reference to contexts in the middle range responses was more straightforward and simple.

Question 3

Assessment Objectives:

Q.3(a) - 3(c): AO1 1a and b
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media.

Q.3(d): AO1 2a and b:
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of contexts of media and their influence on media products and processes.

(a) Name the organisation that owns the Daily Mirror. [1]

It was surprising that many candidates did not know the answer to this knowledge-based question and responses were very diverse. Due to the recent changes at the Daily Mirror, Trinity Mirror and Reach were both acceptable.
(b) **Identify two ways in which newspapers are distributed.** [2]

Most candidates were awarded the full marks for this question. The most popular answers were print and online but candidates also named free papers and mobile apps.

(c) **Briefly explain an advantage of one of these ways.** [2]

To gain two marks, candidates needed to fully explain an advantage of their chosen method of distribution, rather than merely identifying an advantage. Most candidates were able to do this effectively.

(d) **Explain how political contexts affect the newspaper industry. Refer to the Daily Mirror to support your points.** [10]

In this question candidates were rewarded for drawing together knowledge and understanding from across the full course of study, including different areas of the theoretical framework and media contexts.

In their responses, candidates were required to discuss how political contexts, for example ownership, newspaper values and beliefs and political allegiance, shape the product and how this then helps to construct the newspaper’s content.

Several candidates struggled with this question, largely because they were using the edition of the *Daily Mirror* set for Section A, where the focus is textual analysis, as their set product. The focus of this question is **industry** and the expectation was that candidates would refer to the pages of the newspaper that had been chosen by the centre for study with regard to industry and audience. The first step of the question, which required candidates to engage with the newspaper industry on a broader scale, was largely ignored by most candidates who focused solely on the front page of the Trump edition. Some candidates were able to use this example effectively in order to explore how the construction of this story was shaped by the political context of the newspaper, others tended to describe the front cover without relating it to the question.

More effective responses were able to also incorporate theories and theoretical perspectives, including Curran and Seaton and Gerbner. Weaker responses tended to mention these theorists without using them to further their analysis of the newspaper industry.

**Question 4**

**Q.4 (a)** **Using demographics and/or psychographics, identify two possible audiences for Assassin’s Creed III: Liberation.**

**Assessment Objectives:**

**AO1 1a: Demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical framework of media.** [2]

Most candidates understood demographics and psychographics and were awarded the two marks. Some gave audiences that did not fall into these categories, for example ‘people who like violence’.
(b) Explain how audiences interact with video games. Refer to Assassin's Creed III: Liberation to support your points.

Assessment Objectives:

AO1 1a and b: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media.

Similarly to Q3(d), this question was in two parts, requiring candidates to discuss the interactive opportunities of video games and use examples from the set product to support their points. Better responses gave an introduction discussing the interactive opportunities of the platform and proceeded to offer a range of examples from the set product. Points made included the design of the product for the 'on the go' gamer, the immersion in the persistent game world, the creation of a female avatar and the downloading of extra content related to the game.

Weaker responses failed to focus on the key word in the question: 'interact', and instead gave a descriptive commentary on the game generally. Some candidates produced a very general response with no specific reference to the set product.
GENERAL COMMENTS

As this was the first Component 2 examination since the introduction of the reformed AS Media Studies qualification, it was encouraging to see the positive way in which centres and candidates have responded to the demands of the new specification. Although some questions were answered more successfully than others, there were very few rubric infringements across the paper and candidates generally demonstrated a good level of familiarity both with the set products and with relevant aspects of the theoretical framework.

SECTION A: Television: Questions 1-3(a)

*Explain what you understand by intertextuality. Refer to the set episode of Life on Mars/Humans/The Jinx to support your response* (5 marks)

**Assessment Objectives:**

**AO1:** Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media.

Rather surprisingly, the question on the paper that was least successfully answered was the 5-mark question on intertextuality. Although the question itself was relatively straightforward, as candidates were asked to explain their understanding of intertextuality, using the set television product they had studied to support and illustrate their answer, a significant number of candidates were clearly unfamiliar with this concept. Many chose not to answer the question at all, while there were also a lot of speculative answers as well as responses where the term had clearly been misunderstood. This was particularly surprising as intertextuality is explicitly referenced in the AS Media Studies specification - ‘the processes through which meanings are established through intertextuality’ is one of the aspects of media language that learners are required to consider in relation to the set television product they study in Component 2. Centres are reminded to cross-reference with the specification published on the Eduqas website, as the grids that feature in the specification indicate exactly which aspects of subject content need to be studied in relation to each of the set products in Component 2.

However, while some candidates clearly struggled with this question, others did manage to answer it more successfully. Those in the middle band tended to offer a straightforward definition of intertextuality supported by a relevant example, while responses in the higher bands demonstrated a more detailed understanding of the way in which intertextuality *functioned* in the television product studied. There were, for example, some good points about audience pleasure and the way in which intertextual references can be used to evoke a sense of nostalgia. The way in which intertextual references can help to establish characters, ideas, themes and genres, adding layers of meaning to television products, was also usefully discussed by many candidates.
Questions 1-3(b)

To what extent does the set episode of Life on Mars/Humans/The Jinx support Steve Neale’s suggestion that genres change over time? (15 marks)

Assessment Objectives: AO2:

Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to:

- analyse media products, including in relation to their contexts and through the use of academic theories
- make judgements and draw conclusions.

While the 5-mark question on intertextuality proved challenging for many candidates, the 15-mark question on genre was answered much more successfully, with most candidates demonstrating a secure grasp of Steve Neale’s theory of genre. Neale’s definition of genres as ‘instances of repetition and difference’ was widely referenced, while the notion that genres change, develop and vary as they borrow from and overlap with one another was also explored to good effect, with many candidates making pertinent points about genre hybridity. The way in which genres reflect social, cultural, historical or technological changes was also widely discussed. In 1(b), many candidates discussed the way in which shifting social and cultural attitudes toward gender and ethnicity can be seen to inform the representations offered in television crime dramas such as Life on Mars. In 2(b), the way in which science-fiction programmes such as Humans reflect cultural anxieties particular to the time in which they are produced was productively explored, while there were some interesting points about hybridization in 3(b), with candidates exploring the way in which documentaries such as The Jinx borrow conventions from thrillers and crime dramas.

Although candidates were required to make judgements and draw conclusions regarding the extent to which the set product supported Neale’s suggestion that genres change over time, there was no specific requirement to argue that the set product studied did support this claim. Some candidates argued convincingly that the television product they had studied reproduced a familiar set of tropes and conventions and therefore did not support the idea that genres change over time, while others argued that it only supported this idea to a certain extent. These conclusions were all perfectly acceptable provided they were substantiated by analysis of the set product. However, there was some variation in terms of how well-supported candidates’ judgements and conclusions were. Stronger responses were judiciously supported with appropriate reference to specific aspects of the set product whereas responses in the lower bands were often more general or limited in terms of textual analysis.

SECTION B: Magazines: Questions 4-6

To what extent does the set edition of Woman/Woman’s Realm/Vogue magazine target a particular audience? Explore specific aspects of the set product in your response. (20 marks)

Assessment Objectives: AO2:

Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to:

- analyse media products, including in relation to their contexts and through the use of academic theories
- make judgements and draw conclusions.
Questions 4-6 in Section B also required candidates to make judgements and draw conclusions, in this case regarding the extent to which the set edition of the magazine they had studied targeted a particular audience. Again, there was no specific requirement for candidates to argue that their set magazine did target a particular audience; they could equally argue that it did not target a particular audience, or that it targeted a particular audience to some extent.

In discussing who their set magazine targeted, candidates generally showed a good understanding of the different ways in which audiences can be categorised. There were useful references to particular psychographic categories such as mainstreamers and aspirers, for example, as well as relevant demographics including those relating to gender, age, ethnicity and social class/socio-economic status. While some candidates regarded broader demographic or psychographic groups such as women or mainstreamers as particular audiences, others argued that such groups were too broad to be considered a particular audience. Either of these interpretations were valid.

As this was an extended response question, what was important here was candidates’ ability to construct a logical and coherent argument, making appropriate reference to the set product. This was done with varying degrees of success. As well as engaging more explicitly with issues regarding the particularity of the target audience, stronger responses made more detailed reference to specific aspects of the set product to support and illustrate their points, while responses in the lower bands tended to be more general and more descriptive, offering a more limited analysis of the set magazine. In some cases, there was no evidence to suggest that candidates had studied any more than the front cover of the magazine. Although candidates are not required to refer to all of the pages that have been prescribed for study, failure to move beyond the front cover in an extended response question is likely to limit the level of response.

SECTION C: Online Media : Questions 7-8

Explain how representations of identity are constructed in blogs and vlogs. Refer to relevant theories and PointlessBlog/Zoella in your response. (20 marks)

Assessment Objectives:

AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media.

Questions 7-8 elicited a wide variety of responses. Many candidates showed a good understanding of how representations of identity are constructed in blogs and vlogs, making valid points about the ways in which Alfie Deyes and Zoe Sugg construct their online personas, representing themselves as the stereotypical boy/girl next door. Stronger responses often drew productively on relevant critical concepts such as mediation, gatekeeping, and mode of address. There was also some useful discussion of mise-en-scène, as candidates explored the way in which the settings and spaces used by vloggers and bloggers contribute to their representation.
While the majority of candidates focused primarily on self-representation, some also discussed the way in which representations of gender are constructed in vlogs and blogs, making valid points about the gendered content or gendered mode of address that features in these online products. However, some responses lacked a sustained focus on the question, as, rather than focusing specifically on how representations of identity are constructed in vlogs and blogs, candidates digressed into discussions of audience appeal or audience response.

There were also significant differences in terms of how candidates handled the requirement to refer to relevant theories. Some simply chose to ignore this part of the question, while others made rather cursory reference to relevant theories, often including a theorist's name in parentheses without fully explaining the relevance of that theory/theorist to the point made. For example, a statement such as 'the blog features a number of stereotypes (Hall)' does not demonstrate any meaningful understanding of what Hall’s theory actually is or how it might help us to understand the ways in which representations of identity are constructed in vlogs and blogs. In contrast, stronger responses made more effective use of relevant critical concepts and theories to explain the processes through which representations are constructed. Gauntlett’s theory of identity and Hall’s theory of representation were widely referenced and productively explored in many candidate responses. Some candidates also made useful reference to semiotic theory, discussing the way in which representations of identity are constructed through processes of signification.
General Comment

A03: Create media products for an intended audience, by applying knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to communicate meaning.

It was pleasing to see a really wide range of work in response to the briefs and the majority of candidates had clearly grasped the opportunity to create a production in a genre of their choice. Some excellent work was produced and many candidates were able to successfully apply their knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework.

Centres are able to offer one or more briefs to candidates and a range of approaches to task-setting had clearly been taken. Some centres offered only one option, which is perfectly acceptable; however candidates must be allowed to work in a genre of their choice and all aspects of research, planning and production must be completed independently. This is not a taught unit and so genres must not be set on a class basis. Some centres offered a wide choice of options, which is also acceptable as long as candidates fulfil the requirements of their chosen brief. If different options are offered, centres should ensure that there is parity of assessment across the various briefs.

All centres are advised to access exemplar work on the WJEC secure site to ascertain the standards for Component 3.

Administration

The vast majority of centres uploaded work to Secure Assess in advance of the deadline, using appropriate file formats. While PDF files are acceptable, they do not always show print production work to its best quality and it may be advisable to upload original files such as JPEGs in order that the work can be seen clearly. It was extremely helpful where each file was clearly labelled with the candidate’s name and the description of the piece of work, e.g. ‘teaser poster’. The moderation process was occasionally delayed where some candidate work was missing and so it is really important to ensure that the work is uploaded in its entirety.

Most candidates’ cover sheets were completed and submitted with the NEA work. It is helpful for moderation if the cover sheet is clearly labelled and submitted as one complete document rather than three separate files. If candidates submit a website production, it is helpful if the URL is included as a hyperlink, or clearly typewritten, in order that the moderator can access the site.

Some candidates completed Section A in detail, including brief notes on their research, planning and production process. This aids moderation and it is especially important for candidates who have taken photographs in unusual or distant locations to explain how they created their images, so as to confirm that these are original.
Most candidates completed the Statement of Aims and Intentions in Section B of the cover sheet as required. It is essential that candidates include a word count and adhere to the 350 word limit (+/- 10%). Many candidates exceeded the word limit, sometimes by a significant margin. In such cases, teachers should cease marking the statement once the upper threshold has been reached. It is perfectly acceptable for learners to bullet point the statement to maximise the word count.

The Statement of Aims and Intentions must be completed after the research and planning stage but before production begins and must be written in the future tense. The vast majority of candidates did adhere to this requirement; however some wrote in the past tense which is not appropriate. The Statement should be signed off by both candidate and teacher before the production process begins.

Many teachers included detailed comments in Section C, giving examples from candidates’ work to support the assessment decisions. This is extremely important, especially as annotation is not a requirement on the work itself.

**Meeting the requirements of the brief**

Candidates must respond to the set brief for the year of assessment. Briefs are released annually, on 1 September in the year prior to assessment. A small minority of candidates appeared to have responded to the incorrect brief which inevitably limited their ability to meet the requirements of Component 3.

The vast majority of candidates adhered to the requirements for length/quantity of work, although some produced more than the required number of, for example, magazine or web pages. In such instances the guidelines on page 46 of the specification should be used when assessing the work.

While research is not an assessed element of Component 3, it is absolutely essential to ensure that candidates are able to complete a successful production that responds to the brief.

It is of paramount importance that learners adhere to all aspects of the set brief:

- The content and style of the production must be suitable for the specified industry context and target audience. Some music videos, for example, included some expletives and references to behaviour (such as smoking) that was not appropriate to the mainstream nature of the brief targeting a young audience.

- Candidates should not amend the target audience in the brief in any way. Some candidates extended the range of the target audience, while others selected a narrower age band within the range, for example creating a magazine targeting 18-22 year old students which was not appropriate to the 18-34 year old audience in the brief.

- The production should also adhere to the codes and conventions of the chosen form, for example film marketing campaigns and magazines should have a clear ‘house style’ and reflect the conventions of layout that candidates identify in their research. Some candidates’ magazine productions, for example, did not feature consistent use of fonts, layout and colour palette to demonstrate the brand identity of the product.
• The list of minimum requirements in the brief should also be completed as fully as possible. Candidates should pay particular attention to including the required number of original images, the stipulated number of characters/social groups, and particular types of footage. Some music videos, for example, did not include any performance footage and some websites did not include the required audio or audio-visual content. The audio-visual material should be moving image footage, rather than a slide-show of still images with an audio soundtrack.

Additionally, candidates need to ensure that they meet the requirements of Column 3 of the marking grid. This relates to their use of media language to communicate meanings, construct a narrative or design, and construct representations. The briefs include a requirement to construct representations of characters and/or social groups. A small minority of candidates did not include any images of people, which inevitably limited their ability to construct representations.

Statement of aims and intentions

Most candidates were able to discuss their planned use of media language to, for example, apply genre conventions. The best Statements included very specific examples of how candidates intended to construct representations in response to the brief and were appropriately awarded in Band 5. Most candidates referred to their target audience; however many did not explain how their production would reflect the industry context stated in the brief. It is essential that candidates research products from a similar industry context, and targeting the same audience, to that stipulated in the brief. This will help them to plan and construct a product that conforms to the conventions of, for example, a product from a mainstream or independent producer. Some candidates successfully explained why they had chosen a particular production company, giving examples of their existing products that conformed to the brief.

Candidates should include examples from their research to demonstrate how they will apply their knowledge and understanding. A significant number of candidates did not mention their research at all, while many did not give any examples to support their own ideas.

Candidates who produce a website should research similar websites and discuss their plans to use codes and conventions of, for example, music websites. There should be a balance between the conventions of websites as a form and the genre of the product that they intend to produce – a Statement for a website promoting a new television crime drama should not simply discuss conventions of the crime genre.

Many candidates included reference to theories which is good practice; however the theory should be relevant and applied to the ideas for the production. Hall's reception theory was used in some cases, but was only relevant if candidates discussed their aims to construct a production that would generate a particular preferred reading from the target audience. Some candidates applied the ideas of Neale, Todorov, and Gauntlett very successfully.

A small number of candidates explained the research and planning process which is not a requirement and should be avoided.

Production

Print briefs had been followed by the majority of candidates, and the film marketing brief was by far the most popular option. A significant number of candidates undertook online or audio-visual briefs.
Candidates are required to produce original material, including all images or footage, in the production. Some teachers identified that candidates had used some ‘found’ images and had assessed the work accordingly. In some cases, however, it was difficult to determine whether candidates’ images were original. It is essential that candidates detail any non-original material on the cover sheet.

A really wide range of work was produced in a variety of genres and most productions had been assessed appropriately, applying the assessment criteria. However, a significant minority of centres had assessed work generously. Candidates are assessed on their ability to apply their knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework, and meet the requirements of the brief, rather than on their technical or creative ability. It is therefore extremely important that the production is informed by the research and plans detailed in the Statement of Aims and Intentions, and is assessed accordingly. Some candidates were generously assessed for meeting the requirements of the brief where the work did not conform to the industry context, target the specified audience or reflect the conventions of the chosen form and genre. In some cases candidates had completed the list of minimum requirements in the brief but the work was not clearly suitable for the specified industry and audience context so could not be placed in the upper bands.

In relation to Column 3 of the marking grid, work in the upper bands must demonstrate purposeful control of connotations and representations; candidates had sometimes been over-rewarded for work that was more straightforward and did not communicate meaning in a complex manner.

**Brief 1: Television/ Online**

(a) Audio-Visual. Create an opening sequence for a new television programme in a factual or fictional genre of your choice.

(b) Online. Create a functioning website, including a working homepage and two linked pages, to promote a new television programme in a factual or fictional genre of your choice.

You should create a product for a **public service broadcaster** (either BBC or Channel 4) targeting an **adult audience aged 25-44** with a specific interest in your chosen genre or sub-genre.

The majority of candidates who undertook the audio-visual option completed work in a fictional genre. Crime drama was the most prevalent choice, possibly reflecting the popularity of the genre in recent years, and many candidates were able to use appropriate conventions to successfully communicate meanings. The requirement to create a programme for a public service broadcaster targeting an adult audience aged 25-44 was usually adhered to and it was perfectly acceptable that candidates included performers of their own age, often assuming the role of an older character. A small number of candidates completed documentaries; these were often excellent and used appropriate conventions to explore a particular issue.

A pre-title and title sequence were not specific requirements for this brief, although many candidates included them. While many of these were executed successfully, candidates sometimes failed to fulfil all elements of the brief, for example including the required number of characters or using dialogue as well as non-diegetic music.

A small number of candidates completed the online option and some appropriate websites were constructed, demonstrating the brand identity of a public service broadcaster. Appropriate audio-visual content included trailers and interviews with the director.
Brief 2: Magazines/ Online
(a) Print. Create a front cover, contents page and double page feature article for a new specialist magazine in a genre (or sub-genre) of your choice.
(b) Online. Create a functioning website, including a working homepage and two linked pages, for a new specialist online magazine in a genre (or sub-genre) of your choice.
You should create a product for an independent publisher (e.g. Dennis publishing or TCO London) targeting an audience of 18-34 year olds with a specific interest in your chosen genre of magazine.

Candidates constructed magazines from a wide range of genres. In some cases these were highly appropriate to the brief (to create a specialist product for an independent publisher), for example a magazine for a niche music genre. A significant number of candidates produced a lifestyle magazine; this was acceptable if it was a specialist publication such as a fashion magazine for a particular sub-culture. However, in many cases candidates produced more mainstream magazines that did not fully adhere to the brief. The importance of researching appropriate media products is paramount to ensure that candidates understand, and can apply, the conventions of products from the specific industry context.

Some candidates produced work that did not include any images of people, for example specialist travel or food magazines. This did not allow them to demonstrate their ability to construct representations of social groups as required and often resulted in generous assessment.

Some extremely successful print productions were seen that fully conformed to codes and conventions, demonstrated a highly appropriate mode of address and used media language/constructed representations appropriate to the chosen genre. However, many candidates struggled to adhere to conventions of layout and design, particularly in relation to composition and sizing of images and text. Many contents pages, for example, did not include a full list of contents for the magazine but listed three or four articles, often in an extremely large font, which is not conventional. Some productions featured very similar images across all pages which, again, is not conventional and did not allow candidates to demonstrate their purposeful use of media language and construction of representations.

Some appropriate online magazines were produced, for example specialist sport magazines including audio-visual footage of an interview or a training video. The online option must be a magazine rather than a more general website. A small minority of candidates produced, for example, a website for a clothing company rather than a specialist fashion magazine that would have been appropriate to the brief.

Brief 3: Film Marketing: Print/ online
(a) Print. Create a DVD or Blu-ray front and back cover, a ‘teaser’ poster, and a main theatrical release poster for a new film in a genre of your choice.
(b) Online. Create a functioning website, including a working homepage and two linked pages, to promote a new film in a genre of your choice.
You should create a product for a major film company (e.g. Warner Bros. or Universal) targeting a mainstream audience of 16-25 year-olds.

Film marketing was the most popular brief and a wide range of work was produced across all bands of the marking grid. Popular genres included horror, crime and romantic comedy, most of which conformed to the brief and had clearly been informed by the conventions of recent successful marketing campaigns for mainstream films. However, a significant proportion of candidates created a more independent production (for example in the social realist genre) for a company such as Warp which was not appropriate to the brief - to create
a mainstream production for a major studio targeting a mainstream audience of 16-25 year olds. Some candidates also produced materials for a film with an 18 certificate which was not suitable for the lower end of the age range.

Many candidates developed a coherent campaign, demonstrating a brand identity for the film across the three pieces of work. However, some struggled to develop a clear ‘house style’ that linked the posters and DVD cover together, for example they included very different images and font styles across the campaign. Once again, research into film marketing campaigns is essential to inform candidates’ production work.

The very best work adhered to the conventions of the form and some excellent examples were seen where candidates had communicated complex meanings, conveyed the genre and narrative very successfully and constructed purposeful representations. However, some candidates did not conform to recognised conventions and did not include key elements of the brief. DVD back covers provided a challenge in many cases as some candidates did not conform to conventions of layout, thumbnails did not always purposefully communicate elements of narrative and ‘blurbs’ were often extremely brief.

Some candidates had been over-rewarded as they used very similar images across all pieces of work. While some similarity (for example use of the same character or location in more than one image) is conventional, candidates must adhere to the requirements of the brief and create a range of images to demonstrate their ability to use media language appropriately. A small minority of candidates included few, if any, representations of people in the campaign which, again, did not meet the requirement to construct representations of at least one social group.

Very few examples of film websites were seen; those that were produced did adhere to the requirements of the brief and most made use of ‘stills’ from the film as a promotional device and usually included interviews with the director to fulfil the audio-visual requirement.

**Brief 4: Music marketing: Audio-visual/ online**

(a) **Audio-visual.** Create an original music video to promote a new artist or band in a genre of your choice.

(b) **Online.** Create a functioning website, including a working homepage and two linked pages, to promote a new artist or band in a genre of your choice.

You should create a product for a major record label (such as Universal or Warner) targeting a mainstream audience of 16-25 year-olds.

Music videos were created by a significant minority of candidates and most adhered to the brief to produce a video for a major record label targeting a mainstream audience of 16-25 year olds. Genres of video included pop and indie - which was acceptable if candidates created a production that reflected the mainstream nature of this genre. However, some candidates created videos that would have been more suitable for a niche/ independent artist and this did not fulfil the requirements of the brief. Once again, it is important that candidates research artists/ bands from similar labels to those noted in the brief, in order to adhere to appropriate conventions.

Some excellent videos were seen that fully conformed to conventions, for example by editing to the beat, featuring performance and narrative footage, and interpreting the lyrics effectively. A small number of candidates did not include any performance footage to establish the identity of the artist/ band (such as lip synching on location or performance in a studio setting). In such cases, candidates had often been over-rewarded. Conversely, some did not include any narrative at all, which was a requirement of the brief.
Many candidates represented an aspect of youth culture, often exploring relevant contemporary issues for the young, mainstream target audience. In some cases, however, candidates included less appropriate references to drug taking or alcohol which did not reflect the nature of the brief.

A small number of candidates completed the music website option, often very successfully communicating the genre of music and star persona of the artist. Audio-visual included interviews with the singer or performance footage of the artist/ band at a concert or in a studio, both of which were highly appropriate to the brief.