GCE AS EXAMINERS' REPORTS

MEDIA STUDIES
AS

SUMMER 2022

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EDUQAS AS MEDIA STUDIES

GCE AS

Summer 2022

COMPONENT 1: INVESTIGATING THE MEDIA

General Comments

As this was the first Component 1 examination since 2019, it was encouraging to see how positively centres and candidates have responded to most of the demands of the exam and how well candidates had been prepared by centres. Candidates had clearly taken advantage of the Advance Information released to help support teachers and learners in 2022 to focus their revision. 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 the paper.

The quality of handwriting and essay writing skills 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

Q.1 Explore how editing is used in this music video extract [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 selected for this question was an extract from the music video 'Here with Me' by Marshmello featuring CHVRCHES released in 2019. This choice proved accessible for candidates who were well prepared through their study of the music video products. It was encouraging to see that candidates across the mark range were able to analyse the text in detail with varying degrees of use of relevant media terminology. The more able candidates clearly addressed the question, exploring a range of editing techniques that created meaning including:
- fades
- straight cuts
- wipe cuts
- jump cuts
- montage editing
- fast paced rhythm
- cross-cutting
- shot reverse shots
- layering

Candidates accessing marks in the higher bands were confident in discussing the editing techniques and linked this with the meanings embedded, often relating to narrative. Responses at this level remained focused on the question, leading with the use of editing techniques. They could, as expected, discuss the effect of such techniques in relation to meanings and ideological values. 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.

More sophisticated responses applied the language of semiotics and narratology to develop their analysis further, which is to be encouraged.

Candidates in the middle of the mark range often identified some editing techniques used and their associated connotations but either did not explore them in enough detail, or lapsed into discussion of other media language techniques, such as mise-en-scene or camera, and therefore lost focus on the question. They produced a reasonable and straightforward analysis of the music video extract but tended not to cover a broad range of points.

As the unseen 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. There were many candidates awarded marks in the lower bands as they were not focused on the question. They lacked confidence with editing terminology and responses offered a basic application of knowledge and understanding to analyse the product. Some candidates had clearly prepared for the question based on a previous paper and explored a variety of media language techniques at the expense of editing. This limited/undeveloped understanding and focus on the question made it difficult to award higher than Band 2. Some candidates produced a more descriptive response, telling the story of the music video extract. In some cases, candidates downloaded theory, such as narrative theory and semiology, but did not apply it to support their analysis. These responses showed limited application of the theoretical framework and limited use of subject specific terminology.

Q.2 Compare the representation of issues in these two advertisements   [25]
In your answer you must consider:
- the similarities in the representations of issues
- the differences in the representations of issues
- how far the representations relate to relevant 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 the ability to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, relevant, substantiated and logically structured.

In this question, 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 in the same amount of detail. Higher achieving candidates were able to address the focus of the question and to analyse both products, making relevant comparisons. To access the higher bands, 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 construction of representations of issues, in relation to relevant contexts such as Paul Gilroy and post-colonialism, with a focus on the 'white saviour' ideology. At this level, this was discussed in detail in both products, referring to visual codes, technical codes and written codes, highlighting both similarities and differences. To be placed in the higher bands, comparing the two products in detail was essential. It was pleasing to see how candidates at this level engaged with ideologies and complex aspects of representation in an informed way.

Responses in the middle band focused on more straightforward or obvious aspects of representation related to, for example the use of colour or the subjects being happy/unhappy and tended to focus more on one product.

Responses in the lower bands 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.

Very few candidates were underprepared for this question. Those that were either tended to rely on analysis of the print advertisement for the *Feed our Future* campaign, as that was available in the exam, or were over-reliant on the set *WaterAid* advertisement. Other candidates were unable to access the higher bands, as their explorations of contexts were either too general or they did not engage with contexts at all.

It is important that any theories/theoretical perspectives used are 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 drop in theories which were, at worst, irrelevant and, at best, not applied accurately, such as Van Zoonen stating that all women are 'weak and vulnerable'.

Candidates in the higher bands made perceptive judgements and conclusions about the relevant media contexts, supported by specific examples from the products, and were able to effectively relate these to the representation of issues. Reference to contexts in the middle range responses were generally straightforward and simple.

Q.3   **Assessment Objectives**
Q.3 **(a)**   **AO1 1a**
       • Demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical framework of media.
Q.3 **(b)**   **AO1 1a and 1b**
       • Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media.
Q.3 **(c)**   **AO1 2a and 2b:**
       • Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of contexts of media and their influence on media products and processes.

Q.3 **(a)** Name the regulatory body for film in the U.K. [1]
Responses largely referred to the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC). However, some candidates referred to other regulatory bodies such as VSC, OFCOM or PEGI, which were not creditable. Some candidates referred to other organisations such as BBC, Ubisoft, FOX, and cinemas, and so could not be credited either.

(b) Explain briefly why films are regulated. [4]
Overall, the majority of candidates offered a holistic explanation of why films are regulated. Popular responses explored the films' content and the need to protect audiences, particularly children, from harm. Some candidates made a valid point and explanation but then repeated themselves so were not able to access the full range of marks. Some candidates made points but did not explain them fully, lacking clarity and therefore not answering the question.

(c) Explain how cultural contexts can influence film marketing. Refer to *Black Panther* 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. Some candidates struggled with this question, largely because they were too focused on representation and audience theory in their responses, rather than focusing on how cultural contexts influenced film marketing. Although it is a synoptic question, responses must still engage with the specific question set.

Candidates in the higher bands tended to lead with cultural contexts that the film industry (The Walt Disney Company) were aware of and how this might have influenced the way they marketed *Black Panther*. They then effectively offered detailed examples from the film's marketing to support their points.

Many candidates in the lower bands tended to offer limited reference to the film or limited reference to cultural contexts to answer the question.
Better responses were able to also incorporate theories and theoretical perspectives, including Curran and Seaton and Hesmondalgh. Weaker responses tended to mention these theorists without using them to further their discussion of the film industry. Lower band responses tended to be quite brief too, suggesting time management in the exam needs to be worked on.

Q.4 **(a)** Identify two ways video games may appeal to their audiences. [2]
Assessment Objectives:
AO1 1a: Demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical framework of media.
Like Q.3(b), this question led to a variety of diverse responses. Many candidates offered specific ways, such as positive representations, the genre of the game, the quality of games' graphics/technological advancements and the opportunity the game offers to play with others online. However, some responses were too industry focused, exploring marketing, and so were not credited. These included trailers, advertising on TV/social media, organised events by video game developers and endorsement by video game vloggers.

(b) Explain how audiences might interpret the same video game in different ways. Refer to one game from the *Assassin's Creed* franchise to support your points. [8]

Assessment Objectives:

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

This question required candidates to refer to one game in the *Assassin's Creed* franchise. Most candidates referred to the original set video game, *Assassin's Creed III: Liberation*; however, it was pleasing to see other candidates explore the most recent *Assassin's Creed, Valhalla.*

Better responses gave an introduction, discussing the need to reach different audiences and how later games in Ubisoft's franchise might lead to the preferred/hegemonic reading from the audience targeted. Significant points related in detail to the choice of protagonist such as *Assassin Creed: Valhalla*'s Eivor, where the audience could choose the gender, along with making choices regarding their sexuality/preferences throughout the gameplay. Candidates in the higher bands applied Hall's Reception Theory confidently to discuss how various audiences might respond to it differently.

Weaker responses generalised around how audiences literally respond to video games and referred to an example from the *Assassin's Creed* franchise in a minimal way or not at all. Many responses in the lower bands were descriptive and/or had a tendency to download the Reception Theory, without applying it appropriately.

Generally, as in previous papers, the brevity of many responses suggested many candidates ran out of time.

Summary of key points

- Centres should prepare candidates so that they are able to answer questions from across the full range of specification content. Candidates should be able to engage with questions that test all bullet points outlined in the specification knowledge grids.
- In terms of media language, candidates need to be taught the full range of aspects, including editing, in relation to the set forms studied.
- When theory is used in a response, it should be relevant, applied effectively and should be a helpful tool for analysis or discussion of the set products. Candidates are not credited for downloading' theory, trying to 'shoehorn' irrelevant theory into a response or simply naming theorists, often in brackets.
- Candidates must study media contexts and their influence on media products and processed and they need to be able to analyse set products in relation to their contexts. More preparation is needed in this area.

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COMPONENT 2: INVESTIGATING MEDIA FORMS AND PRODUCTS

General Comments

For the AS qualification, there was a comparable number of entries this year compared to 2019. It was hugely pleasing to see a number of excellent responses given the difficulties that the pandemic presented centres in terms of teaching the qualification. There were, however, significant numbers of responses that struggled to answer the questions set, often detailing what appeared to be pre-rehearsed answers that, in many cases, failed to address appropriate analysis, knowledge and understanding requirements.

Once again, in Section A, *Life on Mars* was the most popular choice, followed by *Humans* with very few centres choosing *The Jinx*. In Section B, *Vogue* was again the most popular option, followed by *Woman's Realm* and *Woman*. In Section C, *Zoella*, much like 2019, was by far the most popular choice with a minority of centres choosing to study *PointlessBlog*.

Candidates seemed most comfortable answering the question in Section C, engaging with media representation with a greater degree of confidence than was exhibited elsewhere in the exam. The least secure engagement was evidenced across Section A, where candidates struggled to explore the significance of narrative features in the set episodes they had studied.

Across the paper, the best responses, generally speaking, provided detailed analysis and knowledge of the set products and/or detailed knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework. In contrast, weaker responses often struggled to refer to specific aspects of set products, using generalised commentary that often lacked the use of appropriate subject specialist terminology, or, in some cases, included inaccurate knowledge.

It was pleasing to note, however, a continued reduction in the number of responses that tagged theorists' names in parentheses e.g., 'stereotypes (Hall)'. Simply knowing the theorist's name does not fully evidence knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework and cannot be credited as such. While knowledge of theory isn't a pre-requisite to access higher marks in all questions, those candidates who outlined and correctly applied theoretical knowledge and understanding in detail often accessed higher level marks.

Comments on individual questions/sections

SECTION A: Television

Q.1, 2, 3   **(a)**   Briefly explain Todorov's theory of narratology.   [5]
- AO1 1a Demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical framework of media.
- AO1 1b Demonstrate understanding of the theoretical framework of media.

Responses, on the whole, handled this question with a satisfactory level of knowledge and understanding, with most students identifying various narrative models that correctly named and explained Todorov's assertion that an ideal narrative structure contains moments of equilibrium separated by disequilibrium. Some candidates supplemented these explanations by identifying the potential use of character archetypes: seeker heroes, princesses, or helper characters and so on.

More detailed answers moved beyond the identification of Todorov's narrative formula, outlining arguments that equilibrium and disequilibrium constructed deeper meanings – that, for example, heroes restore social harmony by battling antagonistic forces. Responses that reached Band 5 took this idea further, describing the potential ideological impact of Todorov's narrative formula, explaining, for example, that new equilibrium endings provide audiences with a set of ideals or behaviours that they might use to inform their outlooks and behaviours. Very few responses accessed full marks for this question.

Q.1, 2, 3   **(b)**   Explore the importance of narrative in the set episode of *Life On Mars/Humans/The Jinx*.   [15]
AO2 1 and 2 Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to:
- analyse media products, including through the use of academic theories
- make judgements and draw conclusions

The best responses to this question paid close attention to the question posed, providing analysis and commentary that carefully diagnosed the impact of narrative features for audiences. Responses of this nature, for example, explored the presentation of set episode characters as binary opposites, outlining, for example, the ideological effects of character juxtaposition in *Life on Mars,* carefully drawing out the idea that the paired presentation of Gene Hunt and Sam Tyler provided ideological commentary regarding the shifting nature of male identity.

Some good discussion was also evidenced regarding the institutional needs of producers, with accompanying analysis diagnosing how narrative patterns helped producers to attract and retain a variety of audience types.

Genre-based discussions that were firmly linked to narrative features also worked well; responses, for example, that used detailed knowledge and understanding of the documentary genre's narrative conventions and the rationale for including those features were used to good effect. Similarly, discussion that identified why narrative subversions were applied in set episodes attracted higher marks – that, for example, *Humans* drew narrative features from the genres of science fiction and family drama to nurture a wider target audience.

It is important to note that a common feature of higher level responses was the inclusion of comprehensive analysis of the set episode studied, where students identified detailed narrative features, using that knowledge and understanding to diagnose subtle, complex or even contradictory effects.

Unfortunately, a number of responses failed to include references to such moments, providing basic knowledge or description of narrative events. Lower level answers also missed opportunities to directly address the question set, with lots of responses, for example, identifying the use of Todorovian narrative features without analysing them. Those answers, for example, identified where narrative equilibrium or disequilibrium might be found in set episodes without detailing the underlying significance of those moments. Satisfactory responses also offered broad brush analysis, identifying, for example, the general impact of singular moments or overarching narrative periods.

There were a number of responses that provided very basic knowledge and understanding, where analysis lacked clarity or where discussion conveyed a limited understanding of the events, characters or structuring devices found within the set episodes studied. There were a number of responses too that lacked focus, with discussions, for example, often applying Hall's reception theory in ways that simply did not answer the question set.

SECTION B: Magazines

Q.4, 5, 6   Explain the strategies used by magazine producers to attract audiences. Refer to the set edition of *Woman/Woman's Realm/Vogue* in your response.

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

Responses that demonstrated detailed knowledge and understanding of the design or production approaches taken by producers as a means to engage audiences gained high marks. It was very pleasing to note the high number of responses that used such analysis as a means to address the question, exploring, for example, the intent of language use in advertisements or diagnosing the targeting effects of costuming, setting, props, micro gestures or composition in image-based content.

A number of responses also used uses and gratifications theory to good effect, identifying in detail specific features of content that delivered escapism or personal identity as a means of targeting defined audience groups.

Gauntlett's theoretical thinking was also applied to good effect, wherein candidates identified how specific aspects of content might be included to provide audiences with a range of tools to shape their identity. Similarly, those candidates who were able to link knowledge of contextual features to the targeting strategies used by producers were able to access higher marks. Successful discussion, for example, detailed the following contextual effects: the emergence of the women's liberation movement, the consumer culture boom, embourgeoisement, the end of post-war austerity, youth oriented countercultural forces and so on.

It was disappointing, however, to note that a lot of responses did not evidence a detailed understanding of the set products, with a large number of answers offering limited analysis in terms of breadth and depth. Some candidates limited discussion, for example, to front cover features only, with very candidates offering detailed knowledge of copy content or language devices employed to target audiences. Centres ought to ensure that students are able to provide detailed readings of the set number of set product pages. Candidates who could only offer overarching assessments of limited set page strategies were disadvantaged.

Again, responses in the lower bands evidenced a lack of engagement with the set question. A lot of answers, for example, readily drifted into discussions that assessed how audiences might interpret set text content - using Reception theory to good effect, but in ways that simply didn't address the questions set.

There were also a large number of answers that contained detailed discussion of strategies used by contemporary editions of the set texts. Candidates should be reminded that they ought to focus on the historical set text editions identified in the specification. A lot of responses also drew attention to strategies that might cultivate 'explorer' or 'succeeder' audience groups. It should be noted that the named set products were produced before Young and Rubicam invented their Psychographic segmentation model.

SECTION C: Online Media

Q.7, 8   How far do blogs and vlogs reinforce stereotypes? Explore *PointlessBlog/Alfie Deyes* or *Zoe Sugg/Zoella* in your response.

AO2 1 and 2 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

Successful responses evidenced a sound understanding of media stereotypes, articulating not only how and why stereotypes are used by online producers, but also scoping the potential effects, both positive and negative, of explicit set product content on audiences. Lots of answers, for example, explored – very successfully – that online media producers often author complex and contradictory representations. That Zoella, for example, often reinforces hegemonic female stereotypes via her focus on beauty products and domesticity, yet also produces contradictory effects when celebrating international women's day or articulating her battle with anxiety. Successful responses, again, were able to draw upon detailed knowledge of set product content – offering up evaluations of specific moments in uploads that produced interest in terms of stereotypes.

The most successful answers tended to use gender, race, or class-based stereotypes as a means of exploring set product impact – diagnosing Alfie Deyes, for example, as a stereotypical 'metrosexual' male representation via analysis of key moments in explicitly named uploads. Less successful answers struggled to name specific stereotypes that the set products invoked, and, as such, they lacked focus.

Lower level answers also struggled to identify specific features of the set products or simply drew attention to generic features of content, identifying, for example, that Zoella's use of fairy lights and pink reinforced Zoella's femininity. It was also disappointing to note the lack of use of Hall's representation theory in answers to this question, which when applied correctly provided a useful starting point to investigate stereotype use in products.

Summary of key points

- Centres should ensure that students are able to articulate more detailed knowledge and understanding of the ideological impact produced by set episode narrative features.
- Centres should ensure that candidates study the set number of magazine pages, not just the front covers.
- Centres ought to encourage more detailed readings of magazine story copy that diagnose language effects, story structuring techniques and content selection decisions.
- Centres should prepare candidates so that they are able to answer questions from across the full range of specification content. Candidates should be able to engage with questions that test all bullet points outlined in the specification knowledge grids.
- Centres should ensure that candidates understand the difference between the requirements of AO1 and AO2 – and the 'signpost'/command words for these, drawing particular attention to the specific requirements of questions.

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COMPONENT 3: MEDIA PRODUCTION

General Comments

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

A majority of centres and candidates managed to submit full productions as detailed in the briefs despite the challenges of the last year, which was pleasing to see. For the most part, print based briefs were followed, with a majority of centres following the magazine or film marketing briefs, with a few following the online music marketing brief. Most candidates had clearly been encouraged to select their own genre to work within, and work demonstrated a range of genres. It is necessary to ensure candidates are advised on the suitability of the genre they have chosen and the need to consider how well they can meet the conventions of this genre and comply with the requirements of the brief. Some centres offered a range of briefs while many followed one brief. Generally, there was parity in assessment across briefs. Candidates responded positively to the briefs and were able to produce work that demonstrated their ability to apply their knowledge and understanding of the media studies theoretical framework. It was clear that centres had set appropriate tasks in order for candidates to meet the requirements of the brief and the need for the assessment to be independently developed and produced. All centres are advised to access exemplar work on the WJEC secure site to ascertain the standards for Component 3.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Administration

The administrative procedures prescribed by WJEC are designed to facilitate an effective moderation process and ensure that candidates' work is viewed and moderated appropriately. Most centres adhered to these procedures and uploaded work in advance of the deadline, using appropriate file formats. It is very helpful where centres have labelled work with the name of the candidate and title of the document, as this allows moderators to identify quickly and easily who the work belongs to and view each part of the production efficiently. .zip files were also used appropriately; however, it is crucial to ensure the file types are those that have been authorised for submission, rather than files such as .pub or .psd, as these require specialist software to view and therefore are not appropriate for submitting candidates' work. If candidates submit a website production, it is imperative that the URL is included as a hyperlink, or clearly typewritten, to ensure the moderator can access the website. Handwritten web addresses are difficult to read accurately and often cause issues when trying to view the production.

Coversheets

A majority of the coversheets were completed appropriately, including signatures of candidates and teachers and dates to authenticate the work. Many candidates did not fully complete the final page, specific to 2022 to reflect adaptations, although most were signed. Most candidates identified research undertaken to inform their production and link to the brief.

Coversheets should be submitted as one entire document, some centres submitted the coversheets across three files with the Statement of Aims and Intentions as one file, the authentication and mark sheet as a second file and the GDPR as a final file. This is rather time consuming when moderators have to change between three documents to check all of the relevant authentication, marking and work, therefore coversheets should be kept as a single document.

Most candidates did complete the Statement of Aims and Intentions in Section B of the coversheet as required. It is essential candidates include a word count on this sheet and adhere to the word limit of 350 words. A number of candidates significantly exceeded the word limit; in such cases teachers should cease assessment of the statement once the upper threshold has been reached and the allocation of marks should reflect this. The Statement of Aims and Intentions must be completed after the research stage of planning before the production begins. This therefore should be written in future tense. Most candidates did comply with this requirement; however, a number of candidates wrote in the past tense and described what they had done, clearly indicating the Statement of Aims and Intentions was written after the production was completed. Centres need to ensure they are giving clear guidance with regards to this, and the Statement of Aims and Intentions should be signed off by the candidate and teacher prior to the production commencing.

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.

Most candidates met the requirements of their chosen brief and were able to apply suitable knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework to their production work. In a few cases candidates did deviate from the specific stipulations of their brief with regards to industry or audience. This should be reflected in the assessment of the work.

Most candidates adhered to the more detailed requirements of the brief in terms of length and features. However, centres should be reminded that simply meeting the requirements of the brief is not enough to place the work into the higher bands for column 2. As was the case in 2019, there were a number of candidates that were significantly over-rewarded for meeting the requirements of the brief because they had been placed in bands 4 or 5 simply for including all elements of the tasks. The first bullet point of column two of the marking grid does require a consideration of how conventions are used relevant to the chosen form, genre and industry context of the set brief. In some cases, this was not considered and consequentially, some candidates were over-rewarded for meeting the requirements of the brief.

- The production should adhere to the codes and conventions of the chosen form. Candidates should use their research findings to inform their own decisions about their production work. For example, magazine work should have a clear house style, with layout and design features reflecting typical industry conventions. Some candidates' magazine productions did not feature consistent use of fonts, columns, and colour to demonstrate the brand identity of the product, and in some cases were lacking industry features such as price and barcode. Equally, with the film marketing production brief some productions were missing institutional information on the DVD cover and full poster and did not include appropriate age rating certification or guidance that conventionally and industry standards would expect to see.

- The audio-visual material included in the online options should adhere to the requirements of the brief and should also consider the conventions of this piece of production, for example if this is an interview then appropriate cinematography, sound, lighting and editing needs to be considered to meet the requirements of the production brief in terms of adhering to the codes and conventions of a media production but also the appropriate use of media language.
- The list of minimum requirements were mainly fulfilled, although some candidates need to pay particular attention to the total number of images, word counts, and length of audio-visual material as laid out in the briefs.

Statement of Aims and Intentions

It is essential that candidates have undertaken appropriate research into similar media products before writing the Statement of Aims and Intentions. Candidates should reference their research to explain how they will apply this knowledge and understanding to the creation of their own productions. A number of candidates, as in 2019, did not mention their research at all, and as a result, their Statement of Aims and Intentions were often descriptive. This was particularly evidenced with candidates that produced a website marketing either films or magazines, whereby it appeared general websites may have been looked at rather than music or film websites. Although candidates do need to understand the general conventions and layout of websites, they do need a more in-depth understanding of the conventions of either film or music/band websites and how these engage audiences and convey the genre of the music.

As with previous years, candidates continue to struggle with applying their knowledge and understanding of the industry context. Candidates should be guided to begin with the specified companies detailed in the brief and select case studies bases around those companies' output.

There was some evidence of standardised or formulaic Statements of Aims and Intentions, whereby candidates had clearly been directed to mention particular theorists. This does not necessarily meet the requirements of the brief as the theorists were at times, name dropped or lacked relevance, rather than engaged with or applied to the production. Whilst guidance should be given to candidates to support their development and engagement with theories this needs to encourage candidates to develop their own knowledge and understanding and application of theory rather than paying lip service to the theory.

Most candidates were able to discuss their planned use of media language, but at times this was not supported with evidence from research. The most successful Statement of Aims and Intentions were those which used concise evidence from their own research into similar products to justify and explain their decisions for the production work, addressed all four areas of the theoretical framework in the context of the brief and adhered to the word count. (350 words -/+ 10%)

Production

As mentioned, a majority of candidates followed print briefs (magazine or film marketing), with a very small number following the music marketing online brief.

A variety of genres were produced and a majority of these were assessed appropriately. However, a number of centres had assessed work generously, with some centres not applying assessment consistently for all candidates, resulting in the rank order not being agreed. It is essential centres apply the assessment criteria accurately across all briefs and candidate work to ensure fairness of the assessment process.

Generous assessment was across both column 2 (over-rewarding for meeting the requirements of the brief) and column 3 (use of media language and representations). With production work generously awarded in column 2, this was most commonly over-rewarding for work that did not clearly comply with genre conventions or industry context, at times showing a lack of clear mode of address or genre signifiers. Work that was generously awarded in column 3, was often awarded highly for use of media language or control over connotations, or appropriate representations, whereby the connotations lacked complexity and representations were unclear.

Most candidates did use original images for their production work and a significant number of centres completed the full production work, irrespective of the adaptations for 2022.

Brief 1: Television
(a)   Create a sequence for a new television programme in a fiction or non-fictional genre of your choice, which must include either: a key turning point; a point of conflict; or a point of resolution.
(b)   Online: Create a functioning website to promote a new television programme in a fictional or non-fictional genre of your choice, including: a working homepage, plus an 'about the programme' page, and an 'episodes guide' page.

Very few candidates completed this brief, and the candidates that did created a sequence rather than follow the online option. Due to the small number of candidates completing this it is difficult to identify trends in terms of strengths or weaknesses; however, candidates that did complete the audio-visual option showed an appreciation of the genre conventions and clear use of cinematography to create meaning.

Brief 2: Magazine
Create the following pages for a new magazine in a genre (or sub-genre) of your choice: a front cover; a contents page; a double page spread.
(a)   Online: Create a functioning website for a new online magazine in a genre (or sub-genre) of your choice including: a working homepage; a 'main feature' page and one 'advice' or 'how to' page.

All submissions for this brief were print based this year, with no candidates or centres attempting to create an online website for a magazine.

A wide range of genres were engaged with, and it was mostly evident that candidates had researched their genre and developed their knowledge and understanding of the conventions of magazines and the genre. The most common issues with this brief were students that did not consider the industry appropriate detail and conventions of the genre of magazine. This was evident where magazines did not follow a conventional layout in terms of use of columns for the double page spread or contents pages, and where key information such as page numbers, barcodes, prices were not included. Some candidates did not clearly engage with the need for an appropriate mode of address, which resulted in a lack of ability for the production to clearly engage and address audiences, suggesting candidates need to develop their appreciation for this as a key focus.

The magazine brief was commonly over-rewarded in light of the above-mentioned issues.

Brief 3: Film Marketing
(a)   Create a film marketing campaign to promote a new film in a genre (or sub-genre/ hybrid) of your choice, which consists of an advance release 'teaser' poster; a main theatrical release poster; a DVD or Blu-ray front cover, back cover and spine.
(b)   Online: Create a functioning website to promote a new film in a genre (or sub-genre/ hybrid) of your choice, including: a working homepage, plus a 'key characters bio' page, and a 'gallery' of still images from the film.

A number of candidates completed the film marketing campaign, and some candidates completed the website option. Both commonly demonstrated appropriate genre signifiers and understanding of conventions by candidates. Some candidates did not show a clear understanding of industry whereby conventions and mode of address could be mainstream or independent, demonstrating a lack of clear understanding of the difference in mainstream versus independent. Some candidates did not conform to recognised elements of DVD/Blu-ray covers, particularly as in 2019, whereby candidates did not conform to the layout, use of thumbnails, blurbs or age ratings.

Brief 4: Music marketing
(a)   Create an original music video to promote a new artist or band in a genre (or sub-genre/hybrid) of your choice.
(b)   Online: Create a functioning website to promote a new artist or band in a genre (or sub-genre/hybrid) of your choice, including: a working homepage, plus a 'latest news' page, and a 'video' page with thumbnails.

No candidates submitted option (a), the music video; however, a few candidates did submit the music marketing online option. As with previous years, the core concern was that few candidates engaged with appropriate case studies or researched the industry (Columbia Records or Interscope Records). Thus, production work did not clearly reflect industry conventions at times and showed a more generalised approach to music marketing. Centres are advised to guide candidates to select artists and genres that closely match those listed in the brief and to prompt candidates to engage with industry context to ensure the brief can be met.

A common issue with the music marketing website was the quality of the video page, whereby some candidates included 'interviews' with the artist; however, the use of media language in terms of framing, lighting, sound quality, and mode of address was not appropriate to engage an audience. This often led to over-rewarding, whereby the website did not clearly convey the genre, industry, or utilise media language to address the audience.

Summary of key points

- Centres should guide candidates to complete appropriate research, with a focus on the brief to ensure candidates are engaging with appropriate case studies and industry context. Researching appropriately will support the candidate to ensure a clear understanding of genre, style, tone, and industry is developed prior to developing the production. This research needs to be completed prior to the Statement of Aims and Intentions is written and then centres should support candidates in making the links between what they have researched and what they will produce. Some candidates had clearly researched but then appeared to ignore their findings when creating their production.
- Candidates would benefit from further guidance on genre/industry/mode of address (column 2 on the mark scheme) as some candidates did not clearly comply with the requirements of the brief in terms of utilising genre conventions or engaging with industry requirements.
- Centres should ensure that candidates are appropriately rewarded for both column 2 and 3 on the assessment grid. Assessment should consider how effectively the audience has been engaged and positioned and how industry and genre conventions are used (column 2), and how effectively media language has created appropriate connotations and representations (column 3). For example, if a candidate has produced work whereby the genre is not clear, or the mode of address is undeveloped, or the alignment of coverlines/use of columns, and layout is not industry appropriate it is unlikely the production will succeed in demonstrating an appropriate level of understanding to reach the higher bands of the mark scheme.
- Candidates should be guided to adhere to the word count for the Statement of Aims and Intentions or the centre should mark the work up to the top of the word limit. Some Statements were significantly over the word count, and this led to considerable over-rewarding for some candidates. Writing succinctly and focusing on the key areas of the theoretical framework supported by the candidate's research is key to the success of this element of the NEA.
- Whilst support for candidates is crucial, centres should be aware of encouraging a formulaic engagement with theory for the Statement of Aims and Intentions, as this can lead to candidates paying lip service to theory and not demonstrating a clear understanding.