



GCE A Level Examiners' Report

Media Studies
GCE A Level
Summer 2024

Introduction

Our Principal Examiners' report provides valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. It has been written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and details how candidates have performed in each component.

This report opens with a summary of candidates' performance, including the assessment objectives/skills/topics/themes being tested, and highlights the characteristics of successful performance and where performance could be improved. It then looks in detail at each unit, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.¹

The information found in this report provides valuable insight for practitioners to support their teaching and learning activity. We would also encourage practitioners to share this document – in its entirety or in part – with their learners to help with exam preparation, to understand how to avoid pitfalls and to add to their revision toolbox.

Further support

Document	Description	Link
Professional Learning / CPD	Eduqas offers an extensive programme of online and face-to-face Professional Learning events. Access interactive feedback, review example candidate responses, gain practical ideas for the classroom and put questions to our dedicated team by registering for one of our events here.	https://www.eduqas.co.uk/home/professional-learning/
Past papers	Access the bank of past papers for this qualification, including the most recent assessments. Please note that we do not make past papers available on the public website until 12 months after the examination.	Portal by WJEC or on the Eduqas subject page
Grade boundary information	Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade. For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the subject, rather than for each component that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.	For unitised specifications click here: Results and Grade Boundaries and PRS (eduqas.co.uk)

¹ Please note that where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

Exam Results Analysis	Eduqas provides information to examination centres via the WJEC Portal. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	Portal by WJEC
Classroom Resources	Access our extensive range of FREE classroom resources, including blended learning materials, exam walk-throughs and knowledge organisers to support teaching and learning.	https://resources.edugas.co.uk/
Bank of Professional Learning materials	Access our bank of Professional Learning materials from previous events from our secure website and additional pre-recorded materials available in the public domain.	Portal by WJEC or on the Eduqas subject page.
Become an examiner with WJEC.	We are always looking to recruit new examiners or moderators. These opportunities can provide you with valuable insight into the assessment process, enhance your skill set, increase your understanding of your subject and inform your teaching.	Become an Examiner Eduqas

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Executive Summary

In Component 1, centres and candidates responded positively to the demands of the examination. Many candidates 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. However, there are some points of guidance for centres, including that in preparation for Section A, candidates must be taught textual analysis, the elements of media language and how to incorporate the language of semiotics to enhance their analysis. Question 2 0 requires comparison and an extended response which would be aided by planning and essay writing skills. In all questions, candidates must be guided to dissect the question carefully in order to understand what is required and focus their response. This is particularly important in Section B where the product is the vehicle through which they discuss aspects of the industry and audience.

In Component 2, performance across the paper was generally very encouraging, however one area for improvement identified, again, is ensuring that candidates fully understand and address the specific requirements of the questions set. In questions 11, 21 and 31, some responses lacked a clear and sustained focus on genre, instead discussing representations or narrative structures more generally rather than in relation to particular genres. In questions 12, 22 and 32, some responses discussed the influence of social and cultural contexts on the representations in the set products rather than the influence of social and cultural contexts on audience interpretations of the set products, while others simply described how audiences might interpret the set product. In questions 40, 50 and 60, some responses tended to apply feminist theories to their set products or simply discussed the representations in their set products rather than explicitly evaluating the usefulness of feminist theories. In question 70, not all candidates engaged with the 'to what extent' part of the question, with many simply describing features of the set products instead of making judgements and drawing conclusions about how far those features demonstrated the extent to which the Internet has challenged the power and dominance of large organisations.

As last year, centres are reminded that candidates should be given opportunities to practise handwriting and producing handwritten responses under timed conditions.

Component 3 saw candidates' level of application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media strongly correlating with the marks awarded. Candidates at all levels were able to demonstrate their achievements and, once again, it is very evident that the vast majority of centres are guiding their candidates effectively.

Candidates that conducted thorough research usually performed well, as they could apply such research throughout their work, from their Statement of Aims and Intentions all the way through to their production work. Those who used their research to plan thoroughly also performed well. Representations, in particular, benefitted from focused planning not just of what they would be but also of how they would be achieved through dress codes, props, camera shots etc. Elsewhere, planning from the start benefitted candidates who, for example, thought about where text could appear on an image to be used as a magazine double-page spread.

Not conforming to media form conventions was the most common area of both candidate underachievement and overmarking. It is vitally important that candidates carefully analyse existing media products and make sure their own follow such conventions to look and sound like the real thing.

Areas for improvement	Classroom resources	Brief description of resource
Examination technique	AS and A Level Media Studies Eduqas	Cognitive Overview for Component 1 and Component 2
Evaluating Theory	'Teaching Theory' CPD/PL Resources (WJEC Portal)	CPD/PL resources from the 'Teaching Theory' CPD/PL event held in 2024
Conducting appropriate and useful research for NEA	Guidance for Teaching	The Guidance for Teaching is intended to support teachers in the delivery of the WJEC Eduqas A Level Media Studies specification including suggested approaches to Component 3 (Page 107).

MEDIA STUDIES

GCE A level

Summer 2024

COMPONENT 1: MEDIA PRODUCTS, INDUSTRIES AND AUDIENCES

Overview of the Component

Overall, it was encouraging to see how positively centres and candidates responded to the demands of the examination and how well candidates had been guided by centres. The candidates generally demonstrated a good level of knowledge and understanding both with regard to the set products and the relevant aspects of the theoretical framework. Many candidates 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. Most candidates attempted all of the questions and there were very few incomplete papers signifying that candidates had been well taught in managing timings.

The quality of handwriting and the number of illegible responses continues to be of some concern. It is of paramount importance that candidates are given opportunities to handwrite responses in preparation for the examination. Essay writing skills also proved problematic for some candidates, particularly with regard to the extended response question. Several candidates struggled to structure some responses coherently, particularly in Section A.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A – Analysing Media Language and Representation

Q.1 0 Compare how the representations in these music videos position audiences. [30]

In your answer you must:

- consider the similarities in how the representations position audiences
- consider the differences in how the representations position audiences
- make judgements and draw conclusions about how far the representations reflect social and cultural contexts.

AO2 1 and 3: Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to:

- analyse media products, including in relation to their contexts
- make judgements and draw conclusions.

Despite this question being one of the most challenging on the paper it was generally well answered with some very detailed knowledge and understanding of the two products and the music video form. Question 2 0 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. This question was answered well by candidates who used the preparation that they had undertaken for the set products to aid them in the analysis of the unseen product.

There were some excellent, perceptive responses and the choice of the unseen music video extract from Christine Aguilera's *Beautiful* successfully enabled candidates to explore the ways in which the representations in the set and unseen products positioned audiences in relation to for example, the representation of issues, gender and ethnicity. The more successful responses were able to discuss representation in relation to social and cultural contexts confidently applying theorists such as Butler, which was very well applied in some instances, Van Zoonen, bell hooks and Gilroy, comparing the complexities and contradictions in the products as well as relating them to their contexts. These candidates engaged equally with the two music videos, offering insightful judgements and conclusions fully supported by detailed examples drawn from the products. These responses also demonstrated excellent skills in comparison, the focus of assessment in this question and produced well-structured answers consistently employing relevant terminology.

The main issue was with candidates who did not explore the nuances of this question fully. Several candidates produced some excellent responses comparing the representations of gender/ethnicity/issues in the two products but failed to consider the focus of the question which was how those representations positioned audiences and reflected social and cultural contexts.

In this question the bullet points are included to help candidates to structure their answer and to guide them in what to include. The expectation is that all the bullet points are covered, but not necessarily in the same amount of detail. Better responses were able to do this and to address the focus of the question analysing both products and making relevant comparisons. Candidates attaining marks in the higher bands effectively applied their knowledge of the theoretical framework and in particular, representation. At the higher levels, the analysis and comparison of the two products was complex, referring in detail to how representations positioned audiences through for example, visual codes, layout and design, language and mode of address and highlighting both similarities and differences. For example, better answers discussed the antebellum dresses and reclaiming history in *Formation* and referred to possible audience readings of Beyonce's costumes as sexualised/objectified but also acknowledging power and confidence. References to costume and iconography in *Turntables* supported some very good discussions of the construction of representations, with some excellent, detailed references to the use of archive footage and Afrofuturism. Those candidates discussing *Underdog* tended to be more descriptive and straightforward in their analysis. These were effectively compared with the use of clinical, institutional costume in *Beautiful*, positioning the audience to empathise with the children and the different representations constructed by the more natural costumes and setting at the end, positioning the audience to accept a more positive message.

A range of comparisons were highlighted by candidates and those in the higher bands consistently used the terminology of the question, 'position audiences', to ensure that they maintained this focus throughout their response. As a result, candidates in the higher bands produced coherent, well-developed responses and were also able to make judgements and draw conclusions in relation to how the products reflect their social and cultural contexts, selecting detailed, specific examples to support their points very effectively. To be placed in the higher bands, it was essential to compare the two products.

Some candidates, however, failed to structure their response around the bullet points and as a result produced more straightforward comparisons of the two products that failed to address the key focus of the question – audience positioning. Responses in the middle bands focused on more straightforward or obvious aspects of representation and tended to focus more on one product or only discussed the representation of ethnicity. Some of these responses included some very undeveloped assertions related to ethnicity, many responses for example made the assertion that Beyonce only speaks to a Black audience. It was also of some concern that candidates were at times using terminology that was not appropriate for the discussion of ethnicity.

There are a range of ways in which candidates can demonstrate their ability to compare products, however some candidates, whilst offering a detailed and separate analysis of each product, failed to make any comparisons and this had an obvious impact on their mark as comparison is a key descriptor for this question. Incorporating the language of comparison helped candidates to focus on this element of the assessment.

Less successful responses awarded marks in the lower bands did not address the focus of the question and the analysis was largely undeveloped and at times opinion-led, particularly in the discussion of the effect of social media on young people. At this level there was also a tendency to simply describe the key features of the narrative or to focus on basic similarities. Reference to relevant contexts and how the representations in the music videos positioned audiences was absent, or brief and undeveloped.

Regarding 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 products. There were several examples where candidates included theories that were often irrelevant or not applied appropriately. For example, many candidates referred to feminist theories and the ‘male gaze’ without demonstrating a clear understanding or using the theories to support their analysis. Less successful responses suggested that the products used the theory rather than the theory being a way to explore the product. More straightforward responses simply named the theory or theorist without developing the analysis further.

Whilst some candidates clearly found the discussion of contexts more challenging, there were many responses in the higher bands that made perceptive comments about how the music videos reflected the society that produced them and were also, through selection and combination, raising awareness of social issues. These insightful points were supported by specific, detailed exploration of examples from the products. The reference to contexts in the middle range responses was more straightforward and undeveloped with some responses making very general and superficial comments about the representation of ethnicity, gender and social issues in contemporary media products.

Key Teaching Points

- ✓ Practise deconstructing questions to ensure that learners understand the focus of the question and how to approach their response
- ✓ Practise planning extended response questions using the bullet points as a guide
- ✓ Encourage the use of relevant theories to enhance analysis and to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework
- ✓ Use the terminology of comparison and the language of the question in the response
- ✓ Understand the difference between detailed descriptions and detailed analysis to improve responses.

Q.2 0 Explore how media language communicates viewpoints and ideologies on this front page of the *Daily Mirror*. [15]

AO2 1: Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to analyse media products

The unseen product set for this question was a front cover of the *Daily Mirror* from October 2022. It was of some concern that many candidates seemed unprepared for this unseen product despite having studied the newspaper form in relation to the set products. The focus was media language, and this was included in the question to help to focus candidates' responses. Candidates also needed to consider how aspects of media language contributed to the communication of viewpoints and ideologies. This was a rich unseen resource offering candidates plenty to discuss but many candidates failed to deconstruct the product in any real detail and many elements of the front page were ignored. To prepare for the unseen product it is essential that candidates are given practice in applying their understanding of all elements of media language in relation to print examples including visual, technical and language codes so that they are equipped to analyse a range of media products from the set forms. It was of some concern that too many candidates were not confident in discussing the conventions of newspaper front pages and were not able to apply the relevant terminology in their analysis. Indeed, some candidates included terminology related to other forms discussing taglines and referring to the product as a magazine.

In order to produce a successful response, it was essential that candidates were able to dissect the relevant parts of the question to help them to focus their answer. The overall focus was clearly media language, but candidates were required to explore how media language **communicates viewpoints and ideologies**. Several candidates approached this question as a general analysis of the unseen product, did not address the 'how' element and missed the nuances of the question, demonstrating more limited understanding. In these responses there was a tendency to describe what they could see without analysing why these elements were incorporated into the product and how they contributed to the communication of viewpoints and ideologies.

It was encouraging to see that some candidates across the mark range were able to analyse the product in detail, showing understanding of the form, the relevant focus and employing various degrees of relevant media terminology. These candidates were clearly aware of the left-wing ideology of the newspaper from their study of the set product and analysed specific examples to support their analysis. These candidates also applied appropriate theories and theoretical perspectives to support their points including Barthés and Levi Strauss, with some candidates demonstrating an excellent understanding of semiotics and structuralism, in particular binary oppositions.

Responses in the higher bands were confident in discussing the different elements of media language and could, as expected, discuss how the impact and effect of, for example, language devices, layout and design, choice and construction of images communicated the viewpoints and ideology of the newspaper. Candidates who produced more accurate, developed 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 newspaper front page with a generally accurate application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework but tended not to cover a broad range of points or develop a response to the 'how' element of the question. Several candidates failed to explore the establishing of a brand identity, missing the opportunity to use the work they had done in class in their preparation of similar 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. These more straightforward responses were often guilty of over-emphasising simpler points for example the size of Rishi Sunak, the colour of the masthead, the size of lettering and offered a range of opinions in relation to the appearance of the monarchy in the plug without relating this to the focus of the question and consequently failed to develop their analysis beyond this, sometimes narrow, approach.

Candidates awarded marks in the lower bands tended to produce a more descriptive response, missing the focus of the question. These responses were also less confident with exploring a range of elements of media language and failed to support points made with specific examples from the unseen product, instead adopting a superficial, generalised approach which demonstrated often only a basic understanding of the theoretical framework and little use of subject-specific terminology.

There were some worrying rubric infringements where candidates appeared to have ignored the resource material and instead referred to the set product of the *Daily Mirror* they had studied in class.

Key Teaching Points

- ✓ Deconstruct the question to ensure understanding of the focus
- ✓ Learners should be aware of what to expect in each question e.g. the media language question will always require the analysis of an **unseen** product from a form studied in class
- ✓ Encourage the use of analytical vocabulary and subject specific terminology related to the form to enhance analysis
- ✓ Learners need to understand what is required when analysing media language, for example reference to the particular codes and conventions of the form referring to visual, technical, language and where appropriate, audio codes.
- ✓ Focus on supporting analysis with detailed reference to specific examples from the unseen product

Section B - Understanding Media Industries and Audiences

Q.3 1 Briefly explain what is meant by distribution in the film industry. [2]

AO1 1a: Demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical framework

The majority of candidates were able to answer this correctly. In order to attain 2 marks, there needed to be an accurate explanation which included detail and/or exemplification. The understanding should have been applied to the film industry; some candidates used examples from other forms. A more basic, undeveloped response or one that contained inaccuracies was awarded 1 mark.

Q3 2 Briefly explain what is meant by vertical integration in the film industry. [2]

AO1 1a: Demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical framework

Most candidates were able to answer this correctly but in varied degrees of detail. In order to attain 2 marks, there needed to be an accurate explanation which included detail and/or exemplification. The understanding should have been applied to the film industry; some candidates gave an explanation for horizontal integration. A more basic, undeveloped response or one that contained inaccuracies was awarded 1 mark.

Q.3 3 Explain how economic contexts may influence the film industry. Refer to *I, Daniel Blake* to support your points. [9]

AO1 2a and 2b: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of contexts of media and their influence on media products and processes

As can be seen by the AO being assessed, this question required candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of media contexts in relation to the film industry.

This question was generally well answered with evidence of knowledge and understanding of the film in relation to its economic context. Candidates were aware of the independent nature of the film and the more successful responses discussed the industry context with accurate factual evidence about the sources of funding and marketing methods. These candidates demonstrated their awareness of the focus of the question and addressed the 'how' element. The examples used by those candidates accessing marks in the higher bands were relevant and detailed and supported by theory/theoretical perspectives (Hesmondhalgh/Curran and Seaton).

The more successful responses were also clearly aware of the requirements and structure of this question and were able to give a brief overview of economic contexts within the film industry generally, referring to for example, the difference between mainstream and independent films and the need for low budget films to employ more diverse funding, production, distribution and marketing strategies. This was then applied specifically to *I, Daniel Blake* to further illustrate their understanding.

Candidates awarded marks in the higher bands were also able to demonstrate their understanding through employing subject specific terminology including for example, reference to distribution and exhibition, collaboration and specific promotional strategies e.g. guerilla and below the line marketing. Some candidates effectively combined discussion of the economic contexts of the industry with that which had inspired the creation of the film and its specific narrative related to the economic climate.

The more satisfactory responses tended to be less detailed, lacked development and were less successful at applying knowledge and understanding to specific examples from the set film product.

Basic responses often did not refer to the film industry in general but confined their less well-developed discussion to the set product. These responses awarded marks in the lower band tended to describe the content of the film and had limited understanding of the focus of the question. There were also some superficial generalisations reinforcing stereotypes of Northern people and locations.

Very few candidates used examples other than the film, for example the trailer or posters. There is no requirement in this section to analyse the film's narrative, characters etc. or any expectation that the whole film will have been watched. There were a few candidates who struggled to discuss *I, Daniel Blake* and were more prepared to write about *Black Panther*.

Key Teaching Points

- ✓ Consider what the set film illustrates about aspects of the film industry
- ✓ Encourage the use of subject specific terminology related to both the film industry and contexts
- ✓ Support points with specific examples from the industry element of the film e.g. production, distribution and marketing
- ✓ Learners should consider specific examples from the film's production and marketing that can best illustrate elements of the industry for example, the trailer, posters and the opening and closing credits of the film.

Q.3 4 Explain how film companies use marketing to maintain global audiences. Refer to *Black Panther* to support your points. [12]

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

This question was answered very well by a number of candidates who understood the industry focus and could also demonstrate their knowledge of global audiences. However, it was of some concern how many candidates appeared not to understand the focus of the question and confined their responses to a discussion of the general appeal of the film to audiences. Several candidates did not refer to the global element of the question and others confined their discussion to the film's narrative, characters and setting without relating this to marketing strategies.

As with Question 3 3, the expectation is that candidates will address the first part of the question which refers to the film industry generally, for example the significance of the franchise, distribution strategies, digital convergence, brand identity and recognition to the maintaining of global audiences in a competitive marketplace, before applying their knowledge and understanding to the set film product.

This first step of the question, which required candidates to engage with the film industry on a broader scale, was ignored by some candidates who focused solely on a textual analysis of *Black Panther*. The candidates awarded marks in the higher band referred to a range of points and these stronger responses were able to apply their understanding of the film industry to a discussion of the global marketing of *Black Panther* including for example, the marketing opportunities that the progressive representations of women and ethnicity offered to appeal to specific audiences on a global scale. References to the interactive methods of marketing, opportunities to participate and the appeal to a fandom were also discussed. There were some good, detailed discussions of the trailer and the variety of film posters that were aimed at a global audience. Some candidates also effectively discussed the importance of global audiences, fans and social media, taking the opportunity this question offers to draw together knowledge and understanding from across the full course of study.

Some candidates limited their ability to gain marks by focusing on one point, for example the introduction of mixed-race characters, which created a less well-developed response.

There was a distinction between those who understood that this was an industry question and discussed specifically 'how' film companies used marketing in maintaining global audiences and those who did not engage with the 'global' and/or 'marketing' element of the question.

More effective responses were able to also incorporate theories and theoretical perspectives. Weaker responses tended to mention these theorists without using them to further their analysis of the film industry and the set product in particular.

Key Teaching Points

- ✓ Ensure that learners address all elements of the question, in this case 'global audiences' and 'marketing' to avoid a less focused response
- ✓ Consider how learners can refer to other areas of the specification and incorporate this in their response e.g. in this question, audiences/fan theory
- ✓ Refer to specific aspects of the film and its marketing that best support the focus of the question
- ✓ Use subject specific terminology e.g. in relation to film marketing.

Q.4 1 Explain how the producers of advertisements attract audiences. Refer to *Super. Human* advertisement you have studied to support your points. [10]

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

This question was in two parts and the focus was audience. Candidates were required to discuss how the producers of advertisements attract audiences and then to use examples from the set product to support points made. Those responses awarded marks in the higher bands gave an introduction discussing the importance of establishing the target audience, the devices used for the marketing of non-consumable products and creating a brand identity and then proceeded to offer a range of examples from the set product to support points made. These responses effectively discussed the ways in which *Super. Human* attracts a range of audiences who would be attracted to various aspects of the advert for different reasons, for example the C4 audience of reformers/explorers who would be attracted to the progressive representations, sports fans, disabled viewers. Many responses focused on how the perceptions of audiences may be challenged through the more positive representations of disability and how the construction of the advertisement aimed to combat compassion fatigue.

These responses often clearly defined who they perceived the audience to be discussing for example, demographics and psychographics and incorporating relevant theories. These responses covered a range of points supported by specific examples from the set product focusing on the 'how' aspect of the question, for example the C4 context as well as the content and style of the advert highlighting the change of style from previous advertisements to move away from the 'Super Hero' stereotype with detailed evidence about the intentions behind the more 'human' representations. Many referenced the use of Ellie Simmonds as a 'star' and the variety of sports, personalities and experiences. Shock value and comedy were also given as ways of attracting a range of audiences.

More straightforward responses were very general and unsupported by specific examples from the product. These tended to focus on who the advert attracted as opposed to how, this consequently often led to discussion of VALs categories such as reformers, or to make connections to Channel 4's audience, or to simply state that the advert has been designed to appeal to 'disabled people' without properly examining the 'how' aspect of the question. It was of some concern how many candidates demonstrated a general understanding of how advertisements attract audiences but failed to include any specific examples from the set product to support their assertions. This at times resulted in very brief, undeveloped responses.

Weaker responses were those that tended to be more opinion led, demonstrated little media knowledge and had limited or no understanding of 'how' the producers of advertisements attract audiences. These responses were unclear about the purpose of the advertisement and engaged in a less relevant discussion, for example the appeal of the soundtrack to older people and how the advertisement only targeted disabled people.

Very few candidates used their knowledge of media language to discuss how the construction of the product, including for example, technical and audio codes, may have attracted audiences.

Key Teaching Points

- ✓ Be aware of the key audience term used in the question and allow this to guide the response. In this case it is 'attract'.
- ✓ Encourage the use of terminology related to the area of assessment, in this case audiences and advertising
- ✓ Ensure that points made are applied to specific examples from the set product
- ✓ Incorporate relevant theories/theoretical perspectives to demonstrate knowledge and enhance discussion

Q.4 2 How do radio programmes reach audiences through different technologies and platforms? Refer to either *Woman's Hour* or *Have You Heard George's Podcast* to support your points. [10]

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

This question was completed reasonably well by a majority of candidates and there was little evidence that they had run out of time in this final question. Similarly to Question Q4 1, this was in two parts, requiring candidates to explain how radio programmes reach audiences through different technologies and platforms and then to use examples from the set product to support their points. The most successful responses moved from a more general overview to the specifics of the set product and selected a range of examples to illustrate their points.

Better answers were able to address the focus of the question and clearly understood the impetus of technological change and audience listening habits to compel radio programmes to provide more flexible audience access to content. The strongest responses had a good knowledge of key radio industry terms and used specific examples from the BBC and their set product. These responses understood the changing media landscape and the need for radio programmes to broaden audience reach. They were able to discuss the ability to narrowcast/provide niche programming employing new and varied distribution methods due to advances in digital technology. The better *HYHGP* responses were able to give a range of specific examples of how the programme/podcast used different platforms to reach more diverse audiences. Shirky and participatory culture was applied well here with reference to the Common Ground website and the engagement with audience responses. Specific examples from podcasts, e.g. the Grenfell episode, were used to support points made.

Similarly, those responses using *WH* were able to effectively discuss the ways in which the more traditional programme had diversified to offer more listening experiences. Examples referred to included the continued appeal of the regular live programme and the opportunity to select episodes of interest through BBC Sounds. Many responses also cited the way presenters encourage interactivity and participation through email, text and social media

Responses in the middle bands were more straightforward and tended to move straight to the set product focusing on one or two ways radio programmes may reach audiences. There was a tendency in some responses to download less relevant information about the history of the product, particularly with regard to *WH*.

Responses in the lower bands were brief, undeveloped, and made only partial reference to the programme. Here there was also a more basic knowledge of audiences with some worryingly simple assertions regarding the audience of the programme, in particular in relation to *WH*, for example housewives who did not go to work listened to the live broadcast. For some candidates there was little evidence that they had listened to the programme or were aware of its role as a commentator on contemporary society across a range of platforms.

There were some rubric infringements where candidates referred to the older set product of *Late Night Woman's Hour* and some candidates referred to both *WH* and *LNWH* in their response.

Key Teaching Points

- ✓ Be prepared to support points made about audiences with specific, relevant examples from the set product.
- ✓ Focus on the question and on the specific aspect of audience being assessed, here it was 'reach'.
- ✓ Only include information that is relevant to the question.

Summary of key points

- Candidates need to be clear about the focus of each element of the examination paper and what needs to be included in their response.
- Candidates would have benefited from spending some time planning their response to Q2 0
- In preparation for Section A, candidates must be taught textual analysis, the elements of media language and how to incorporate the language of semiotics and structuralism to enhance their analysis.
- Question 2 0 requires comparison and an extended response which would be aided by planning and essay writing skills.
- For the comparison question it would be helpful to guide candidates to use strategies to ensure that comparisons are being made and encourage them to employ the language of comparison
- In all questions, candidates must be guided to dissect the question carefully in order to understand what is required and focus their response. This is particularly important in Section B where the product is the vehicle through which they discuss specific aspects of the industry and audience.
- Candidates must develop their use of subject-specific terminology and the language of analysis to enhance their responses.
- Candidates should be given opportunities to practise handwriting and to produce handwritten responses under timed conditions.

MEDIA STUDIES

GCE A level

Summer 2024

COMPONENT 2: MEDIA FORMS AND PRODUCTS IN DEPTH

Overview of the Component

As this was the first assessment series since the introduction of the new set products for Section A of Component 2, it was particularly pleasing to see how well the majority of candidates engaged with the television products that were being assessed for the first time. More broadly, there was significant evidence of thoughtful engagement with both the theoretical framework of media and the specific set products that had been studied across the paper as a whole.

While performance across the paper was generally very encouraging, one area for improvement is ensuring that candidates fully understand and address the specific demands and requirements of the questions set. For example:

- In questions 11, 21 and 31, some responses lacked a clear and sustained focus on genre, instead discussing representations or narrative structures more generally rather than in relation to particular genres.
- In questions 12, 22 and 32, some responses discussed the influence of social and cultural contexts on the representations in the set products rather than the influence of social and cultural contexts on audience interpretations of the set products, while others simply described how audiences might interpret the set product without discussing the influence of social and cultural contexts on those interpretations.
- In questions 40, 50 and 60, some responses tended to apply feminist theories to their set products or simply discussed the representations in their set products rather than explicitly evaluating the usefulness of feminist theories.
- In question 70, not all candidates engaged with the 'to what extent' part of the question, with many simply describing features of the set products instead of making judgements and drawing conclusions about how far those features demonstrated the extent to which the Internet has challenged the power and dominance of large organisations.

Poor handwriting also continues to be a significant issue. Using exam-style assessments during the course is therefore particularly important in order to give candidates experience of writing by hand as well as enabling centres to identify any issues with legibility and to put appropriate access arrangements in place as necessary.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Questions 11, 21 and 31

Explore how the set episode of *Peaky Blinders*/*Black Mirror*/*Killing Eve* reinforces or challenges genre conventions.

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.

This question was generally well-answered, as most candidates were able to successfully apply their knowledge and understanding of genre to the set product they had studied.

Although reference to theory wasn't specifically required, in exploring how their set product reinforced or challenged particular genre conventions, many candidates made useful reference to relevant aspects of Neale's theory of genre, such as his claim that genres may be dominated by repetition but are also marked by difference, variation and change. Many candidates also made productive reference to genre hybridity. There was some effective analysis of the way in which *Peaky Blinders* combines the conventions of a gangster show or crime drama with those of a western or period drama, for example, and of the way in which the 'San Junipero' episode of *Black Mirror* combines the conventions of sci-fi with those of the romance and coming-of-age genres.

Stronger responses generally showed a clearer and more detailed knowledge and understanding of particular genre conventions and were able to apply this knowledge and understanding effectively to analyse how those conventions were reinforced or challenged in the set products. Less successful responses often failed to identify what genre(s) the set products drew on, making more general points about the narrative structure of the product, discussing, for example, the extent to which the set episode adhered to Todorov's model of equilibrium rather than exploring the way in which the narrative could be seen to reinforce or challenge the conventions of a particular genre. Similarly, less successful responses tended to offer a more general discussion of the representations of gender in the set product whereas more successful responses were able to discuss whether or not those representations were conventional of a particular genre. For example, some candidates were able to discuss the way in which the inclusion of a female spy and a female assassin in the leading roles in *Killing Eve* challenged the representations of gender conventionally found in the spy thriller genre whereas others simply discussed whether or not the representations in the show were stereotypical.

Questions 12, 22 and 32

Explain how social and cultural contexts influence audience interpretations of television products.

Refer to the set episode of *The Bridge*/*The Returned*/*Tehran* in your response.

AO1 2: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of contexts of media and their influence on media products and processes.

This question was answered with varying degrees of success. Many candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the way in which social and cultural contexts could be seen to influence audience interpretations of their set television product. For example, there was some useful discussion of the way in which particular, culturally specific references and representations in *The Bridge* might be viewed differently by Swedish and Danish audiences compared with British audiences, and of the way in which *The Returned* might be read as an allegory of the French migrant crisis, particularly in the context of cultural debates regarding immigration in French society both at the time of original broadcast and more recently. There was some thoughtful discussion of the way in which the current Israel-Gaza war might influence audience interpretations of *Tehran* as well. Many candidates also made interesting points about the way in which audience interpretations of *The Returned* and *Tehran* could be influenced by ongoing social and cultural debates about violence against women, particularly in the wake of the MeToo movement.

Some candidates were able to make useful reference to relevant critical concepts such as cultural capital to explain how social and cultural contexts influence audience interpretations, while many drew on Hall's reception theory, although this was applied with varying degrees of success. For instance, while more successful responses were able to explain how social and cultural contexts might lead to or help to produce dominant-hegemonic/preferred, negotiated or oppositional readings of the set products, some candidates simply used Hall's reception theory to outline what the dominant-hegemonic/preferred reading of the set products would be, or what a negotiated or oppositional reading might be, without linking this to the social and cultural contexts in which audience reception takes place.

This was part of a broader issue as many candidates simply discussed audience interpretations of their set products in general, or how audiences were positioned to interpret the products, without considering the influence of social and cultural contexts on those interpretations.

Another issue with some of the responses was a lack of focus on audience interpretations as a number of candidates simply discussed the influence of social and cultural contexts on the set products themselves or the representations within them, rather than considering how social and cultural contexts might influence audience interpretations of those products or representations.

Questions 40, 50 and 60

How useful are feminist theories for analysing the representations in the set editions of *Woman* and *Adbusters* or *Woman's Realm* and *Huck* or *Vogue* and *The Big Issue*?

Refer to at least one of the following theories in your response:

- van Zoonen's feminist theory
- bell hooks' feminist theory

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

AO2 2: Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to evaluate academic theories

While most candidates were able to demonstrate some knowledge and understanding of feminist theories in response to this question, many found the requirement to evaluate the usefulness of those theories more challenging.

The most successful responses tended to offer a more explicit evaluation of the usefulness of feminist theories as a tool for analysing the representations in the set magazines, demonstrating a more detailed knowledge and understanding of feminist theories by referring to specific aspects of those theories. Some candidates evaluated the usefulness of van Zoonen's suggestion that the meaning of gender varies according to social and historical context, for example, considering how this might be used to analyse the ideas regarding gender conveyed in the set magazines, while others considered how useful bell hooks' notion of intersectionality was for exploring the relationship between sex, race, ethnicity and social class in the set products. A significant number of candidates referred to van Zoonen's points about the objectification of women in the media, using this to explore features in the set magazines such as the Cutex advert in *Vogue*, the 'Bottled Beauty' feature in *Woman's Realm*, and the 'Are You an A Level Beauty?' feature in *Woman*. Many candidates also made useful reference to other relevant theories such as Butler's theory of gender performativity and Mulvey's male gaze theory.

In some cases, there was a rather narrow or superficial understanding of the feminist theories of van Zoonen and bell hooks, which in turn led to somewhat simplistic evaluations of their usefulness. For example, some candidates claimed that, because the representations of women in their set magazine were exclusively white, bell hooks' feminist theory was of no relevance or use at all. Similarly, some candidates suggested that the feminist theories of van Zoonen and bell hooks' theory were not useful because there was no evidence of feminism in either one or both of the set magazines, failing to recognise the way in which feminist theories can be used to analyse, critique or challenge the operation of patriarchal ideologies in the media. Many candidates reasonably argued that van Zoonen's theory was less useful for analysing the representations in the contemporary magazines because there was no evidence of women being objectified in those products. However, the most successful responses tended to show a greater awareness of other relevant aspects of van Zoonen's feminist theory (and other forms of patriarchal oppression) rather than focusing exclusively on whether women were sexually objectified in the set products.

There was often a significant disparity in terms of the amount that candidates wrote on their two set products, with significantly more written about the representations in the historical products, perhaps because the representations in the historical women's magazines tended to lend themselves better to feminist analysis. Many candidates were still able to demonstrate how particular aspects of van Zoonen's and bell hooks' theories could be used to analyse some of the representations in the contemporary magazines though. For example, some candidates successfully showed how van Zoonen's idea that gender is constructed through discourse and that its meaning varies according to social and historical context could be used to analyse the representation of gender in the 'Grayson Perry: Letter to My Younger Self' feature in *The Big Issue* or the representation of gender in the 'Beyond Binary' feature in *Huck*, while others used bell hooks' concept of intersectionality to explore the representations in the Louboutin culture jam in *Adbusters*. While less successful responses would often simply state that feminist theories were not particularly useful for analysing the representations in the contemporary magazines, more successful responses were able to explain more fully why this might be the case. For example, some candidates discussed why other theories such as Gilroy's postcolonial theory or Gauntlett's theory of identity might be more useful than the feminist theories of bell hooks and van Zoonen for analysing the representations in the contemporary magazines.

Question 70

To what extent has the Internet challenged the power and dominance of large media organisations?

Refer to **one** product from Group 1 and **one** product from Group 2 in your response.

Group 1: JJ Olatunji/KSI or Zoe Sugg

Group 2: the *gal-dem* website or the *Attitude* website

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

AO2 3: Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to make judgements and draw conclusions.

Again, there were significant differences here in terms of how fully and directly candidates answered the question. The most successful responses engaged more explicitly with the 'to what extent' part of the question, using evidence from the set products to draw well-supported conclusions about the extent to which the Internet has challenged the power and dominance of large media organisations. In less successful responses, there was often a tendency to simply describe features of the set products without explaining how these features could be seen to demonstrate how far the Internet has challenged the power and dominance of large media organisations. For example, many candidates simply provided an outline or overview of how JJ Olatunji/KSI or Zoe Sugg had become successful influencers, content creators or entrepreneurs without relating this back to the question.

More successful responses tended to draw more effectively on relevant aspects of the theoretical framework. For example, some candidates made productive reference to relevant critical concepts such as digital convergence, gatekeeping, diversification, and vertical and horizontal integration, as well as appropriate critical theories such as Shirky's 'end of audience' theory, Curran and Seaton's theory of power and media industries and Hesmondhalgh's theory of cultural industries. For instance, some candidates discussed whether the growth of the Internet could be seen to challenge Curran and Seaton's claim that the media is controlled by a small number of companies driven by the logic of profit and power. It was also pleasing to see some candidates discuss Hesmondhalgh's suggestion that the radical potential of the Internet has been partly contained by its incorporation into a large, profit-orientated set of cultural industries, although far fewer candidates appeared to be familiar with this part of Hesmondhalgh's theory compared with his discussion of the way in which cultural industry companies try to minimise risk and maximise audiences, which was much more widely referenced.

A large number of responses also discussed the impact of the Internet on regulation, although many of these discussions were much less successful as the precise relevance of this material to the question of how far the Internet has challenged the power and dominance of large media organisations lacked clear explanation. Much more successful were discussions of the extent to which the Internet has democratised the media landscape by facilitating the rise of the prosumer and the growth of smaller, independent media companies. Many candidates made valid points about widespread access to the means of production and distribution in a digital age, for example, and about the lower costs associated with digital production and distribution. There was also some useful discussion of the extent to which the Internet has enabled smaller companies to challenge the dominant discourses, ideologies and representations that tend to circulate in mainstream media, catering for more specialised, niche audiences that have previously been neglected.

MEDIA STUDIES

GCE A level

COMPONENT 3: CREATING A CROSS-MEDIA PRODUCTION

Overview of the Component

AO3: Create media products for an intended audience, by applying knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to communicate meaning.

What makes the non-exam assessment a unique part of the course is that it requires candidates to create media products, rather than written responses, to show their knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework. While the end result (the cross-media production itself) is obviously important, the most successful candidates carefully utilise their knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework throughout the production process. In that respect, Component 3 is more similar to Components 1 and 2 than it first appears: the underlying key media concepts are the same, just assessed via a different outcome.

The work submitted bore this out, with candidates' levels of application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media strongly correlating with the marks awarded. Nevertheless, candidates across the mark range were able to demonstrate their achievements and, once again, it is very evident that the vast majority of centres are guiding their candidates effectively.

Candidates that conducted thorough research usually performed well, as they could apply such research throughout their work, from their Statement of Aims and Intentions all the way through to their production work. While secondary research was a vital part of this, many candidates achieved highly through analysing existing media products and applying conventions of the genre and media form to their own work.

Those that used their research to plan thoroughly nearly always found success. Representations, in particular, benefitted from focused planning not just of what the representations would be but also of how they would be achieved through dress codes, props, camera shots, etc. Elsewhere, planning from the start benefitted candidates as they always had the end product in sight – for example, composing a photograph with consideration about where text could appear when the image is used on a magazine double-page spread led to some impressive final pieces. On the other hand, some products (particularly magazines) containing much less planned selfie photographs were submitted, despite selfies not being appropriate for any professional media product.

Not conforming to media form conventions, discussed extensively below, was the most common area of both candidate underachievement and overmarking. It is vitally important that candidates carefully analyse existing media products and make sure their own follow such conventions to look and sound like the real thing.

Tasks

Comments on tasks/questions relating to candidate performance/meeting assessment criteria

Many different approaches to the tasks of Component 3 were seen. Few centres offered just one brief (though this is acceptable), with most offering two, three or even all four briefs. Though magazines and film marketing remained the most popular briefs, though there was a definite rise in music marketing responses submitted this year. Television remained the least popular brief, though was clearly relished by candidates who undertook it.

A great variety of genres (and sub-genres) were seen, and it was clear that the vast majority of candidates had picked their own genre, in keeping with specification requirements. There were fewer instances of centres imposing a restricted range of genres on candidates this year, which is pleasing as candidates should be given a completely free choice. Most candidates had researched their genres well and this was reflected in their work. Those who performed less well tended to take a generalised overview of the genre, without considering its intricacies. This was commonly seen, for example, in horror film marketing, where quite basic (or even clichéd) conventions were employed. Here, candidates could be advised to consider a sub-genre of horror that has more precise codes and conventions to research.

More generally, research was once again the hallmark of a successful candidate. Those that researched the conventions of their media form and genre tended to produce more faithful production work. The very best candidates also researched their planned representations carefully, allowing them to see how social groups are currently represented in the media and then follow or subvert these representations in their own work. As discussed in last year's report, research into the industry context remains important, with those considering the contemporary landscape and trends of the industry (and their production company's position in it) being able to precisely place their media products within the market.

Statement of Aims and Intentions

Candidates who performed well in the Statement of Aims and Intentions produced a concise piece of writing that outlined their plans. Such candidates were detailed – not in the sense that they exhaustively listed every facet of their production (which would be impossible in the word count) but that they included precise detail of how their plans would be executed, such as how representations would be constructed through clothing or how camera shots would reflect genre conventions.

Those performing well nearly always used research explicitly in their Statement of Aims and Intentions. The likes of circulation figures, audience surveys or textual analysis of existing products were often used to justify the decisions made. This could include academic theory, with industry theorists, in particular, often being used well to justify how the mainstream audiences specified in the briefs would be targeted.

Candidates who did not achieve as highly tended to describe their ideas without detail or justification. These candidates therefore produced more of a plan than a Statement of Aims and Intentions and struggled to achieve the marking criteria.

There remain a number of candidates who included limited (or no) reference to the second task, which meant they did not consider how the products would be interrelated or even linked and therefore limited their marks. This was often seen where candidates had used subheadings for each product, and it is therefore advised that this is discouraged to allow for a holistic approach.

The vast majority of candidates were within the 500-word limit. Some, however, went well over. In most occurrences of this, the assessor correctly stopped marking after a 10% allowance (550 words). There were very few candidates who wrote well under 500 words and these short responses were self-penalising.

Cross-Media Production

Most candidates recognised that Task 1 and Task 2 are of equal importance, though there remain a minority where Task 2 has not been given the same attention as Task 1 and these candidates therefore did not perform as well. Conversely, higher achieving candidates tended to not only treat both tasks equally but also contemplate the cross-media aspect of them and consider how the two products work together (such as how a website will complement the accompanying print materials, for example).

It was evident that those that had planned well (and beyond the detail specified in their Statement of Aims and Intentions) often achieved highly. For example, precisely planned camera shots in audio-visual work helped candidates realise media form and genre conventions and well-scripted interviews with participants in appropriate dress ensured representations were constructed.

Where work had been filmed without a storyboard or photoshoots undertaken without consideration of the setting, work was often less successful – not least because such candidates had left themselves a lot to do in editing.

There remained a minority of candidates who included no people in their work (often in magazines based on hobbies) or few faces (such as in horror film marketing). This severely restricted candidates' abilities to construct representations and therefore limited their marks.

On the other hand, candidates that really planned their representations often achieved highly because such representations were 'insightful' (Band 5) or 'purposeful' (Band 4). This was often achieved through the representation of minority groups (including the likes of ethnicity and gender identity), though much more common and established representations were also portrayed perceptively when planned well (often through some sort of backstory to the person's past).

There was less use of artificial intelligence (AI) to produce work this year (from an already very low base), indicating that most centres have taken heed of the [guidance for managing AI](#) available on the Eduqas website. On the other hand, there were still many instances of non-original material being used beyond the limits allowed. This was most commonly seen on websites, where the likes of merchandise templates had been used, or in audio-visual work, where commercial music was employed.

Brief 1: Television

Create an audio-visual sequence from a new television programme and associated online or print materials to promote the same programme.

*You should create a cross-media production for **an independent production company** (such as Studio Lambert, Roughcut Television or Two Brothers Pictures) to be shown as a **streaming exclusive on either ITVX or Amazon Freevee**. Your cross-media production should target a **mainstream audience of 16–25 year olds**.*

Though television was the least popular brief, it tended to be successfully tackled by those that took it. It was not uncommon to see only one or two candidates in a centre submit this brief, perhaps indicating it was a conscious choice and therefore of real interest to those taking it. Candidates who performed particularly well tended to fully grasp the industry context of the brief and recognise that streaming exclusives are often marketed a little differently to linear television programmes and are a way that traditional broadcasters such as ITV can attract a younger audience.

Task 1 required a sequence from the end of the first episode of a programme to be produced. Many candidates executed this most effectively, with cliffhangers or other enigmas to entice the audience to watch the next episode. Some even made recognised that streaming services often release all episodes of a series at once and included content such as teasers for the next episode to encourage binge watching. Where work was less successful, the fact the sequence was from the end of the episode was not as clear. The majority of candidates used conventional shots and editing, though there remained some instances of overlong shots or incoherent editing that limited marks.

The most successful websites for Task 2(a) embraced fandom and allowed audiences to find out more about a programme through insightful behind-the-scenes content (often in the audio-visual extract). Depth was given to characters or participants (in non-fiction genres) through profiles. Less successful websites often did not embody consistency with the style and brand of the television programme and therefore missed opportunities for coherent marketing to occur.

Task 2(b) responses were less seen, though those meeting success gave the audience further insights into the programme, often through an interview with a star of the show, while maintaining the form and genre conventions of a television magazine.

Brief 2: Magazines

Create original print pages for a new magazine and associated online or audio/visual material to promote the same magazine.

*You should create a cross-media production for **a major publishing organisation** (such as Bauer Media, Future Publishing or Immediate Media Co). Your cross-media production should target **an audience of 16–25 year olds with an interest in your chosen genre**.*

Continuing its reign as the most popular option, the magazines brief once again reflected the full attainment range. A huge variety of genres were seen, reflecting the contemporary magazine market where even major publishers (such as the ones specified in this brief) target relatively narrow audiences that have a clear interest in the magazine's content. There remain some candidates that do not feature people enough in their print and online magazines. While no genres are off-limits, this is more likely to occur in magazines about videogames, baking and the like. As discussed in last year's report, simply switching the focus of the magazine to the people behind these hobbies will allow representations to be constructed and the full range of marks to be accessed.

In Task 1, the front pages of magazines were most often successfully executed. Candidates who carefully considered coverlines, fonts, the masthead and the model's pose in the central image often produced very realistic work that both met the brief's requirements and, often through anchorage, created representations. The 'next issue' page, set for the first time this year, was often successfully realised as well. It was clear that candidates' research had revealed a wide range of approaches to such pages in real magazines and tailored their own 'next issue' pages to reflect the needs of their magazines. Those that were less successful had a less defined layout, often using a simple list of articles rather than combining text and images thoughtfully. The double-page spread was where candidates were most likely to underperform. As in previous years, it was usually a lack of adherence to media form conventions that cost candidates here, with unconventional column structures, text across the fold and fragmented layouts being common issues. Copy text was often a concern, usually because it was too large (most magazines use 8 or 9 point), an inappropriate font (serif fonts tend to be the standard) or not aligned correctly (such as being centred, rather than left-aligned or justified). This was also a common area for candidates to miss aspects of the brief's requirements, such as page numbers or captions.

The websites produced for Task 2(a) were often effective in broadening the magazine's audience and including additional content. The layouts of such websites varied a lot, with higher attaining candidates often producing well-crafted homepages with large hero images at the top above a grid of links to other articles. At the other end of the spectrum, some websites were barely recognisable as being from magazines and required excessive scrolling to even arrive at the first linked article. The articles themselves and embedded audio-visual content often continued to construct representations, though material less likely to represent a social group was sometimes dominant here and therefore opportunities to construct representations were missed.

When Task 2(b) was submitted, it usually took the form of a podcast, rather than a YouTube video. The majority of candidates recognised that this was a podcast/video produced *about* the magazine, rather than *by* it. Interviews with the magazine's editor were often successful, though some included a lot of technical detail, as if the audience was Media Studies students. Other segments of the production, where candidates had more choice, were sometimes less well developed, indicating that perhaps more time should be spent planning beyond the core requirements of the brief.

Brief 3: Film Marketing

Create print marketing materials for a new film and associated audio/ online or audio/audio-visual material to promote the same film.

*You should create a cross- media production for a **large content-producing streaming service** (such as Netflix or Disney+) targeting a **mainstream audience of 16–25 year olds with an interest in your chosen genre**.*

Film marketing was a very popular brief, and the majority of candidates successfully reflected the increasing dominance of content-producing streaming services in the film industry. Genres were usually very clear, and a wide variety were seen. There were far fewer examples of real actors or directors being used in work this year, allowing candidates to construct their own representations with full control.

The most successful candidates in Task 1 effectively differentiated between teaser and release posters, realising that the former comes before the latter and that they work together to construct a marketing campaign. Some especially inventive teaser posters (often featuring close-ups of a character's face) were used to introduce characters and address and position the audience. Issues remain with the layout of DVD/Blu-ray/4K Blu-ray sleeves, with many not conforming to conventions. Advice on this is given on page 23 of last year's report, so it is not necessary to repeat it here. A key takeaway for teachers is that a stock of old DVD sleeves for candidates to refer to would make a very useful classroom resource.

The websites in Task 2(a) were, overall, perhaps the most successful across all the briefs. Many candidates constructed their websites to further market the film, with director interviews (far more popular than the actor's audio/video blog) adding insight into the production process. Some missed the opportunity to add to representations here by being descriptive, rather than allowing an audience to 'get inside the director's head'. There were still some candidates who profiled actors, rather than characters, on the second page.

Audio-only, rather than audio-visual, responses to Task 2(b) were the most common. Like last year, many candidates struggled with the precise form here and produced work that came across more as a podcast than a chatshow. Given how common such programmes are, more research into this form would have been straightforward and very fruitful.

Brief 4: Music Marketing

Create an original music video and associated online or print material to promote the same artist or band.

*You should create a cross-media production for a **major record label** (such as Polydor Records or Epic Records) owned by a conglomerate, **targeting a mainstream audience of 16–25 year olds**.*

The music marketing brief increased in popularity this year, with many effective representations of musical artists or bands being created. Very few examples of existing artists/bands being marketed were seen, showing that the precise requirements of the brief were being adhered to.

Many music videos (Task 1) were very successful. The best combined performance footage and a narrative (often cutting between the two, in line with media form conventions) and creative interpretation of the lyrics. Where music videos were less successful, there was a reliance on repetitive performance footage and opportunities to construct representations were not taken. Overlong shots also remain a stumbling block for those achieving lower marks.

Websites, set for Task 2(a), were often very well realised, with many candidates using colour and fonts effectively to convey the genre and enhance the representation of the artist/band. The second pages were often an area for improvement, however, as many candidates missed the brief's requirement for the 'song inspiration' page to be about a *different* song to the one in the video or wrote descriptive tour diaries. Conversely, those that used the second page as an opportunity to enhance the representation of the artist/band through their thoughts and feelings about either their songs or tour often performed well.

Candidates taking on the print-based Task 2(b) often very effectively boosted the representation of their artist/band by including an interview alongside effectively taken images, often using low-angle shots to indicate power or certain dress to convey the genre. As with all magazine tasks, those who did not adhere to media form conventions did not perform as well.

Task marking

Comments on approaches to internal marking

As in previous years, the most useful feedback on task marking is the personalised moderator's report for each centre, available to download from the Internal Assessment Mark Input System on the [WJEC Portal](#) (formerly the WJEC Secure Website) until Christmas. In the report, the centre's moderator provides tailored feedback on all aspects of the centre's submission.

Nationally, the majority of centres' marking was in line with the agreed standard. It was clear that many centres had used the materials available that exemplify the mark scheme, such as the exemplar marked work available on the WJEC Portal or past CPD materials (also available on the Portal) to help establish the standard work should be marked against.

The Statement of Aims and Intentions was marked accurately by the majority of centres, applying the criteria from the first column of the mark scheme. Most centres correctly rewarded candidates for the level of detail in their plans and how well the theoretical framework was used to underpin the planning. Overmarking most frequently occurred where plans were descriptive without justifying the reasoning behind the plans.

Marking of candidates' response to the brief (the second column of the mark scheme) was still accurate in most centres, though it was here that generosity was most likely to be seen. The vast majority of centres were accurate when considering how well the intended audience had been engaged and positioned through the mode of address. Marking of how well genre conventions and industry context were used was also largely accurate. Issues were most likely to occur when considering 'conventions relevant to chosen forms' – in other words, how close the candidate's work is to a real media product. It was not uncommon to see work that did not follow media form conventions being overrewarded. This was often seen in the likes of magazines, where – amongst other issues – unconventional column layouts and large copy text were not fully considered when awarding the mark. Similar issues occurred with the layouts of DVD/Blu-ray/4K Blu-ray sleeves or design of websites not being in keeping with conventions. It must be stressed that work in the upper bands at A Level should look very close to real media products. It was in print and online work where this aspect was most commonly overmarked; audio-visual work tended to be more accurately assessed, though sometimes candidates not using conventional shots and editing were marked leniently in some centres. On a positive note, instances of centres overweighting the final bullet point in this column of the mark scheme and awarding Band 5 to candidates who merely included all required aspects of the brief were rarer this year, with most centres balancing the bullet points to arrive at a 'best fit' mark.

Assessment of candidates' use of media language to communicate meanings and construct representations (the third column of the mark scheme) was again marked accurately in the majority of centres, with more complex media language use (such as intertextuality, hybridity and a thorough control of connotations) correctly being placed in the upper half of the mark scheme. Where generosity occurred, it tended to be in the construction of representations. It should be remembered that representations need to be 'purposeful' for Band 4 and 'insightful' for Band 5.

While most candidates produced work of equal quality across the two tasks, some did not and consideration of this was variable across centres. Centres that marked such work accurately considered the preamble at the beginning of the mark scheme that specifies which bands to place work of uneven quality. The preamble also offers guidance on assessing work with rubric infringements.

Most centres offered a useful rationale behind the marks awarded in Section C of the coversheet. As with previous years, the most useful comments were those that combined phrases from the mark scheme with actual examples from the candidate's work. Comments that merely copied and pasted the mark scheme (sometimes not in line with the actual mark awarded) were less useful.

This year, the coversheets from both 2023 and 2024 were accepted, though the 2023 coversheet will not be accepted in 2025. Some centres made use of the new PDF version of the coversheet, which automatically copies the details at the top of the first page to subsequent pages and totals the marks automatically.

Completion of Section A of the coversheet by the candidate continued to be variable. Many candidates outlined their work at each stage of the production process, giving moderators a valuable insight into how the work was produced, but others included minimal or no detail. The boxes detailing permitted non-original material and the software used were also inconsistently completed, sometimes even within the same centre. The [video guide to completing the coversheet](#) is recommended to ensure coversheets fulfil their purpose.

The vast majority of coversheets were correctly authenticated by both the candidate (in Section A) and assessor (in Section C). Centres submitting coversheets that were missing signatures (either digital or handwritten) had to be contacted to rectify this.

Nearly all centres clearly took great care when entering marks on the Internal Assessment Mark Input System, though there were some worrying cases of candidates' marks being transposed or simply typed in incorrectly. Centres will have their own processes for checking the accuracy of submitted marks, but they must ensure they include thorough error-checking procedures.

The vast majority of centres successfully uploaded work to Surpass by the deadline, though there were instances of incomplete uploads with pieces of work missing from candidates' submissions. Missing website addresses for online productions remained an issue. These should be included on coversheets and must be the address for the published website, not an editing link.

Much work was well labelled with the candidate's number, name and description of what the work is (such as 'music video', 'podcast' or 'magazine pages'). A minority of centres uploaded work as an unnecessarily large number of files, such as separate documents for the Statement of Aims and Intentions (rather than being in Section B of the coversheet), separate website videos (rather than embedded on the website) or even separate files for the front, back and spine of a DVD sleeve. Production work should always be presented as it would be seen by an audience.

There were fewer instances of unsupported file types, such as Photoshop (.psd) and Microsoft Publisher (.pub), being submitted this year, which was appreciated as not all moderators have the software to open these files.

It was, however, common to see very large files uploaded. Many video files were over half a gigabyte in size and a number of podcasts were excessively large for audio-only files (many actually being video files with no images). Even some JPEG files were hundreds of megabytes in size, making them difficult to open. While Surpass allows up to 600 MB per candidate, this amount of data can take several minutes to download for moderators in areas where superfast broadband is not yet available. Most programs have export settings that allow for much smaller file sizes. There is also [guidance of compressing files on the E-Submission page of the Eduqas website](#).

Once again, the overriding impression at the end of the moderation process is that both candidates and centres have worked diligently to make Component 3 a success and should be congratulated on their efforts.

Supporting you

Useful contacts and links

Our friendly subject team is on hand to support you between 8.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

Tel: 029 2204 4308

Email: media@edugas.co.uk

Qualification webpage: [AS and A Level Media Studies | Edugas](#)

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Regional Rep Team

Our regional team covers all areas of England and can provide face-to-face and online advice at a time which is convenient to you.

Get in contact today and discover how our team can support you and your students.

[Regional Support Team | Edugas](#)

Edugas Qualifications

We are one of the largest providers of qualifications for schools, academies, sixth form and further education colleges across England, offering valued qualifications to suit a range of abilities. Each and every one of our qualifications is carefully designed to engage students and to equip them for the next stage of their lives.

We support our education communities by providing trusted qualifications and specialist support, to allow our students the opportunity to reach their full potential.



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