GCE A LEVEL EXAMINERS' REPORTS

MEDIA STUDIES
A LEVEL

SUMMER 2022

Grade boundary information for this subject is available on the WJEC public website at:
https://www.wjecservices.co.uk/MarkToUMS/default.aspx?l=en

Online Results Analysis

WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC secure website. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.

Annual Statistical Report

The annual Statistical Report (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

COMPONENT 1: MEDIA PRODUCTS, INDUSTRIES AND AUDIENCES

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 the demands of the examination and how well candidates had been guided by centres. Candidates had clearly taken advantage of the Advance Information released to help support teachers and learners in 2022 to focus their revision. 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 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, and had additional insertions on extra paper which affected the flow of the response.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Q.1   *Explore how this music video extract communicates meanings*   [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 audio-visual and was an extract from the music video *Up All Night* (Beck, 2017). This proved to be a rich product that was very accessible for most candidates who had been well prepared for this question through their study of the music video set products. However, it was of some concern that there were several candidates who approached this question as a representation question, focusing almost entirely on the representation of gender and youth in the advertisement and how representations and more common stereotypes had been subverted. Whilst this approach is relevant where it contributes to an analysis of how media language creates meanings, this should not form the main focus of the response. In addition, theories less relevant to this question were also used. To prepare for analysis of the unseen product, it is essential that candidates are given practice in applying their understanding of all elements of media language so that they are equipped to analyse a range of media products from the set forms.

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 they were required to explore how media language **communicates meaning**. Several candidates approached this question as a general analysis of the unseen product and missed the nuances of the question.

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 construction of meaning. There was also a tendency to discuss the relationships and motivations of the characters and elements of the narrative without linking to the construction process though media language choices.

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 applied appropriate theories and theoretical perspectives to support their points, including Barthes and Levi Strauss, with some candidates demonstrating an excellent understanding of semiotics. These more successful responses used their understanding of the theoretical framework to address how media language 'communicates meanings.' The expectation was that aspects of media language, and how they work together to communicate meaning, would be explored, including:

- visual codes
- technical and audio codes
- setting and iconography
- narrative
- the codes and conventions of music videos

Responses in the higher bands were confident in discussing the codes and conventions of the music video form, were particularly strong when discussing media language and could, as expected, discuss how the impact and effect of specific camera shots, angles and editing techniques communicated meaning. There was some excellent, detailed analysis, demonstrating application of understanding of the theoretical framework and relevant theory. These responses referred to a range of elements of media language evident in the unseen product and in addition discussed postmodernism, surreal elements, and enigma.
Candidates who produced more sophisticated responses also used the language of semiotics to develop their analysis further, which is to be encouraged.

Candidates in the middle of the mark range often recognised the connotations of the visual elements but failed to then explore them in any detail. They produced a reasonable and straightforward analysis of the music video and tended not to cover a broad range of points. Several candidates failed to discuss the fact that the product was a music video and missed the opportunity to use the work they had done in class in their preparation of 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 application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework in relation to the selected form. These responses were often guilty of over-reading, interpreting the product in ways that the video offered very little evidence for, and consequently failed to develop their analysis beyond this, sometimes narrow, approach; for example, candidates who interpreted the extract as some kind of condemnation of the immorality of youth culture.

Candidates awarded marks in the lower bands tended to produce a more descriptive response, telling the story of the music video with some inaccuracies, and missing the focus of the question. These responses were also less confident with exploring a range of elements of media language and supporting points with specific examples from the extract and instead adopted a superficial, generalised approach which demonstrated limited understanding of the theoretical framework and limited use of subject-specific terminology.

Q.2 *Compare how audiences may interpret the representations of gender in the film poster for* Vampire Academy *and* Kiss of the Vampire. [30]

In your answer you must:

- *Consider the similarities and differences in how audiences may interpret gender representations.*
- *Make judgements and draw conclusions about how far audience interpretations of gender representations reflect historical 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.**

Candidates found this question one of the most challenging on the paper. This is an extended response question where candidates are assessed on the quality of their written response, including their ability to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, relevant, substantiated and logically structured. This question was answered well by some candidates who used the preparation that they had undertaken for the set product to aid them in the analysis of the unseen product.

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 in the two products but failed to consider the focus of the question, which was how audiences may interpret those representations. Similarly, there were candidates who had a complex and detailed understanding of the social and historical context of the 1960s but did not use this understanding to make judgments and draw conclusions about how far audience interpretations of gender representations reflect those contexts, as required by the question.

The more successful responses were able to discuss audience interpretations of representations of gender using Stuart Hall and feminist theorists such as Van Zoonen to explore the complexities and contradictions in the products, as well as relate them to the historical context. Many had a good understanding of feminism in the '60s and the move from 'housewife' to sexualised female representations and were able to relate this to how audiences might interpret the film poster and reasons why; for example, due to the historical context and the way they were positioned by the text, along with hegemonic ideologies. The most successful responses made effective use of modal verbs - may, could, might. These responses made effective comparisons with the modern product, using it to highlight changes in the representation of gender roles and the complexity of the gender representations in this product for contemporary audiences.

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. The expectation is that all of 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 in relation to the specific focus of the question. It was essential for this response that candidates demonstrated effective essay writing skills and employed 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 how the choices made position audiences and affect interpretations. At the higher levels, the analysis was complex, referring to visual codes, layout and design, language and mode of address, and highlighting both similarities and differences. 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. Responses in the middle band focused on more straightforward or obvious aspects of representation related to, for example, colour, clothing and hair and tended to focus more on one product or only discussed the representation of women.

Less successful responses awarded marks in the lower bands did not address the focus of the question and the analysis was largely undeveloped. Here there was a tendency to simply describe the key features of the two products and reference to relevant contexts and audience interpretations was absent, or brief and undeveloped. At this level there was often limited comparison and responses instead discussed the two products separately.

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 of candidates who tried to include theories which were, at worst, irrelevant and, at best, 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 without developing the analysis further.

However, there were many responses in the higher bands that made perceptive comments about media contexts supported by specific, detailed exploration of examples from the products. These were able to effectively relate the context to the construction of representations and how this related to different audience interpretations. The reference to contexts in the middle range responses was more straightforward and undeveloped, with some responses downloading information about life in the 1960s and feminism without then applying this awareness of historical contexts to possible audience interpretations.

Section B: Understanding Media Industries and Audiences

Q.3 **(a)** *What is meant by conglomerate ownership?* [2]

AO1 a 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.

(b) *Name one media conglomerate.* [1]

AO1 a Demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical framework

This was answered accurately by most candidates, Disney and News Corps being the most popular choices. Some candidates incorrectly named individual products, for example *The Times.*

(c) *Explain the impact of economic contexts on the newspaper industry. Refer to the Daily Mirror to support your points* [10]

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

The most successful answers were able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of this specific aspect of the newspaper industry and apply this to the product. These responses were clearly aware of the structure of this question and were able to give a brief overview of economic contexts in relation to the newspaper industry referring to for example, production, distribution and/or ownership. This understanding was then applied specifically to the edition of the *Daily Mirror* they had studied in class to illustrate their understanding (it was not appropriate to refer to the Section A set product here). These more detailed responses understood the importance of profit for a newspaper and the need to diversify. There was good understanding of Reach and their ownership of regional newspapers and linked this to Curran and Seaton/Hesmondhalgh. Some were able to include details such as subscription elements of the online newspaper (dating and betting) and the ability to attract advertisers. These responses were also able to demonstrate their understanding through employing the language of the topic, including reference to conglomerates, diversification, vertical and horizontal integration.

Some less successful responses did not refer to the newspaper industry in general but confined their discussion to the set product. Some weaker responses discussed the economic context of the country without reference to the industry, or of the specific reader of the *Daily Mirror,* focusing on the simple point of working class readers having less money. These responses tended to focus on stereotypes of *Daily Mirror* readers.

(d) *Explain the importance of digital convergence in the newspaper industry. Refer to The Times to support your points.* [12]

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

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. For example, the links between digital convergence, economic contexts and audience consumption.

This question was answered very well by a number of candidates who understood the industry focus and could also demonstrate their knowledge of digital convergence.

However, it was of some concern how many candidates appeared not to understand this term, a key element in any study of the newspaper industry, and consequently struggled to answer this question.

The set newspaper product had clearly been well taught by many centres, with candidates demonstrating their ability to place this product within its industry context. Some candidates, however, downloaded irrelevant information, for example a historical overview of *The Times* which did not contribute to their response in a meaningful way.

As with 3(c), the expectation is that candidates will address the first part of the question which refers to the newspaper industry, for example the changing media landscape, the significance of digital convergence in distribution and brand identity and appeal and its impact on audiences, and in particular consider **the importance of** digital convergence, before applying their knowledge and understanding to the set product.

This first step of the question, which required candidates to engage with the newspaper industry on a broader scale, was ignored by some candidates who focused solely on a textual analysis of *The Times*. Conversely, some candidates were able to use examples from the various digital platforms used by the newspaper effectively in order to explore how important digital convergence is to the product in the contemporary media landscape. Some candidates focused solely on the newspaper's website which created a less well developed response. More successful responses referred to a range of digital platforms including *Times Radio* and made relevant points about podcasts and apps and the way in which these support *The Times* brand and allow audiences different ways to access *The Times* content.

Some candidates discussed the need to attract a younger audience and how social media links encourage sharing of information and bring traffic back to the website, so illustrating their more developed understanding of digital convergence. There was a distinction between those who understood that this was an industry question and discussed the benefits of convergence for *The Times* as a business and those who interpreted it as an audience question and discussed the advantages for the audience.

Weaker responses were less developed and more limited; some candidates relied on stereotypical descriptions of *The Times* readers, focusing on wealth and age. This resulted in more superficial responses repeating references to the website having a paywall and linking this to the economic status of the readers. There was limited consideration of the fact that the paywall is a safeguard protecting valuable content.

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

Q.4 **(a)** *Explain how the advertising industry categorises audiences. Refer to the* WaterAid *advertisement you have studied to support your points.* [8]

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

The focus of this question was audience, and it was in two parts, requiring candidates to discuss how the advertising industry categorises audiences and to use examples from the set product to support their points.
More successful responses gave an introduction discussing the reasons why audience categories are important to enable producers of advertisements to effectively target their audience and what appeals to them and proceeded to offer a range of examples from the set product to support points made. These responses effectively discussed the ways in which audiences may be categorised and discussed for example, demographics, psychographics, audiences grouped according to when they were born and 'tribes'.

More straightforward responses tended to focus on one audience category and failed to discuss examples from the advertisement in any detail, for example people of a certain age who could remember the song *Sunshine on A Rainy Day* and felt nostalgia and so would donate money. These responses also tended to discuss the target audience, for example 'reformers', without really demonstrating any understanding of audience categories and their purpose.

Weaker responses were those that had limited or no understanding of audience categories in relation to the advertising industry and instead approached the question as a 'target' or 'appeal' question. Some responses attempted to categorise audiences into those who interpreted *Wateraid* in a preferred/negotiated/oppositional way, so misunderstanding the focus of the question.

(b) *Explain how media products attract audiences. Refer to the Wateraid advertisement you have studied to support your points.* [12]

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

This question was completed well by a majority of candidates and there was little evidence that they had run out of time in this final question. Similar to Q.4(a), this was in two parts, requiring candidates to explain how media products in general attract audiences and then to use examples from the set product to support their points. Some candidates were effectively able to discuss the importance of media products having a clear target audience and of establishing a brand identity to attract that audience. These stronger responses demonstrated their understanding of the meaning of 'attract', specifically in relation to the sub-genre of charity advertisements and how they differ from those created for consumable products, for example. The most successful responses then moved from a more general overview to the specifics of the set product and selected a range of examples to illustrate their points. Popular examples included the subversion of more typical conventions of charity advertisements, the personalisation of Claudia, the use of positive visual and technical codes drawing the audience in, and the 'feel-good factor' as a unique selling point.

These responses were also able to discuss how different elements in the advert might attract different audience groups for different reasons.

Responses in the middle bands were more straightforward and tended to move straight to the set product, focusing on one or two ways audiences may be attracted to the advertisement. There was a focus by some candidates solely on the song and its attraction for a specific age group which inevitably produced a more limited response.

Responses in the lower bands were brief and undeveloped and made only partial reference to the advertisement. These candidates often seemed to be answering a different question signified by the use of 'target' or 'appeal' in their response.

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 planning their response to Q.2.
- Question 2 requires comparison and an extended response which would be aided by planning and essay writing skills.
- 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.
- 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.
- Candidates must develop their use of subject-specific terminology and the language of analysis to enhance their responses.

EDUQAS MEDIA STUDIES

GCE A LEVEL

Summer 2022

COMPONENT 2: MEDIA FORMS AND PRODUCTS IN DEPTH

General Comments

Given the exceptionally difficult circumstances of the past two years and the particular challenges that the pandemic has presented, it was very encouraging to see how positively candidates responded to the demands of the paper. This is clearly the result of a great deal of hard work, dedication and commitment on the part of candidates, teachers and support staff alike.

The work that candidates produced generally showed a sound grasp of the theoretical framework of the subject. Candidates had clearly been well-taught and, on the whole, appeared to be well-prepared for the exam. The Advance Information seemed to have been well-used in most cases, enabling candidates to focus their revision on the relevant areas of the theoretical framework for each question.

Most candidates had a good knowledge of the set products studied and were able to refer to appropriate aspects of those products in their answers. However, while knowledge of the set products was generally good, where candidates were sometimes less successful was in tailoring their responses to the specific requirements of the question. In some cases, it appeared that candidates had prepared ready-made answers, anticipating a question on a certain aspect of the topic identified in the Advance Information, and were reluctant to change their approach or focus when faced with a question that required them to draw on a different set of skills or address a different aspect of that topic. For example, while the Advance Information for the English language television products in Section A specified that the question would be on 'audience', it seemed that many candidates were anticipating a question specifically on audience *targeting*, even though this is just one of many aspects of audience identified in the Specification, and proceeded to discuss how audiences were targeted by their set television product rather than using their set product to explain Jenkins' theory of fandom as the question required.

Another area that many candidates struggled with was the requirement to evaluate theory. This requirement was addressed in Section B of the 2022 Component 2 paper. It is worth emphasising that the ability to 'apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to evaluate academic theories' is a key assessment objective (AO2 2), and there will always be one question in Component 2 that addresses this particular AO. While candidates generally seem to be relatively confident in *applying* critical theories to their set products, it was noticeable that many appeared to be significantly less confident when required to either *explain* critical theories (as the question in Section A required) or *evaluate* them (as was required in Section B).

Having said this, it was pleasing to see many of the candidates engaging thoughtfully with their set products and with the theoretical framework of the subject. Considering the disruption that the pandemic has wrought not only on their education but also on their day-to-day lives, it is a real testament to their resilience and determination to succeed that candidates performed as well as they did in what is likely to be one of their first experiences of a major, formal exam.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A

Q.1(a), 2(a), 3(a)   Explain Henry Jenkins' theory of fandom. Refer to *Life on Mars*/*Humans*/*The Jinx* to support your response.

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

Although a fairly significant number of candidates appeared to have little or no knowledge of Jenkins' theory of fandom, most showed at least some familiarity with this theory. The idea that fans play an active role when engaging with media texts was referenced by many candidates, as was the idea that fans are part of a participatory culture. Various forms of fan activity were cited to illustrate these ideas. There was a lot of interesting material on fan fiction, fan art and cosplay, for example, as well as useful references to the sharing of fan theories and opinions in online communities.

The most successful responses tended to use these forms of fan activity as a vehicle through which to *explain* particular aspects of Jenkins' theory. For example, in the top bands, some candidates were able to explain Jenkins' notion of textual poaching by discussing the way in which fans had extended or modified the original narrative of the set product. Some candidates discussed the way in which fans of *Humans* created different endings for Mattie and Leo through fanfiction, for instance, while others discussed the way in which particular pieces of fan art and fanfiction challenged the operation of heteronormativity in *Life on Mars* by placing characters such as Gene Hunt and Sam Tyler in overtly romantic or sexual scenarios. A number of candidates writing about *The Jinx* also referred to the circulation of fan theories regarding Robert Durst's innocence or guilt on sites such as Reddit as a means of explaining Jenkins' claim that fans are part of a participatory culture that has a vital social dimension.

In the middle and lower bands, candidates tended to simply list various forms of fan activity rather than using these examples as a means of explaining particular aspects of Jenkins' theory. In some cases, candidates made little or no reference to Jenkins' theory, choosing to discuss how the set product was marketed or how it targeted audiences instead.

Q.1(b), 2(b), 3(b)   Explore how representations in the set episode of *The Bridge*/*The Returned*/*No Burqas Behind Bars* may position audiences.

AO2 1: Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to analyse products, including through the use of academic theories

This question was answered with varying degrees of success. The most successful responses showed a clear understanding of the way in which representations may be used to position audiences while less successful responses tended to discuss representations in the set product more generally, failing to address the issue of how audiences might be positioned by those representations. There was some very good material on how audiences might be aligned with particular characters or viewpoints through the representations in the set products. For example, many candidates made good points about the way in which the representations in *No Burqas Behind Bars* encouraged audiences to identify with the female prisoners in Takhar Prison as well as aligning them with western norms and values. Similarly, there was some useful discussion of how the representations in *The Bridge* might align the audience with more liberal or progressive values, while some candidates made interesting points about the way in which the programme could be seen to subvert the dynamics of the male gaze. There was also some interesting material on gender representation in *The Returned*, as candidates discussed the extent to which audiences were aligned with patriarchal understandings of gender roles. Many candidates also made good points about the way in which the representation of 'the returned' as 'other' could be read allegorically as a commentary on dominant cultural attitudes towards immigrants in French society. Some candidates argued that these representations positioned audiences to identify or empathise with the 'other', while some argued that they positioned audiences to fear the 'other', reinforcing their demonisation. Either argument here was valid and acceptable, provided that candidates were able to justify their response.

A number of candidates made useful and appropriate reference to preferred or dominant-hegemonic readings in explaining how audiences were positioned by the representations in the set products in particular ways. Slightly less successful were responses that moved from this into a discussion of negotiated or oppositional readings, as the focus here tended to be more on the positions that audiences *chose* to adopt in relation to the representations in the set products rather than on the way in which the representations themselves might position audiences.

Section B

Q.4, 5, 6 Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of semiotic approaches to magazine analysis. Refer to Roland Barthes' theory and the set editions of *Woman* and *Adbusters*, or *Woman's Realm* and *Huck*, or *Vogue* and *The Big Issue* in your response.

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

This was the question on the paper that candidates appeared to find most challenging, perhaps because it required them to evaluate rather than simply apply critical theory.

Consequently, rather than evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of semiotic approaches to magazine analysis, many candidates simply provided a textual analysis of their set magazine products instead. While some of these responses did at least show knowledge and understanding of semiotic theory (often implicitly) by drawing on relevant semiotic concepts, others showed little or no engagement with semiotic theory and ended up discussing the representations that the magazines offered without, for example, explaining how those representations were constructed through a process of signification or a system of signs.

Some candidates also appeared to have a rather narrow understanding of what semiotic theory is and what it involves. For example, many candidates discussed the particular codes identified by Barthes (the hermeneutic code, the proairetic code etc.). While this in itself was fine, where it became more problematic was when candidates started making statements suggesting, for instance, that semiotic approaches weren't useful for analysing magazines at all because their set magazines didn't feature an example of the proairetic code. While candidates are by no means limited to those aspects of the required theories set out in the Media Studies specification, it is often a good idea to at least use those aspects of the theories as a starting point (for example, helping candidates develop a basic understanding of the idea that semiotics is essentially concerned with the way in which meaning is produced through a process of signification), before looking at other aspects of the theories or, indeed, other related theories.

Another issue with many responses was that candidates tried to evaluate how effectively semiotics/signs/codes had been used by/within the magazines themselves rather than evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of semiotic approaches to magazine *analysis*. It is important that candidates understand that academic theories are analytical tools that are used to explain or make sense of media products and processes as well as the world around us, and that these tools may be perceived to have certain strengths and certain limitations. The most successful responses did show a clear understanding of this, and there was some very effective, and at times perceptive, evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of semiotic theory in the top bands.

Many candidates showed a good understanding of the way in which semiotic approaches could facilitate a better understanding of the processes of signification through which messages and meanings were constructed and communicated in the magazines studied. It was also good to see some candidates explaining how Barthes' concept of myth might help us understand the way in which certain constructed ideas or meanings in the set magazines had been made to seem self-evident through a process of naturalisation.

Candidates also made some very good points about the weaknesses of semiotic approaches to magazine analysis. Many made valid points about the limited usefulness of such approaches in terms of explaining the different ways in which signs might be interpreted by audiences or the impact of industry context on the messages and values conveyed in the magazines, for instance. Some candidates also offered instructive comparisons with other critical theories, such as Hall's reception theory or Levi-Strauss's theory of structuralism and binary oppositions, in order to highlight some of the perceived deficiencies or limitations in semiotic approaches to magazine analysis.

Section C

Q.7 & 8 How much influence do economic factors have on online media products? Refer to *PointlessBlog*/*Alfie Deyes* and *gal-dem*/*Zoella*/*Zoe Sugg* and the *Attitude* website in your response?

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

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

Again, this question was answered with varying degrees of success. The most successful responses tended to engage more explicitly with the 'how much …' part of the question, coming to a well-reasoned conclusion regarding the extent to which economic factors have an influence on online media products. Many candidates showed a good understanding of the way in which online content can be monetised through, for example, sponsorship, brand partnerships, YouTube's Partner Programme and the selling of advertising space. Responses in the higher bands tended to show a more detailed understanding of these economic factors and gave specific examples from the set products to support their points, whereas the discussion of economic factors in the middle and lower bands tended to be more generic.

It was pleasing to see a number of candidates making informed and appropriate use of relevant critical theories in this question. Many candidates made useful reference to Hesmondhalgh's theory of cultural industries and Curran and Seaton's theory of power and media industries for instance. Although some of these references tended to be undeveloped (e.g. arguing that Zoella was driven by the logic of profit and power without providing evidence to support this claim, or suggesting that the online products sought to minimise risk and maximise audiences without explaining how), many candidates were able to apply these theories to more meaningful effect.

While Curran and Seaton's claim that the media is dominated by a small number of companies driven by the logic of profit and power was discussed by a significant number of candidates, some also made very good points about the extent to which the Internet might support or illustrate their suggestion that more socially diverse patterns of ownership help to facilitate more varied and adventurous media productions. Similarly, some candidates made useful reference to Hesmondhalgh's suggestion that the Internet has been partially incorporated into a large, profit-orientated set of cultural industries, exploring the extent to which the set online products could be seen to support this claim. Many candidates also made pertinent points about the set products being driven more by social factors, such as a desire to raise awareness of social inequality in the case of *gal-dem*, or fostering a sense of cultural identity and belonging for LGBTQ audiences in the case of *Attitude*, rather than being motivated primarily or exclusively by economic imperatives.

The most successful responses tended to retain an analytical focus throughout, constructing a logical and well-substantiated argument, whereas less successful responses often lapsed more into personal opinion and simple value judgements. Many candidates made rather general and simplistic points about the branded advent calendar that Zoella promoted being 'over-priced' for example, without explaining how or to what extent this demonstrated the influence of economic factors on online products more specifically. More successful responses were able to draw on relevant concepts such as diversification and synergy in their discussion of economic factors.

Summary of key points

- Candidates would generally benefit from more practice at evaluating critical theories, considering their relative usefulness, validity or relevance, as well as identifying possible strengths and weaknesses.
- It's also vitally important that candidates answer the specific question that is asked directly and consistently throughout their response, selecting the information and subject knowledge that is most relevant to the question, and tailoring their answer accordingly.
- In order to ensure that the relevant assessment objectives are met, it would be useful for candidates to familiarise themselves with different types of question (e.g. questions that assess their knowledge and understanding of a particular aspect of the theoretical framework by asking them to *explain* something, questions that assess their ability to *evaluate* academic theories, questions that assess their knowledge and understanding of the influence of *contexts* of media, questions that require them to make judgements and draw conclusions, and questions that assess their ability to *analyse* or explore media products).
- The key aspects of the theoretical framework to be studied for each of the set products in Component 2, including relevant theories, can be found in the A Level Media Studies Specification. Centres and candidates are strongly advised to use this information to ensure that all relevant aspects of the specification are covered.

EDUQAS MEDIA STUDIES

GCE A LEVEL

Summer 2022

COMPONENT 3: CROSS-MEDIA PRODUCTION

General Comments

A very wide variety of approaches had clearly been taken to Component 3 and it was pleasing to see a diverse range of work across all of the set briefs. Some really excellent cross-media productions had been created, fully deserving of marks in Band 5; however, candidates across the achievement range were able to successfully meet the criteria for Assessment Objective 3.

It was encouraging to see that most candidates had completed full productions despite the restrictions of the last couple of years, testament to the hard work of candidates and centres. Relatively few centres submitted adapted forms of evidence. Where this was the case, they were scripts for podcasts or for the audio-visual element of the website. Where these were done successfully, they enabled candidates to effectively communicate their knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework in their chosen form. Many candidates approached these very well, with detailed mock-ups and relevant supporting evidence. In some cases, however, the adaptations had been misunderstood and the required pieces of evidence were not produced and/or excessive pages of supporting evidence were submitted which made moderation quite challenging.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Administration

Cover Sheets:
- Most centres used the new cover sheet for 2022 which includes GDPR details and, in addition for this year, information about the candidate's submission, highlighting the adapted work that may be included. A small but significant number of cover sheets had not been authenticated by the candidate and/ or teacher; this is a JCQ requirement. Electronic signatures are acceptable, but these should be full signatures rather than initials.
- Whilst most centres had monitored and signed off the work at each stage of the process, as required by the specification, there were several instances where the dates were the same for each stage, which is not appropriate. This section must be completed at three key stages through the production process and on completion of the production to ensure that work is continually monitored.
- Most centres included teacher comments as required in Section C; however, sometimes these consisted solely of descriptors from the marking grid. It is strongly recommended that teachers include examples from the individual candidate's work to explain the rationale for the marks awarded.

- Many candidates did not complete Section A fully: it is important that candidates complete the stages of production including as much detail as possible and it is vital that full references to any non-original material (such as music tracks for music videos) are included. Where appropriate, website addresses should be embedded in the relevant section of the cover sheet to ensure easy access for moderators. Handwritten addresses are not appropriate.

Most centres uploaded work in the appropriate file formats to Surpass. Some audio-visual productions were submitted as links to YouTube which is not one of the accepted methods; audio-visual production tasks should be uploaded to Surpass. A minority of candidates created productions in Publisher and PowerPoint which are not suitable forms. A list of acceptable forms is available in the specification. A small minority also uploaded research and planning work which is not assessed and should not be uploaded. Candidates should research similar products to those that they intend to produce, but this should be detailed in Section A of the cover sheet and discussed in the Statement of Aims.

Meeting the requirements of the specification

Some centres offered the full range of briefs, others offered a limited selection, or set one brief for all candidates. All of these approaches are acceptable; however, candidates must be allowed to select their own genre and develop an individual response to the brief. A small minority of centres took quite a uniform approach, for example where all candidates filmed in a college setting or included the same small group of peers in their productions. While the same performers might feature in different candidates' work, each assessed candidate must direct their performers to create their own, individual work. It is also recommended that candidates select their own locations, appropriate to their chosen genre. Most candidates submitted a statement of aims and created a cross-media production in response to the set brief for 2022. A very small minority of candidates created only one production task which limited the marks that could be awarded for the production to Band 1; this was not always applied by the assessor. Some produced more work than was required: only the specified amount of work detailed in the brief can be assessed. Some candidates wrote the Statement of Aims in the past tense; this must be completed before production work begins as a statement of intent, written in the future tense.

The set briefs are designed to allow candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework. When the requirements had been followed closely, candidates across the bands of the marking grid were able to demonstrate an appropriate response to the brief. In many cases, however, candidates did not adhere closely to all of the requirements of the brief.

Some candidates used non-original material beyond the acceptable limits set by Eduqas. The use of 'found' images, for example, in a magazine or on a website is not acceptable as it is a requirement of the specification that candidates create original material for Component 3. Any non-original material must be referenced on the cover sheet and teachers must take this into account in the marks awarded in column 2. A minority of candidates had used a significant proportion of non-original images in their work which had not been acknowledged or taken into account in the assessment. This is potential malpractice and an increased number of cases were investigated this year.

Some candidates referred to behaviour such as smoking and drug-taking or included images of weapons such as knives and guns in their productions that were not wholly appropriate. It is recommended that candidates research the relevant regulatory requirements and ensure that their work is appropriate to the industry and audience context specified in the brief.

They should also be mindful of the current social context and sensitivities to issues such as knife crime and drug taking; teachers are advised to guide candidates in relation to these issues to ensure that the work they produce is appropriate.

Adaptations

Where these were completed successfully, candidates used the templates provided by WJEC/Eduqas and produced the required amount, addressing the minimum requirements of the brief, for example a storyboard for a television sequence including a combination of sketches/photographs and annotations detailing an appropriate range of shot types, editing transitions and audio codes for the chosen genre, applying knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework. Media language was used to construct representations through for example a mock-up of a magazine cover including hand drawn images accompanied by annotations describing use of the colour palette, the mise-en-scène and the gesture, costume and mode of address of the models.

Where the adaptations were less successful, candidates had not used the templates provided or had not produced the required amount of material, for example for the Television brief, the requirement was a storyboard for four extracts from the sequence with 10 cells for each extract.

Assessment

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

When assessing the work, teachers should consider each of the bullet points in every column of the mark scheme and use the guidance on page 57 of the Specification to determine the marks awarded. Some candidates had been over-rewarded as one of the bullet points had been prioritised over the others; for example, if a candidate has completed all of the 'minimum requirements' for the brief but has not targeted the specified audience or reflected the industry context, then a mark in the higher bands for column 2 is unlikely to be appropriate.

Both cross-media productions are assessed together in both column 2 and column 3. At Band 5 it is expected that these are completed to an equal standard; if one product is better than the other, teachers should follow the guidance in the Specification and award marks accordingly. This was not always evident in the assessment and resulted in some over-rewarding. Other issues with column 2 related to the use of appropriate codes and conventions, particularly of layout and design in relation to magazines and film marketing products, which were often not used sufficiently to justify the marks awarded. Candidates were often over rewarded where media language was not used as purposefully as the marks suggested.

In column 3, candidates are assessed on their ability to use media language to communicate meanings and construct representations. The emphasis of AO3 is the application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework. Some teachers referred to technical skills or the 'professional' quality of the work; however, the focus should be on the use of appropriate conventions of, for example, the form and genre. Some candidates were over-rewarded; for example, marks were sometimes awarded in Band 5 when the control of connotations was not complex or sustained.

Candidates were often over-rewarded where media language was not used as purposefully as the marks suggested. This was particularly evident in relation to the construction of representations which were often underdeveloped, including repeated imagery, the use of images that did not appear to have been constructed specifically for the production and images of young people in school uniform or in casual clothing that did not construct characters appropriate to the genre. A substantial number of productions, particularly with regard to the magazine brief, failed to include images of people, limiting the opportunity to demonstrate the construction of purposeful representations.

Centres are reminded that, if a candidate produces only one of the cross-media production tasks, they cannot be awarded marks above Band 1 for the production. The Statement of Aims should be assessed according to the marking grid and can be awarded up to Band 5 if appropriate. However, marks cannot be awarded above Band 1 for realisation of the brief and use of media language (columns two and three of the marking grid). Some candidates had been over-rewarded, in some cases significantly so, where this rule had not been applied.

Candidates who had completed adaptations were frequently over-rewarded where they had, for example, used annotations or parts of the storyboard to analyse and evaluate their decisions rather than describing and exemplifying what was intended where it was not clear from the images/drawings. Analysis and evaluation is not assessed in AO3.

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

Administration

Cover Sheets:
- Most centres used the new cover sheet for 2022 which includes GDPR details and in addition for this year, information about the candidate's submission highlighting the adapted work that may be included. A small but significant number of cover sheets had not been authenticated by the candidate and/ or teacher; this is a JCQ requirement. Electronic signatures are acceptable, but these should be full signatures rather than initials.
- Whilst most centres had monitored and signed off the work at each stage of the process, as required by the specification. However, there were several instances where the dates were the same for each stage which is not appropriate. This section must be completed at three key stages through the production process and on completion of the production to ensure that work is continually monitored.
- Most centres included teacher comments as required in Section C, however sometimes these consisted solely of descriptors from the marking grid. It is strongly recommended that teachers include examples from individual candidates' work to explain the rationale for the marks awarded.
- Many candidates did not complete Section A fully: it is important that candidates complete the stages of production including as much detail as possible and it is vital that full references to any non-original material (such as music tracks for music videos) are included. Where appropriate, website addresses should be embedded in the relevant section of the cover sheet to ensure easy access for moderators. Handwritten addresses are not appropriate.

Most centres uploaded work in the appropriate file formats to Surpass. Some audio-visual productions were submitted as links to YouTube which is not one of the accepted methods; audio-visual production tasks should be uploaded to Surpass. A minority of candidates created productions in Publisher and PowerPoint which are not suitable forms.

A list of acceptable forms is available in the specification. A small minority also uploaded research and planning work which is not assessed and should not be uploaded. Candidates should research similar products to those that they intend to produce, but this should be detailed in Section A of the cover sheet and discussed in the Statement of Aims.

Meeting the requirements of the specification

Some centres offered the full range of briefs, others offered a limited selection, or set one brief for all candidates. All of these approaches are acceptable; however, candidates must be allowed to select their own genre and develop an individual response to the brief. A small minority of centres took quite a uniform approach, for example where all candidates filmed in a college setting or included the same small group of peers in their productions. While the same performers might feature in different candidates' work, each assessed candidate must direct their performers to create their own, individual work. It is also recommended that candidates select their own locations, appropriate to their chosen genre. Most candidates submitted a statement of aims and created a cross-media production in response to the set brief for 2022. A very small minority of candidates created only one production task which limited the marks that could be awarded for the production to Band 1, this was not always applied by the assessor. Some produced more work than was required: only the specified amount of work detailed in the brief can be assessed. Some candidates wrote the Statement of Aims in the past tense; this must be completed before production work begins as a statement of intent, written in the future tense.

The set briefs are designed to allow candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework. When the requirements had been followed closely, candidates across the bands of the marking grid were able to demonstrate an appropriate response to the brief. In many cases, however, candidates did not adhere closely to all of the requirements of the brief.

Some candidates used non-original material beyond the acceptable limits set by Eduqas. The use of 'found' images, for example, in a magazine or on a website is not acceptable as it is a requirement of the specification that candidates create original material for Component 3. Any non-original material must be referenced on the cover sheet and teachers must take this into account in the marks awarded in column 2. A minority of candidates had used a significant proportion of non-original images in their work which had not been acknowledged or taken into account in the assessment.

Some candidates referred to behaviour such as smoking and drug-taking or included images of weapons such as knives and guns in their productions that were not wholly appropriate. It is recommended that candidates research the relevant regulatory requirements and ensure that their work is appropriate to the industry and audience context specified in the brief. They should also be mindful of the current social context and sensitivities to issues such as knife crime and drug taking; teachers are advised to guide candidates in relation to these issues to ensure that the work they produce is appropriate.

Adaptations

Where these were completed successfully, candidates used the templates provided by WJEC/Eduqas and produced the required amount addressing the minimum requirements of the brief, for example a storyboard for a television sequence including a combination of sketches/photographs and annotations detailing an appropriate range of shot types, editing transitions and audio codes for the chosen genre applying knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework.

Media language was used to construct representations through for example a mock-up of a magazine cover including hand drawn images accompanied by annotations describing use of the colour palette, the mise-en-scène and the gesture, costume and mode of address of the models.

Where the adaptations were less successful candidates had not used the templates provided or had not produced the required amount of material, for example for the Television brief, the requirement was a storyboard for four extracts from the sequence with 10 cells for each extract.

Assessment

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

When assessing the work, teachers should consider each of the bullet points in every column of the mark scheme and use the guidance on page 57 of the Specification to determine the marks awarded. Some candidates had been over-rewarded as one of the bullet points had been prioritised over the others; for example, if a candidate has completed all of the 'minimum requirements' for the brief but has not targeted the specified audience or reflected the industry context, then a mark in the higher bands for column 2 is unlikely to be appropriate.

Both cross-media productions are assessed together in both column 2 and column 3. At Band 5 it is expected that these are completed to an equal standard; if one product is better than the other, teachers should follow the guidance in the Specification and award marks accordingly. This was not always evident in the assessment and resulted in some over-rewarding. Other issues with column 2 related to the use of appropriate codes and conventions, particularly of layout and design in relation to magazines and film marketing products, which were often not used sufficiently to justify the marks awarded. Candidates were often over rewarded where media language was not used as purposefully as the marks suggested.

In column 3, candidates are assessed on their ability to use media language to communicate meanings and construct representations. The emphasis of AO3 is the application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework. Some teachers referred to technical skills or the 'professional' quality of the work, however the focus should be on the use of appropriate conventions of, for example, the form and genre. Some candidates were over-rewarded; for example, marks were sometimes awarded in Band 5 when the control of connotations was not complex or sustained.

Candidates were often over-rewarded where media language was not used as purposefully as the marks suggested This was particularly evident in relation to the construction of representations which were often underdeveloped, this included repeated imagery, the use of images that did not appear to have been constructed specifically for the production and images of young people in school uniform or in casual clothing that did not construct characters appropriate to the genre. A substantial number of productions, particularly with regard to the magazine brief, failed to include images of people limiting the opportunity to demonstrate the construction of purposeful representations.

Centres are reminded that, if a candidate produces only one of the cross-media production tasks, they cannot be awarded marks above Band 1 for the production. The Statement of Aims should be assessed according to the marking grid and can be awarded up to Band 5 if appropriate.

However, marks cannot be awarded above Band 1 for realisation of the brief and use of media language (columns two and three of the marking grid). Some candidates had been over-rewarded, in some cases significantly so, where this rule had not been applied.

Candidates who had completed adaptations were frequently over-rewarded where they had, for example, used annotations or parts of the storyboard to analyse and evaluate their decisions rather than describing and exemplifying what was intended where it was not clear from the images/drawings. Analysis and evaluation is not assessed in AO3.

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

Statement of Aims and Intentions

The vast majority of candidates completed the Statement of Aims and Intentions. The most successful Statements discussed each area of the theoretical framework in relation to the cross-media production as a whole. Some candidates referenced the specific requirements of the brief very thoroughly in their Statements and this allowed them to demonstrate highly appropriate production plans. Many candidates referred to their research into similar existing products which enabled them to apply their understanding to purposeful plans for production.

Most candidates did demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework and the vast majority were able to discuss their plans for use of elements of media language to target the audience. However, many candidates tended to describe their plans, without explaining why and how they intended to use particular elements of media language. Some candidates did not discuss representations of social groups in detail; it is vital that this area is addressed in the Statement, as the construction of representations forms a significant part of the assessment of the cross-media production.

Industry was often discussed in limited detail, if at all. Some candidates simply stated that they would create a product for a specific media organisation without explaining how or why they would do this. Some candidates did clearly reflect the industry context in the plans for use of media language, by, for example, working in a genre that was suited to an independent or mainstream context or by focusing on relevant regulatory issues. Explicit reference to industry issues enables candidates to demonstrate understanding of this area of the framework.

Not all candidates discussed digital convergence and some made very little reference to the second task in the cross-media production, which inevitably limited their ability to explain their concept for interrelated products. Many candidates included reference to theoretical perspectives, which is absolutely appropriate; however, some tended to describe theories rather than consider how they would be relevant to their own plans.

Cross-Media Production Work

Meeting the requirements of the brief

Many candidates produced a very appropriate response to all aspects of the set brief, including the industry and audience specified, as well as the list of minimum requirements. However, a significant number of candidates did not meet the requirements of the brief, for example:

- The production did not reflect the specified industry context. This should be evident, not only in the production company logos placed on the work, but in the use of appropriate conventions. The choice of genre is often crucial here and candidates are strongly advised to research products from the required industry context to identify appropriate codes and conventions.
- The work did not reflect conventions of the form, for example, a television sequence or magazine feature article. It was often the case that the second production task did not adhere to conventions as fully as the main task; it is important that candidates pay close attention to both tasks.
- The target audience demographic was altered; for example, the work was for a narrower age range or, in some cases, a completely different audience. The target audience should be evident in the mode of address, as well as in the use of media language and representations to engage the appropriate group.
- The cross-media productions were not clearly interrelated. Some websites, for example, did not maintain the 'house style' of the print work.
- The work did not include all of the required elements. This ranged from more minor elements (such as a director's name on a DVD cover for Brief 3) to more significant issues, such as not creating the required number of characters, or thumbnails, or not including performance footage in a music video. These elements enable candidates to demonstrate their ability to use media language and construct representations and so it is important that they are included.

Some centres identified these issues and awarded marks accordingly; however, in many cases, candidates had been over-rewarded as the assessment did not reflect the fact that the brief requirements had not been met.

Use of Media Language

Most candidates did demonstrate ability to use media language to communicate some meanings. However, the productions did not always demonstrate a clear sense of construction or purposeful use of media language. For example, some appeared to feature pre-existing material, such as footage from a family holiday or photographs of a social occasion, which was not wholly appropriate. Candidates are strongly advised to create original material, specifically in response to the set brief, in order to meet the assessment objective.

Some candidates created few, if any, images of people in their work, which inevitably limited their ability to construct purposeful representations. This was most notable in some responses to Brief 2, Magazines, and Brief 3, Film Marketing. The construction of representations of social groups is one of the key ways in which candidates should apply their understanding of the theoretical framework and some candidates had been assessed generously if their work did not include images of people.

Audio-visual productions: many candidates filmed footage on a mobile phone, which is perfectly acceptable. However, the work should be filmed in the appropriate format; it is not generally conventional for television sequences or music videos to be filmed in 'portrait' format, or to switch between portrait and landscape format, as was the case in a minority of candidates' work.

It was pleasing to see that many candidates demonstrated an awareness of contemporary social and cultural contexts. There was a genuine understanding of diversity in the representations of gender, age and/or ethnicity in many candidates' work.

Some candidates referred to issues such as mental health or current topics of debate such as sustainability, usually in a highly appropriate and sensitive manner, communicating ideological perspectives as required in the higher bands.

Cross-media production Task 2: General Points. Please see sections below for further details in relation to each brief.

It is important that candidates research appropriate products and plan the production for Task 2 as carefully as Task 1. Candidates are also advised to research examples of convergence and cross-media promotion in order to create interrelated products.

Websites. There was evidence of more websites for Task 2 than in 2019, and many of these were very good – some candidates paid very close attention to detail and considered consistent branding with the print work. It was noticeable that many candidates produced appropriate audio-visual work for the website, considering elements such as the mise-en-scène and use of sound, and constructing an appropriate mode of address.

However, some websites were under-developed and did not always include the required number of images, written copy or audio-visual work stipulated in the brief. Some candidates did not create purposeful content that was fully appropriate to the website and failed to make clear links with the products created for Task 1. Some candidates did not produce the appropriate pages, for example a 'News' page for the Film Marketing brief.

Audio extracts. Where the podcast option is chosen it is important that the requirements of the brief are adhered to, for example a documentary sequence or a film featurette. Many candidates created engaging audio content but did not include the conventions of an audio sequence, such as music or recording in different locations. The very best examples adopted an excellent mode of address from the presenter and participants and used appropriate language codes to clearly promote the magazine or film to the intended audience. However, others featured only the voice of the film director or magazine editor who were obviously reading from a script; these were much less engaging.

Audio-visual extracts. Some candidates created an appropriate studio setting in, for example, a drama studio space where they had constructed an appropriate mise-en-scène and consideration had been given to costume and mode of address. However, some had given less thought to an appropriate location and were filmed in a living room or office space with participants in school uniform that did not always allow candidates to demonstrate appropriate use of media language in terms of the mise-en-scène. Some sequences featured a very limited range of shots and angles and lacked a second location, which was less engaging for the audience.

Print. A range of print work was produced. Some were highly appropriate, adhering closely to conventions of the form and successfully promoting the television programme or music artist. However, the design and layout of many magazine covers and articles was not clearly conventional, this was particularly the case for double page spreads. Some magazine covers did not feature images or cover lines that directly referenced the audio-visual production and did not conform to the industry context or target the specified audience.

Brief 1: Television

A cross-media production for a new television programme in a factual or fictional genre (or sub-genre/hybrid) of your choice.

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

You should create a cross-media production for a programme to be broadcast on a Public Service channel, either E4 or BBC3, targeting a specialised audience of 16-25 year olds with a particular interest in your chosen genre.

Television was the least popular brief, although a significant number of candidates did respond to this option. Most candidates who completed this brief created an appropriate product for E4 or BBC3; however some candidates had created work that might have been better suited to more mainstream channels targeting an older demographic. Most worked within fictional genres, crime drama being the most popular, and many did clearly adhere to recognisable genre codes and character types. A small number completed non-fictional work in, for example, the reality or documentary genres, often very successfully.

The best responses constructed genre and narrative effectively; however not all clearly included the conventions of an opening sequence, with some productions appearing to construct a whole narrative. A significant number of candidates did not include the required three characters or participants: not only did this impact on the realisation of the brief, it also limited candidates' ability to construct representations. Candidates are not assessed on technical ability; however, sound is a key convention of the television form and so diegetic and non-diegetic sound appropriate to the chosen genre should be included.
There were some examples of excellent work, where candidates purposefully communicated meanings though elements of media language such as locations, visual signifiers, selection of camera shots and angles, editing and sound. Some candidates were very successful in constructing a narrative enigma conventional of an opening sequence in the chosen genre.

Task 2

Print option
The best DVD covers and posters demonstrated very clear links to the audio-visual sequence by, for example, featuring an actor from the programme on the front and clearly establishing the genre through detailed consideration of the blurb, thumbnails and visual signifiers, for example font style and colour palette. Some candidates used the same/similar images across the DVD and poster, which was not appropriate, and failed to construct representations, where objects featured and locations were used which did not feature people.

Online option
Most candidates created an appropriate website and the best examples of these included images of, for example, the actors or locations and further information to promote the programme. Some candidates used the 'Profiles' page to effectively establish the genre, narrative and the role of the characters within this. Some candidates had clearly given specific direction to the 'actors' regarding gesture and expression codes, whereas others included images that were less successful in constructing believable characters/participants. Audio-visual content took the form of 'on location with…. or 'meet the cast'; the best examples of these were engaging and used the opportunity to construct appropriate representations through visual codes and mode of address.

Brief 2: Magazines
A cross-media production for a new magazine in a specific genre (or sub-genre) of your choice.

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

*You should create a cross-media production for **an independent publishing organisation** (such as Anthem Publishing, TCO London or Pride Media) targeting a **specialised audience of 16-25 year olds** with a particular interest in your chosen genre.*

This was a very popular brief and candidates responded in a variety of ways and produced work across the range of mark bands.

The brief required candidates to create a magazine from an independent publishing organisation and many candidates produced very well realised magazines conforming to the industry context and the specified target audience, for example fashion, music and sport magazines with a more specialised focus, for example sustainability in fashion. It was clear that these candidates had researched the magazine publishers given as examples and their brands and understood the concept of an independent publisher. Some created excellent feature articles exploring related topics, such as racism in sport or profiling an eco-aware fashion designer.

However, a significant number of candidates created very niche publications which were so specialised they would struggle to be commercially viable. These did not meet the requirements of the brief and were not suitable for an independent publishing organisation or the young audience and in some cases resembled in-house trade or business magazines; candidates had often been over-rewarded as a result. In some cases, the choice of magazine sub-genre for example pets, cars, baking or travel meant that not many images of people were included, which limited candidates' ability to construct representations of social groups. Some candidates chose sub-genres that were not appropriate for the younger target audience range and this was reinforced by the inclusion of older people on the front cover and double page spread, for example walking, country music and certain hobbies.

Some candidates needed to apply conventions of print magazines much more fully in terms of the design and layout of covers and feature articles. Some double page spreads were not laid out in columns or did not combine images and text in a generic manner, while many candidates did not include elements such as a standfirst or pull-quotes as required.

The very best magazines responded fully to the brief, adopting an appropriate mode of address and creating content to engage the 16-25 audience. There was evidence of sustained use of media language to construct insightful, appropriate representations through for example costume, gesture, expression and mode of address. The more successful candidates also took all opportunities to construct representations, for example in cover lines and sub-headings. Some excellent feature articles were seen, for example interviews with successful music artists and young environmentalists that constructed highly appropriate representations.

Some candidates did not create a full 400 word feature article but created, for example, a list of travel or beauty tips. This limited their ability to use media language purposefully, and to construct representations or points of view. Many candidates did not create the required number of images across the print work, missing opportunities to construct representations, or used the same model (often dressed the same way) in every image across both productions; this is not generic and does not demonstrate purposeful use of media language.

Task 2

Online option
Magazine websites did not always reflect the branding of the print magazine. Some online products appeared to be less obviously a promotional vehicle for the magazine and were more general sites, focused on, for example, fashion or travel. The best examples maintained the house style of the print work, featuring the masthead and other design elements from the magazine, and adopting a similar mode of address. Some highly effective online articles reflected the ideologies in the print work; however, many websites did not include an article as required and the appearance of the website pages did not reflect the independent aesthetic. Audio-visual footage varied enormously but was most successful when it clearly related to the magazine content, for example an online tutorial about recycling clothes to accompany an article about sustainability in fashion. There were some excellent examples of the 'quickfire interview' which really captured the essence of the magazine and its ethos. Some material lacked a clear purpose; for example, make-up demonstrations that were not clearly linked to the magazine content.

Audio-visual/Audio option
Some highly engaging YouTube sequences and podcasts were created that communicated the brand values of the magazine and engaged the target audience through mode of address and subject content. Some candidates produced short documentaries related to issues covered in the magazine, for example racism/sexism in sport or focused on the front cover artist and their struggles in a music magazine, which were very effective. However, some productions were less engaging and featured a conversation between presenter and editor in a single location with little variation. This did not fully reflect the conventions of the form.

Brief 3: Film Marketing

A cross-media production to market and promote a new film in a genre (or sub-genre/hybrid) of your choice.

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

*You should create a cross-media production for a studio that is owned by a major film company (such as Warner Bros. or Sony Pictures) targeting a **mainstream global audience of 16-25 year-olds.***
*The cross-media production must **not** include a complete short film, film sequence or trailer.*

This was a very popular brief and candidates responded with varying degrees of success across the mark bands. Candidates are advised to research examples of film marketing campaigns from the relevant industry context to identify the conventions of this form; many discussed the genre and narrative of the film in the Statement of Aims, with less focus on how they would construct these elements in the marketing materials.

The best work responded to the mainstream nature of the brief and targeted an audience in the 16-25 year old demographic. Many candidates achieved this through the selection of genre for example, action, horror, romantic comedy or crime. It was evident that the study of *Black Panther* in Component 1 had informed some candidates' work. Many effectively used their understanding of media language and constructed characters through elements such as dress and gesture codes that might engage the younger demographic. Some candidates had given less thought to how representations may be constructed and their 'actors' frequently appeared in school uniform, sometimes still wearing their lanyards and in settings not appropriate to a mainstream industry context.

It was encouraging, however, to see how many candidates capitalised on the local settings that were at their disposal, constructing settings appropriate to their chosen sub-genre.

Some candidates, however, worked in more specialised genres and used conventions and narratives more suited to an independent film company. There was also a trend for candidates to create work that appeared to target an older audience demographic; this was particularly the case for the horror genre where in some cases the 18 certificate appeared on the marketing materials and the images used were not appropriate for the younger target audience.

Centres are reminded of the need to respond fully to the brief and are advised to read the accompanying notes for guidance, which give further advice regarding suitable genres and possible research sources to allow candidates to successfully realise the set brief. Several candidates failed to adhere to all the requirements of the brief and the finer details including release dates and the names of the director and actors were frequently missing from work.

Many candidates successfully constructed posters for release in different countries, considering the different conventions that might need to be applied in an international context. Some produced two posters in the English language (e.g. one for release in the UK and another in the USA), while others produced one poster in a different language; either was acceptable as long as there was a clear global focus. However, a significant number of candidates did not appear to have produced posters that were obviously for release in different countries.

Some candidates struggled to apply a consistent house style across the print work; sometimes each artefact looked very different and did not form a coherent marketing campaign. Conversely, some candidates created print pieces that were too similar, using virtually identical images on each piece of work which limited their ability to demonstrate purposeful and complex use of media language. DVD covers in particular produced a range of responses: some were highly effective and communicated complex meanings. However, some did not use typical conventions of layout and design and had not considered the importance of details such as font style and colour palette in constructing visual signifiers of the chosen genre. Thumbnails were not always clearly purposeful in communicating narratives or representations, and the blurbs were often extremely short and did not construct a clear mode of address or construct a narrative. Some candidates submitted DVD covers as three separate pages – back, front and spine – which is not appropriate.

A significant number of candidates included very few images of people across the products in the campaign and consequently had often been over rewarded in column 3. Many candidates working in the horror genre also made use of masked or silhouetted characters, which did not always allow them to demonstrate construction of representations of social groups as fully as they might.

Task 2

Online option

Some candidates created highly engaging websites that maintained the house style of the print work and gave the audience additional insight into the film through further details and images of the locations and characters. However, many websites were under-developed and did not include an 'About the Film' or 'News' page, or different imagery from the print campaign. Most audio-visual material featured an interview with the production designer or a news item, sometimes in an appropriate location or studio.

The most successful of these were edited carefully and discussed areas of the production process, for example the choice of locations appropriate to the genre or information about the upcoming release of the film.

Audio-visual/Audio option.
The audio option was more popular than the YouTube sequence and there were some excellent productions that adopted an appropriate mode of address for the younger audience demographic, for example by casting a presenter and actors from the same age group. Some audio productions in particular made excellent use of different types of sound, for example effects to suggest that the programme was being recorded at the premiere of the film.
A small minority of candidates included film sequences or trailers in their audio-visual product or as the audio-visual content on the website. This is not permitted and cannot be credited for assessment. Some candidates had been over-rewarded as a result of this.

Brief 4: Music marketing

A cross-media production for a new artist or band in an appropriate genre for the target audience and industry context (or sub-genre/hybrid) of your choice.

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

*You should create a cross-media production for a **major record label** (such as Atlantic Records or Capitol Records) targeting a **wide, mainstream audience of 16-25 year olds.***

This was a popular brief and a very wide range of genres had been selected, some of which were more appropriate than others. The brief specified a mainstream industry context and many candidates had researched appropriate record labels, analysing the conventions of their artists' music videos and selecting a track by an artist for whom they created an original persona. Some candidates indicated in their Statement of Aims that they had researched artists from the indie genre which did not help to develop their awareness of conventions of mainstream music videos. Similarly, while it was not essential for candidates to choose a song by an artist signed to a mainstream label, generally candidates did benefit from this. Some candidates created videos for songs by more independent music artists, which did not always enable them to use appropriate conventions for the mainstream industry context.

The vast majority of candidates did include conventions of the music video form which were clearly influenced by research into appropriate existing examples, combining performance footage and an element of narrative as required. There were some excellent examples of music videos that successfully constructed the identity of the artist or band, and communicated meanings and controlled connotations in a highly complex manner.

However, a significant minority did not include any performance (such as lip-synching or playing instruments) which often limited their ability to establish the persona of the artist. Conversely, some featured only performance which made it difficult for candidates to create an effective narrative.

Some candidates did not apply music video conventions as successfully; editing, for example, was often very slow and videos were not always cut to the beat. Some videos lacked a clear sense of purpose, featuring a montage of shots that did not communicate meanings as successfully as the marks suggested. It is vital that candidates analyse examples of music videos in their chosen genre and apply appropriate conventions. They should also use their study of the set products to influence their decisions.

Task 2

Print option
The requirement for a front cover and double page spread for a new mainstream magazine was met by most candidates who effectively demonstrated the ability to use the print form to promote their artist and engage the target demographic through appropriate visual and language codes. These candidates had clearly given direction to their artists in terms of clothing, expression and gesture. The persona of the artists was then further explored in some excellent double page feature articles where images and text combined to construct insightful, appropriate representations. Candidates frequently adopted an appropriate mode of address, especially in the interview with the artist.

Some candidates, however, created a more specialised, niche music magazine that did not fully meet the requirements or target the younger demographic. Other candidates replicated images or used stills from the music video which was not appropriate. Most candidates included images of people but there were some examples where instruments were used as the front cover image or in the double page spread which made it difficult to construct purposeful representations.

Online option
The music websites varied considerably; the very best examples successfully constructed an identity for the candidate's original artist, extending the brand identity from the video through the choice of media language. The design and layout of the site often reflected the music genre, coupled with the selection of colour palettes and font to communicate meanings. The embedded audio-visual material often took the form of an interview with the artist or band or the music video director, sometimes in an appropriate location such as a studio. The newsletter or blog sometimes featured Instagram style posts with appropriate images, which successfully promoted the artist and their work. However, some websites were not so well developed and lacked a range of images (sometimes using only stills from the music video) or written text to engage the audience.

Summary of key points

It is important to adhere to the brief: the industry and audience specified, as well as the minimum requirements. Industry context should be reflected in the use of media language, including the selection of an appropriate genre, not simply through the inclusion of a company logo.

Research is important: candidates should research similar products to those that they intend to produce, from a similar industry context and targeting a similar audience to that specified in the brief. Particular attention should also be paid to the codes and conventions of all elements of the products to be produced. Candidates should analyse both types of product, as well as examples of convergence, to identify appropriate conventions to apply to their own work.

The Statement of Aims and Intentions is an opportunity for candidates to explain how they will respond to the requirements of the brief and apply their knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework to the cross-media production. They should discuss each area of the framework as outlined in Section B of the cover sheet and consider both production tasks, explaining how these will be linked.

It is recommended that candidates use examples from their research to support their plans. Where theories and theoretical perspectives are discussed, they should be relevant and applied to the products.

Apply the theoretical framework: candidates should consider the meanings that they intend to communicate; for example, the messages and points of view in their work. Use of media language should demonstrate control of connotations, moving beyond a literal approach. It is also vital that candidates construct representations of social groups; they should create images or footage of people in their productions and construct purposeful representations (of, for example, ethnicity or gender) through their choice of visual, technical and language codes.