



GCE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**EDUQAS MEDIA STUDIES
GCE A Level**

SUMMER 2023

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EDUQAS MEDIA STUDIES

GCE

Summer 2023

COMPONENT 1 : MEDIA PRODUCTS, INDUSTRIES AND AUDIENCES

General Comments

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

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

Comments on individual questions/sections

Question 1 0

Explore how this advertisement uses media language to communicate meaning [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 advertisement for Dolce & Gabbana. 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 advertisements. The focus was media language and this was included in the question this year to help to focus candidates' responses. However, it was of some concern that there were several candidates who approached this question as a representation question focusing their response predominantly on the representation of gender and age in the advertisement and how representations and more common stereotypes had been subverted. Whilst this approach may be relevant where it contributes to an analysis of how media language communicates meanings, this should not form the focus of the response. In addition, theories of representation less relevant to this question were also included instead of those related to elements of media language, for example semiotics. To prepare for the unseen product it is essential that candidates are given practice in applying their understanding of all elements of media language including visual, technical and audio codes 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 candidates 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 demonstrating limited understanding of how media language constructs meaning. 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 a narrative without linking these to the construction process through 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 discussed specific examples of the use of media language and applied appropriate theories and theoretical perspectives to support their points including Barthes and Levi Strauss, with some candidates demonstrating an excellent understanding of semiotics and structuralism, in particular binary oppositions. Better responses were able to discuss advertising as a form and the generic codes using media language to support their points. These more successful responses used their understanding of the theoretical framework to address how media language 'communicates meanings.' The discussion of audio codes understanding and employing the correct terminology, for example diegetic/non diegetic proved problematic for some candidates.

The expectation was that aspects of media language and how they work together to communicate meaning would be discussed, including:

- the construction of meaning through binary opposition, for example black and white and colour filming; formal and informal, rural and city, tranquillity and noise
- visual codes
- technical and audio codes
- setting and iconography
- narrative.

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

Candidates in the middle of the mark range often recognised the connotations of the visual elements, but failed to then explore them in any detail. They produced a reasonable and straightforward analysis of the advertisement with a generally accurate application of their knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework but tended not to cover a broad range of points or develop a response to the 'how' element of the question. Several candidates failed to discuss the fact that the product was an advertisement and did not explore the establishing of a brand identity, missing the opportunity to use the work they had done in class in their preparation of similar products. As the unseen resource is always taken from one of the forms studied for Section A, the expectation is that candidates will be able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework in relation to the selected form. These more straightforward responses were often guilty of over-reading, interpreting the product in ways that the advertisement 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 exploration of religious belief or a discourse on the subjugation of women.

Candidates awarded marks in the lower bands tended to produce a more descriptive response, telling the story of the advertisement 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 were less confident in supporting points made with specific examples from the advertisement, instead adopting a superficial, generalised approach which demonstrated often only a basic understanding of the theoretical framework and little use of subject-specific terminology.

Question 2 0

Compare how representations in the film poster and the set music video convey values and beliefs. [30]

In your answer you must:

- consider the similarities and differences in how representations convey values and beliefs
- consider how stereotypes are challenged or reinforced
- make judgements and draw conclusions about how far representations reflect social and cultural contexts.

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

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

Despite this question being one of the most challenging on the paper, it was generally well answered with some very detailed knowledge and understanding of the two products and their forms. Question 2 0 is an extended response question where candidates are assessed on the quality of their written response, including their ability to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, relevant, substantiated and logically structured. This question was answered well by candidates who used the preparation that they had undertaken for the set products to aid them in the analysis of the unseen product.

There were some excellent, perceptive responses to this question and the choice of the unseen film poster for *All Day and a Night* successfully enabled candidates to explore the ways in which the set and unseen products conveyed values and beliefs through the construction of representations. The more successful responses were able to discuss representation in relation to social and cultural contexts using Stuart Hall and theorists such as Van Zoonen, bell hooks and Gilroy to explore the complexities and contradictions in the products as well as relate them to their contexts. These candidates engaged equally with the unseen film poster and the set music video, offering insightful judgements and conclusions fully supported by detailed examples. These responses also demonstrated excellent skills in comparison which is the focus of assessment in this question and produced well-structured answers consistently employing relevant terminology. The most successful responses made effective use of modal verbs - may, could, might. These responses made effective comparisons using these to highlight the complexities in the representations of ethnicity, issues and gender in the two products.

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

In this response the bullet points were included in order to help candidates to structure their answer and to guide them in what to include. The expectation is that all the bullet points are covered, but not necessarily in the same amount of detail. Better responses were able to do this and to address the focus of the question analysing both products and making relevant comparisons in relation to the specific focus of the question. Candidates attaining marks in the higher bands effectively applied their knowledge of the theoretical framework and in particular, representation. At the higher levels, the analysis and comparison of the two products was complex, referring in detail to how individuals and social groups were represented through visual codes, layout and design, language and mode of address and highlighting both similarities and differences. For example, better answers discussed the antebellum dresses and reclaiming history in *Formation* and referred to possible readings of Beyonce's costumes as sexualised/objectified but also acknowledging power and confidence, a few applying post feminism. This was compared with the film poster and the more nuanced, less obvious readings around costume, character roles and links to the writer of *Black Panther*. With *Dream* there were some good points made referencing post colonialism and power. These candidates were also able to make judgements and draw conclusions in relation to how the products reflect their social and cultural contexts, selecting detailed, specific examples to support their points very effectively. To be placed in the higher bands, it was essential to compare the two products.

Some candidates, however, failed to structure their response around the bullet points and as a result produced more straightforward comparisons of the two products that failed to address the key focus of the question. Responses in the middle bands focused on more straightforward or obvious aspects of representation related to, for example, clothing (the hoodie) and tended to focus more on one product or only discussed the representation of women. There are a range of ways in which candidates can demonstrate their ability to compare products, however some candidates, whilst offering a detailed and separate analysis of each product, failed to make any comparisons and this had an obvious impact on their mark as comparison is a key descriptor for this question. Incorporating the language of comparison helped candidates to focus on this element of the assessment.

Less successful responses awarded marks in the lower bands did not address the focus of the question and the analysis was largely undeveloped. Here there was a tendency to simply describe the key features of the two products or to focus on basic similarities such as sitting on a car, direct mode of address and black cast. Reference to relevant contexts and how the representations in the film poster and the music video conveyed values and was absent, or brief and undeveloped.

Regarding the use of theory, it is important that the theory/theoretical perspective chosen is valid, relevant and can be used to support the points the candidate wishes to make about the products. There were several examples of candidates who tried to include theories which were often irrelevant or not applied appropriately. For example, many candidates referred to feminist theories and the 'male gaze' without demonstrating a clear understanding or using the theories to support their analysis. Less successful responses suggested that the products used the theory rather than the theory being a way to explore the product. More straightforward responses simply named the theory or theorist without developing the analysis further.

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

There was some rubric infringement which, unfortunately, had an effect on the mark that could be awarded for the response. For example, candidates who compared the music video with the Dolce & Gabbana advertisement set for Q1 0 or who compared the film poster with the Q1 0 advertisement. It is essential that candidates read the instructions on the examination paper carefully before embarking upon their response.

Section B: Understanding Media Industries and Audiences

Question 3

3 1 Briefly explain what is meant by distribution in the video games industry [2]

AO1 1a: Demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical framework

Most candidates were able to answer this correctly but in varied degrees of detail. In order to attain 2 marks, there needed to be an accurate explanation which included detail and/or exemplification. A more basic, undeveloped response or one that contained inaccuracies was awarded 1 mark.

3 2 Explain the impact of digital technologies on video games. Refer to the *Assassin's Creed* game you have studied to support your points [8]

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

In preparation for a question on the video game industry, candidates should have knowledge and understanding of the *Assassin's Creed* franchise in terms of the relevant video games industry issues it illustrates. One game should have been studied in detail and candidates are required to consider one extract from the chosen game. Some responses confused the franchise with a specific game and so lacked the required detail.

The most successful answers were able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of this specific aspect of the video games industry and apply this to the game they had studied in the *Assassin's Creed* franchise. These responses were clearly aware of the structure of this question and were able to give a brief overview of the impact of digital technologies in relation to the video games industry generally, referring to for example, accessibility, distribution and the enhanced gaming experience. This was then applied specifically to the game they had studied to further illustrate their understanding. These more detailed responses understood the importance of digital technology in reinforcing brand identity, targeting audiences and circulating products. These responses were also enhanced by reference to relevant theories/theoretical perspectives, for example Hesmondhalgh/Curran and Seaton.

Candidates awarded marks in the higher bands were also able to demonstrate their understanding through employing subject specific terminology including for example, reference to synergy, convergence and compatibility. The more successful responses covered a range of points related to the positive and negative impact of digital technologies for example, accessibility to fan communities, broader distribution across diverse digital platforms, backward capability, cross-generational gaming and the issues related to regulation, whereas more straightforward responses tended to concentrate on one point, for example availability of the game across different platforms. Some responses were too focused on audience and how new technologies had enhanced user's experience or on technical aspects of the game, for example graphics.

The more basic responses did not refer to the video games industry in general but confined their less well developed discussion to the set product, others did not explore a specific video game from the franchise adopting a more general discussion. Some responses awarded marks in the lower band tended to describe the features of the game studied and had limited understanding of the focus of the question.

3 3 Explain how video games producers maintain global audiences. Refer to the *Assassin's Creed* game you have studied to support your points. [15]

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 maintaining global audiences, economic contexts and audience targeting and consumption.

This question was answered very well by a number of candidates who understood the industry focus and could also demonstrate their knowledge of global audiences. However, it was of some concern how many candidates appeared not to understand the focus of the question and confined their responses to a discussion of the general appeal of the game to audiences. Where candidates referred to the example of the video game this had clearly been well taught by many centres with candidates demonstrating their ability to place this product within its industry context demonstrating understanding of the role of Ubisoft as a global company.

As with Question 3 2, the expectation is that candidates will address the first part of the question which refers to the video game industry, for example the competitive nature of the gaming industry, the significance of distribution, brand identity and franchises to the maintaining of global audiences in a competitive marketplace, before applying their knowledge and understanding to the set product.

This first step of the question, which required candidates to engage with the video game industry on a broader scale, was ignored by some candidates who focused solely on a textual analysis of the chosen *Assassin's Creed* game. Conversely, some engaged in a general discussion of the franchise referring to several games in limited detail. Other candidates failed to relate their game to the question focus of global audiences. Where this was done well, candidates awarded marks in the higher band referred to a range of points including the global marketing of the game including multi-national events, the universality of themes, downloadable content and synergy with manufacturers of consoles, the introduction of more diverse characters and the importance of global fan communities and their sense of involvement in the games' development.

Some candidates limited their ability to gain marks by focusing on one point, for example the introduction of female, mixed-race characters, which created a less well developed response. There was a distinction between those who understood that this was an industry question and discussed the role of the games' producers in maintaining global audiences and those who did not engage with the 'global' element of the question.

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 video game industry and the set product in particular.

Question 4

- 4 1 Explain how radio programmes appeal to specific audiences. Refer to *Late Night Woman's Hour* to support your points. [12]

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

In preparation for a question on the radio industry, candidates should have considered extracts from at least two podcasts of *Late Night Woman's Hour* to enable them to support their understanding of the industry.

The focus of this question was audience and it was in two parts, requiring candidates to discuss how radio programmes in particular appeal to specific audiences and then to use examples from the set product to support their points. More successful responses gave an introduction discussing how radio stations and Radio 4 appeal to specific and at times niche audiences and then proceeded to offer a range of examples from the set product to support points made. These responses effectively discussed the ways in which *Late Night Woman's Hour* appeals to a specific audience, clearly defining who they perceived that audience to be discussing for example, demographics, psychographics, audiences grouping and tribes. These responses covered a range of points supported by specific examples from their chosen podcasts including themes and topics, choice of presenters, guests and changes to the programme's format and distribution. It was clear from the response when candidates had studied specific podcasts and were aware of the development of the programme from radio to podcast on Sounds and how this enhanced the appeal of the programme.

More straightforward responses tended to focus on how *LNWH* appealed to audiences in general for example, women, or offered fairly narrow and often inaccurate suggestions of audiences, for example women aged 60+. Alternative approaches included general responses unsupported by specific examples from the product.

Weaker responses were those that had limited or no understanding of 'how' radio programmes appeal to specific audiences. These responses instead approached the question as a 'target' rather than 'appeal' question, or engaged in a less relevant discussion, for example how the programme did not appeal to men. Here there was also a more basic knowledge of audiences with some worryingly simple assertions regarding the audience of the programme, for example busy housewives who did not finish their chores until late so the 11pm scheduling time suited them.

- 4 2 Explain how audience responses to advertisements reflect social and cultural circumstances. Refer to the *Wateraid* advertisement you have studied to support your points. [8]

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

It was clear from the question that contexts was the element of the specification being assessed here. 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. Similarly to Question Q4 1, this was in two parts, requiring candidates to explain how audiences responses to advertisements in general reflect social and cultural circumstances and then to use examples from the set product to support their points. 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.

Better answers were able to address the focus of the question and clearly understood the difference between social and cultural contexts with excellent knowledge of the way compassion fatigue in audiences had been considered by the producers of the advert and how specific demographic/psychographic groups had been positioned through detailed discussion of the selection of media language. 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.

The 'audience responses' focus was also addressed well by some who were able to explore how the advertisement positioned the target audience and different readings were explored using Stuart Hall. For example, parents may feel empathy with the children and Claudia in particular; an older audience may be familiar with the song choice and the use of the name 'Claudia' would position a UK audience to respond positively by donating due to personally identifying. Some identified 'Reformers' and their sense of responsibility and ability to make changes through donating and there was reference also to 'Digital Natives' and the way that the advert would encourage positive responses through the use of websites and the language used at the end of the advert.

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 respond to the advertisement with more limited reference to social and cultural circumstances. 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 weaker responses described Stuart Hall's theory but didn't use the advert.

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

MEDIA STUDIES

GCE

Summer 2023

COMPONENT 2 : MEDIA FORMS AND PRODUCTS IN DEPTH

General Comments

Overall, candidates responded to the demands of the exam very positively. There was a lot of very good material produced, and it was heartening to see so many candidates showing real, thoughtful engagement with the theoretical framework of the subject and the set products they had studied.

Performance on the two extended response questions (those in Sections A and B) was especially encouraging, as candidates generally showed a good grasp of relevant critical issues and debates and were able to draw productively on appropriate aspects of the theoretical framework. It was also notable how much many of the candidates were able to write in response to these questions. Although quantity is not always an indication of quality, it did suggest that candidates found these questions accessible and were able to respond to them with a certain degree of confidence, demonstrating an understanding of what an extended response question requires, particularly in terms of constructing a well-supported argument.

However, performance on the two 15-mark questions in Section C was generally weaker. Whether this was because these questions were at the end of the paper and candidates simply ran out of time (perhaps because they spent too long on the two extended response questions), or whether they found these questions less accessible, was difficult to establish. However, as the issue was not just to do with how little many candidates wrote in response to these questions, but also about the quality of their responses (much of the material here tended to be quite basic or superficial), this would seem to indicate that candidates found these two questions more challenging than the extended response questions and were less confident in terms of how to approach them or what to write.

A more general issue that was particularly apparent this year was to do with the quality of candidates' handwriting. There were a significant number of responses where candidates' handwriting was virtually illegible. This may be due, in part at least, to the impact of the pandemic on young people's education (for example, the switch to online learning may have resulted in a decline in handwriting skills as they weren't being put to use as regularly), or it may be part of a broader cultural trend in a digital age where the ability to write by hand is becoming less important. However, while handwritten assessments continue to be used, it is important for candidates to be given opportunities to practice writing by hand under timed conditions, and for centres to identify where legibility is likely to be an issue and to put appropriate access arrangements in place.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A

Questions 10, 20 and 30

How useful are structuralist theories for exploring television products?

Refer to Lévi-Strauss's structuralist theory of binary oppositions and the set episodes of *Life on Mars* and *The Bridge/Humans* and *The Returned/The Jinx* and *No Burqas Behind Bars* to support 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 question was answered well on the whole. The vast majority of candidates were clearly familiar with Lévi-Strauss's structuralist theory of binary oppositions and were able to discuss relevant aspects of their set television products, often in some detail. In the middle and higher bands, there tended to be a greater understanding of the function that binary oppositions perform. For example, many candidates were able to discuss the role played by binary oppositions in advancing the narrative or in aligning the audience with certain characters or particular ideological values.

There was, however, quite a significant variation in terms of how effectively and how explicitly the usefulness of structuralist theories was evaluated. In many cases, there was a tendency to apply rather than evaluate structuralist theories, with a significant number of candidates simply identifying, describing or exploring binary oppositions in the set television products without discussing the relative usefulness of Lévi-Strauss's theory. While there was sometimes an implicit understanding of the usefulness of structuralist theories evident in the way in which the theories were applied, stronger responses tended to engage more explicitly with the question of their relative usefulness, discussing, for example, the extent to which structuralist theories might help to explain the way in which meanings are produced, how narrative conflict and momentum are created or how audiences are positioned.

Rather than evaluating the usefulness of the theory as a critical approach, some candidates discussed why the binary oppositions themselves were useful for television products or those who produce them. Again, there was often an implicit understanding of why structuralist theories might be useful here, but a more explicit reference to how structuralist theories might facilitate a better understanding of the function that binary oppositions perform within television products would have provided a clearer and more direct link back to the question.

Some candidates attempted to evaluate Lévi-Strauss's theory by simply discussing the differences between their two set products, arguing that they were constructed in binary opposition to one another. This approach tended to be less successful as it often resulted in a rather broad and tenuous application of Lévi-Strauss's theory.

However, many candidates made good evaluative points about why and in what ways structuralist theories might be regarded as less useful than other critical approaches, explaining how other theoretical perspectives might better explain or illuminate certain aspects of the products (such as the significance of industrial and institutional contexts or issues regarding audience reception) that structuralist theories tended to overlook. In some cases, though, candidates simply chose to discuss another theory (such as Hesmondhalgh's theory of cultural industries) instead of making an evaluative comparison between structuralist theories and alternative critical approaches.

Some candidates discussed the usefulness of structuralist theories besides that of Lévi-Strauss (Todorov's theory of narratology was referenced in a number of responses, for example). This was a perfectly legitimate approach, provided that the response also referred to Lévi-Strauss's theory, as this was specifically required in the question.

Section B

Questions 40, 50 and 60

To what extent can audiences interpret the same magazine in different ways?

Explore the set editions of *Woman* and *Adbusters/Woman's Realm* and *Huck/Vogue* and *The Big Issue* in your response.

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

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

Again, candidates seemed to answer this question relatively well, generally showing a sound grasp of relevant issues regarding audience reception and interpretation. Many candidates made effective use of Hall's reception theory to explain the different ways in which the same magazine could be read, discussing the preferred/dominant-hegemonic, negotiated, and oppositional readings that their set magazines might elicit. In the higher bands, the possible interpretations that candidates discussed tended to be more reasonable and more fully explained and substantiated whereas those in the middle and lower bands were sometimes less plausible and not as well supported.

Many candidates made valid points about the influence of historical contexts on audience interpretations, pointing out that the historical magazine products might be viewed very differently through a contemporary lens. There were some interesting discussions of how the changing social and cultural context of Britain in the 1960s might have led audiences at the time to read the magazines in different ways. For example, a number of candidates argued that the more progressive or liberal ideas that became more widespread during this era may have led audiences with more 'modern' values to interpret the magazines very differently compared with those with more traditional values. There was also some good material on possible feminist readings of the set products. However, in some cases, candidates focused more on the representations in the set products and their ideological significance rather than considering the extent to which those representations might be interpreted in different ways.

While some responses simply listed a range of hypothetical responses to the set magazines, the most successful responses tended to engage more explicitly with the 'to what extent' part of the question. For example, some candidates argued that, while a range of different interpretations would hypothetically be possible, in practice, interpretations were unlikely to vary significantly because the magazines would be read by communities of readers who shared similar values, attitudes and beliefs. Some candidates also made useful reference to cultivation theory in order to explain why there might be a certain uniformity in audience responses, pointing out that long-term exposure to similar patterns of representation would be likely to cultivate certain values and beliefs in readers, shaping and influencing how they interpret the set magazines. Equally, many candidates made valid points about how differences in ethnicity, social class and political or ideological outlook could lead audiences to interpret the same magazine in different ways, or how personal experiences might lead to varying interpretations. There was also some useful discussion of the polysemic nature of magazine products as well as a consideration of the extent to which magazine producers were able to limit the possibility of different interpretations by directing audiences towards a preferred reading of their products through techniques such as anchorage or presupposition.

In some cases, candidates only discussed the set magazines in very broad or general terms though, outlining the extent to which audiences might agree or disagree with the overall mission, purpose or ethos of the magazine, for example, whereas stronger responses explored specific features, adverts, articles or images in the set editions of the set products in greater depth, considering the extent to which they might elicit different interpretations and responses.

Section C

Questions 71 and 81

Explain how media production and distribution have changed in the age of YouTube and the Internet. Refer to *Alfie Deyes/Zoe Sugg* in your response.

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

This question was generally less well answered compared with the extended response questions, as many candidates ended up simply describing how Alfie Deyes or Zoe Sugg had changed over the course of their careers as YouTubers/content creators rather than using the set products as a vehicle to explain how media production and distribution had changed in the age of YouTube and the Internet.

Stronger responses tended to show greater engagement with relevant aspects of the theoretical framework. Some candidates made useful reference to key concepts such as digital convergence, for instance, while others drew on relevant theories such as Shirky's 'end of audience' theory to explain the role of the prosumer in the digital age. There was some interesting discussion of how and to what extent media production and distribution have been democratised in the age of YouTube and the Internet, as many candidates explained how content creators no longer need to be part of a well-resourced professional organisation with large levels of financial capital in order to produce and distribute content; they simply need a camera and an internet connection.

The ability of content creators to bypass the traditional, institutional gatekeepers of the media was thoughtfully discussed in some responses, and there were also some good points about the volume of content being produced in the age of YouTube and the Internet, and the impact that this had on media regulation. Some candidates discussed the different phases in the development of the Internet, considering the significance of the shift to Web 2.0 or 3.0, and the way in which this has led to new patterns of production and distribution.

The speed at which content can be distributed in the age of the Internet was also discussed by a number of candidates, and there was some useful material on globalisation too, although this was sometimes a little simplistic or generalised (a common assumption, for example, was that any and all material published on YouTube has a mass, global audience).

Questions 72 and 82

Discuss the influence of social and cultural contexts on the representations on the *gal-dem/Attitude* website.

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

This question was perhaps the least successfully answered on the paper, as a significant number of responses were brief and undeveloped (even for a 15-mark question), and there was a tendency to discuss the set products in very general terms.

Stronger responses were able to draw links between the representations in specific articles on the relevant website and the wider social and cultural contexts in which those representations were produced. There was some good material on the influence of the Black Lives Matter movement on the representations on the websites, for example, and some candidates provided a thoughtful exploration of the way in which the representations related to recent and ongoing cultural debates regarding sexual politics, non-binary identities and gender fluidity. The way in which the websites could be seen to address issues regarding the under-representation or misrepresentation of particular social groups was also usefully discussed by a number of candidates, and there were some good points about the extent to which the representations challenged or reinforced certain stereotypes and dominant social discourses regarding gender, sexuality and race.

However, some of the links drawn between the set products and the wider social and cultural contexts in which they were produced were rather tenuous, and the discussion of the set products was often more basic or superficial. For example, a surprisingly large number of candidates suggested that the *Attitude* website featured a lot of images either because men don't like to read or because they aren't very good at reading.

Summary of key points

- Candidates should always ensure that they explicitly address the specific requirements of the question. For example, in a question that requires evaluation of theory, it is important that candidates do not simply apply the relevant theory but consider its usefulness or validity as required. Similarly, in 'to what extent' questions, it is important that candidates explicitly discuss this as they are being assessed on their ability to use their knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework to make judgements and draw conclusions. Using the key terms from the question consistently throughout the answer can help in this regard.
- Candidates should ensure that they support the points they make by referring to specific aspects of their set products rather than simply discussing their products in very general terms.
- As the ability to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the influence of contexts on media products and processes is one of the key assessment objectives that is addressed in Component 2, candidates should ensure that they consider the influence of relevant contexts (e.g., social, cultural, historical, economic) on the set products and their reception as part of their studies. They should be able to make links between the set products and the wider contexts in which they are produced and consumed.

- Candidates should take care over their handwriting, ensuring that their answers are clearly legible to the examiner, and centres should ensure that appropriate access arrangements are put in places for candidates whose handwriting is likely to pose an issue in this regard.

MEDIA STUDIES

GCE

Summer 2023

COMPONENT 3: CROSS MEDIA PRODUCTION

General Comments

The non-exam assessment continues to be a popular component of the course, with many candidates relishing the opportunity to apply their knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework to their own cross-media production. It was evident that candidates were usually well-guided by their teachers to produce work that addressed the briefs and component requirements.

Despite there being four briefs each with a choice of tasks within them, every possible combination was seen. Briefs where print work makes up the majority were the most popular, but there was a noticeable rise in audio-visual work submitted after a decline during the pandemic.

As the specification matures and two consecutive years of non-exam assessment submission has finally been achieved, most centres are familiar with Component 3's requirements. The vast majority of centres submitted samples of appropriate work where candidates at all levels had been able to demonstrate their achievements.

Each centre that entered candidates this summer has been issued with a bespoke moderator's report, offering detailed feedback on the centre's assessment. That report should be read in conjunction with this document, which comments on broader national trends. Centres are also reminded that a wealth of exemplar material for Component 3 is available on the WJEC Secure Website.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Most centres met the submission deadline. For A Level, this is always 15 May. It is worth noting that this is the date by which the sample should be submitted and it is therefore suggested that marks should be entered on the Internal Assessment Mark Input System in advance of this to allow time for the work itself to be uploaded.

Online submission of work is now well established, with both centres and moderators recognising that it is preferable to postal moderation. Most centres uploaded work to Surpass under the correct keycodes and labelled it with useful filenames. A list of acceptable file formats is available on the Eduqas website, but, in summary, print work will usually be submitted as PDFs or JPEGs and audio-visual work as MP4s. Centres should avoid prohibited formats such as Photoshop (.psd) and Microsoft Publisher (.pub) as not all moderators are able to open such files.

While mistakes in uploading work are rare and becoming even rarer, there were still some examples of the wrong work being uploaded under a candidate's keycode or pieces of work missing from a candidate's submission. Such oversights can only be rectified by contacting the centre's exams officer at a very busy time of year, so should be avoided. A second pair of eyes when the work is being uploaded is often very useful.

The most commonly missing aspect of a submission was a working website address. Where a candidate has produced a website, its address should be included in the 'Completion of Cross-Media Production' box on the coversheet and care should be taken to ensure that it is the address of the published website and not an editing link. To aid moderation, addresses should be clickable hyperlinks, or at least typewritten. If a coversheet is completed by hand, then a separate file containing a clickable link should be included.

As coversheets provide a helpful insight into the production process and ensure candidates' work can be authenticated, it was pleasing to see the care with which many centres ensured their completion. Most centres used the updated coversheet for 2023 onwards, available from the Eduqas website.

The most variable aspect of coversheets was Section A: some candidates completed each box of the key processes grid thoroughly to outline the work completed at each stage; in many cases, however, completion was minimal or non-existent. A useful document on the Eduqas website provides guidance on how to complete the coversheet, including an indication of the level of detail expected.

It is also important that candidates give precise details of any non-original material used in the appropriate box. This should include an exact source, which is usually a webpage address. Similarly, the named software packages used to create the production work should be provided. There is no expectation that any particular software is used, but candidates do need to record the programs used to edit their work.

The majority of coversheets were correctly verified, with signatures (either handwritten or digital) and dates being provided at each stage of the production process and again for the final authentication. To be clear, the candidate should sign at the end of Section A and the assessor at the end of Section C. Coversheets not containing these signatures – whether in the sample or not – are in breach of the qualification's code of practice.

As there is no requirement for assessors to annotate the work itself, it is vital that Section C of the coversheet, where the assessor records the marks awarded and justification for them, is completed in detail. The vast majority of centres recognised this and wrote thorough comments. The most useful comments balanced both phrases from the mark scheme with examples from the candidate's work. Though there is no set format, sentences containing reference to the mark scheme and a specific example of how the candidate has achieved this are usually very helpful.

Finally, centres should check the marks entered on the coversheet are final and the total matches the numbers entered on the Internal Assessment Mark Input System. In some quarters, there were a worrying number of clerical errors; any such error puts the integrity of the qualification at risk.

Meeting the requirements of the brief

Centres can complete Component 3 any time from when the briefs are released on the 1st March preceding the year in which the qualification will be assessed. Examples of centres using briefs for the wrong year, or even the wrong qualification, were thankfully rare.

Many centres offered all four briefs, but some offered a selection or even just one. All these approaches are acceptable. On the other hand, the specification requires that candidates are allowed to work in genres (or sub-genres) of their own choosing. Virtually all centres facilitated this and examples of whole cohorts following the same genre are now extremely rare. There remain some centres, however, where candidates are clearly being offered a restricted menu of genres – this is not appropriate, as candidates should have a free choice.

While the genre choice is the candidate's own, the briefs are prescriptive with regard to the industry context and target audience required. To achieve well in Component 3, candidates need to carefully adhere to both of these. Industry context is still an area some candidates struggle with. The role of the production company (and how the candidate's new product will fit into its portfolio) is an important part of this, but candidates should also consider the industry as a whole – for example, they could research recent changes in their industry to help consider how their production could be successful in this landscape. Target audiences were usually better handled. Here, it is important to remember that the product should be suitable for the entire target market, even if the targeting skews towards a certain end of it. Many candidates who achieved well considered psychographic aspects of their target audience as well as demographic elements.

There was a strong correlation between thorough research and achievement. Candidates who undertook independent research and used it to inform their planning tended to devise much more coherent concepts for their production work, allowing them to access higher marks. The briefs themselves contain suggestions for research and planning activities. It is important that candidates balance research across the theoretical framework – by, for example, researching the media language of existing products, the representations of their chosen social groups within similar media products, the industry context and their target audience. The guidance within the briefs booklet often contains starting points for such research, including suggested products to consider and sources of industry information. Nevertheless, research should be an independent task and candidates should explore their own sources.

Most production work submitted was in line with brief requirements. A surprisingly common issue was candidates submitting too much work, with embedded audio-visual content on websites being beyond the permitted 30–45 seconds being the biggest culprit. In the interests of parity and fairness, only the best work that fulfils length stipulations (such as the best 45 consecutive seconds of embedded audio-visual content) should be assessed. Further guidance on this is available in the preamble to the mark scheme, which also contains instructions on handling other rubric infringements.

Explicit plagiarism in production work was rare, but it was disappointing when it did occur and led to malpractice investigations being launched. A little more common was candidates who over-relied on non-original material, for which they cannot be credited. The only non-original material permitted (all of which should be recorded on the coversheet) is production company logos, BBFC/IFCO film age certificates, barcodes, royalty-free background music and, for music videos only, commercial tracks. All other content should be produced solely by the candidate.

This year, a small number of candidates included images produced by artificial intelligence (AI). While this technology is very new, the existing JCQ requirement that 'the work [candidates] submit for final assessment is their own unaided work' still applies. This means that AI imagery, such as that generated/edited from a prompt typed by a candidate, is not permitted as it is not unaided work.

Similarly, a handful of candidates used screenshots from videogames where they had exerted some input, such as controlling the camera angle or appearance of a character. Given such imagery is, overall, not the original work of the candidate, it also cannot be permitted.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Statement of Aims and Intentions

Candidates at all levels used the Statements of Aims and Intentions to outline their plans. This was, overall, the most accurately assessed column of the mark scheme, with vast majority of centres correctly rewarding candidates for their level of detail and the preciseness of plans.

At the top end of the mark scheme, candidates planned in detail, giving explicit details (often referencing precise uses of media language) of their intended products. These ideas were justified by references to candidates' research. Such candidates made sure all areas of brief's requirements were addressed, ensuring that representations (and their construction) were discussed, along with the industry context and target audience. These candidates also gave attention to both tasks and explained how they would create synergy between the two.

Where candidates did not achieve as highly, Statements of Aims and Intentions were less focused, often giving quite vague ideas without specifics of how they would be achieved. There was sometimes a tendency to merely describe plans, without justification. The different elements of the brief were not always covered, with plans for representations, in particular, often not featuring. Sometimes, Task 2 was relegated to a single mention at the end.

As in the past, the use of academic theory was variable. Some candidates integrated the work of theorists from their studies effectively into their plans, such as using industry theories to justify decisions about their productions. Often, however, theories were merely 'name dropped' with no real link to candidates' plans. Candidates should remember that, while the use of theory can enhance a Statement of Aims and Intentions, it is not compulsory and should only be used where it has value.

Nearly all centres are now secure in their knowledge of the rubric around the Statement of Aims and Intentions, understanding that it should be completed entirely between the completion of planning and the commencement of production work. Many centres also dealt with over length Statements of Aims and Intentions correctly by ceasing marking at 550 words (the word count + 10%) and noting this on the coversheet.

Cross-Media Production

A wide range of production work was seen, befitting the variety in briefs and different genres candidates chose to work in. The majority of work was assessed accurately, with centres carefully applying both columns of the mark scheme holistically to both tasks of the brief.

It was encouraging to see that most candidates put equal efforts into both tasks within the briefs. Sometimes, however, there was a marked difference in quality between the two tasks, with the second task sometimes being considered a 'bolt on' to the first task. This is not the case and candidates should be reminded that both tasks are of equal importance. The mark scheme provides guidance on assessing work of uneven quality. Where this was not applied, assessment was often generous.

The second column of the mark scheme assesses candidates' ability to meet the requirements of the brief. Those that carefully considered the form, genre, industry context, audience and elements of the task throughout the creation of their cross-media production achieved highly here. A common stumbling block was to only consider the task's named requirements (such as the number of images) – including all the required elements does not automatically lead to a high band, as that criterion is just one of the three bullet points in this column of the mark scheme.

An often neglected aspect of the second column was adherence to the conventions of the media form, which will be discussed in more depth in the comments on each brief. Candidates were often stronger, however, on adherence to genre.

Centres with accurate assessment balanced all aspects of the second column of the mark scheme when arriving at a mark. Where one or more bullet points were not fully factored in, the mark given was often lenient.

In the third column of the mark scheme, use of media language to communicate meanings and construct representations is assessed. It was gratifying to see candidates use a wide range of media language (including visual, audio, technical and narrative codes), often drawing on their studies for the examined components. Candidates performing well here closely considered the connotations of the media language they used and employed complex methods, such as intertextuality and hybridity. These pieces often contained some sort of ideological message.

Similarly, successful representations were insightful and constructed through sustained media language use. A very wide range of representations were seen, with those achieving highly often exploring contemporary issues through representations of (for example) gender identity, the Black Lives Matter movement and the cost of living crisis. Nevertheless, even seemingly more established representations, such as those of sportspeople or models, could be constructed in a purposeful and appropriate manner with careful thought.

There remain a minority of candidates who, despite the briefs' warnings, do not include people in their work. This severely limits candidates' abilities to construct representations. People, and their social groups, should be heavily featured in all production work. Consideration of this may affect the choice of genre (see below).

The unifying theme where media language was effectively used was that it had been planned for. Successful candidates carefully thought out their filming or photoshoots, choosing locations, costumes camera angles and the like in advance and with purpose. In the middle of the mark scheme, plans were often in place, but the finer details had not been thought through. At the lower end of the mark scheme, it was often evident that most decisions were made as the footage was collected, leading to a less coherent final product.

Again, most centres assessed this column accurately, though some centres gave unjustifiable credit to work containing quite simple media language use. The most common areas for over-rewarding, however, was the use of representations. Many centres gave high marks to representations that were neither purposeful nor appropriate. The most extreme over-marking came where representations were largely absent (due to a lack of people) but high marks were still given, seemingly ignoring the final bullet point of this column of the mark scheme.

Brief 1: Television

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 an **independent production company** (such as Tiger Aspect, Kudos or Red Productions) to be broadcast on either Netflix or E4.

*Your cross-media production should target **an audience of 18-35 year olds** with a particular interest in your chosen genre.*

Although this remained the least popular brief, there was an increase in candidates choosing this option. A wide variety of genres were worked in, with fictional drama pieces (often crime) being the most common. Some excellent factual work was seen this year, with many candidates closely following the codes and conventions of documentaries to produce effective pieces. The audience was usually targeted effectively (though some work did lean more towards a teenage audience) and many pieces produced for E4, for example, would fit well into its portfolio.

The majority of candidates produced an audio-visual sequence (Task 1) that fitted the brief's requirement for a pre-title and title sequence. In the pre-title sequence (sometimes known as a cold open), the best work employed the genre's codes and conventions (such as suspense) effectively. The title sequences were more variable in quality, but some high quality work, often using genre imagery and carefully considered onscreen text, marked out those scoring highly. Pleasingly, very few portrait mode videos were seen, with candidates employing a widescreen aspect ratio and considering how to use the frame. Many effective camera shots and angles were seen, with establishing shots and close-ups often used to position the audience most effectively.

The websites produced for Task 2(a) were more variable in quality. When done well, websites became an effective part of the television programme's marketing campaign, satisfying an audience wanting extra information about the programme through written details about the programme and behind-the-scenes insights in the embedded audio-visual material. Websites that were not as successful often did not look like they belonged with the television programme.

More candidates opted for Task 2(b). Posters here often used narrative enigma effectively through careful use of imagery and, often, text. The newspaper feature articles sometimes were not as carefully considered, but candidates who researched the layout and design of such supplements produced strong work. Many candidates embraced the opportunities the copy offered to construct representations of those involved in the production.

Brief 2: Magazines

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 a **major publishing organisation** (such as Bauer Media, Conde Nast or Hearst) targeting **a mainstream audience of 18-35 year olds**.*

Magazines remained the most produced brief. Although the brief was for a major publishing organisation and mainstream audience, it still left plenty of scope for many different types of magazines to be produced, across a variety of genres. Most candidates chose genres that could effectively sustain a mainstream magazine. Although reducing, there remain a number of centres where many candidates produce magazines for genres that do not feature people heavily, with baking, racing and videogames being the most common examples. Because of the lack of people in these candidates' magazines, their ability to construct representations was severely limited. Candidates should therefore be guided to work in genres that feature people heavily and allow for the construction of representations. Sometimes, this may only necessitate changing the focus of a magazine. For example, while a racing magazine featuring just a car on the front is unlikely to fulfil the mark scheme, one featuring a well-constructed racing driver is.

A wide range of print work (Task 1) was seen. Most candidates used their research to produce realistic looking magazines, using well posed photos, considered use of colour and an effective mode of address to construct representations and position the target audience and convey the genre. Nearly all candidates used the cover feature for their double-page spread, which was appropriate. While cover images were often strong, some candidates often used images on the double-page spread that were very similar to each other or not as well constructed to further the representations of the social group. Some double-page spreads did not fully conform to the media form and this was a frequent area of overmarking for the second column of the mark scheme. Common problems including unconventional layouts (such as not using columns), text printed across the fold and copy text that was too large. Although work is submitted digitally, it is sometimes beneficial for candidates to print out their magazine pages at actual size and compare them to real magazines – many issues not immediately apparent on screen may reveal themselves. Contents pages, set for the first time this year, varied. The best used a conventional layout and made use of the article titles, descriptions and images to target their audience and construct additional representations. Elsewhere, some contents pages were merely lists and sometimes looked more like the contents page of a book.

Candidates tackling Task 2(a) often produced websites that effectively complemented their print production. Where this occurred, the house style was clear across the print and online work through the use of masthead, colour scheme, mode of address etc. Many candidates discovered through their research that a homepage would list far more articles than the brief's minimum requirements and correctly reflected this. Some candidates, however, produced very sparse looking websites, often not modifying pre-made templates enough. The very best candidates recognised that their print and online magazine may have slightly different readerships and produced content to match this. Most candidates' audio-visual content supplemented their online article, though some, equally acceptably, linked to the print magazine. Better audio-visual content was well edited and made use of the restricted time frame to produce lively material.

For Task 2(b), the audio-only BBC Sounds podcast was most popular, with very few audio-visual BBC documentary excerpts being seen. While most podcasts were recognisably BBC productions, a significant number not brand their podcast beyond BBC Sounds, meaning their podcast lacked a name. Virtually all candidates included the required interview, though many did not fulfil the brief's requirement that it was the designer of the magazine interviewed, instead featuring the editor. Location segments varied, with some 'vox pops' sections asking the public about a magazine they had read being somewhat unconvincing.

Brief 3: Film Marketing

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 **major film studio** (such as Paramount or 20th Century Studios) targeting **a mainstream audience of 18-35 year-olds**.*

This was a very popular brief, with most candidates effectively targeting the mainstream 18–35 year old audience and reflecting the major film studio context. Some candidates produced work that was a little more independent and therefore did not fulfil the brief. Others marketed films that were targeted at younger age ranges, such as teenagers. This brief offers candidates the opportunity to produce work with representations of both characters within the film and the personnel making the film, including actors, directors and producers. To fully exploit these opportunities, real actors', directors' and producers' names should not be used, with the candidate constructing their own representations.

Task 1 followed a familiar format of two posters and a DVD/Blu-ray/4K Blu-ray sleeve. Most candidates, informed by their research, successfully differentiated between the teaser and theatrical release posters, recognising that these represent two separate stages in the marketing campaign. Most DVD/Blu-ray/4K Blu-ray sleeves were appropriately presented, but a minority of candidates do not include all the technical and legal information required for a release in the UK. The advice accompanying a BBFC rating was the most common missing feature, but there were also many other examples of BBFC ratings symbols not being displayed at the correct size (this information is available on the BBFC website) or even using the old symbols withdrawn in 2020. Many candidates' research revealed that a large number UK releases also contain the IFCO age ratings for Ireland and including these was thus appropriate. A minority of candidates used scanned technical information or billing blocks from existing DVD sleeves. This is not appropriate, as candidates should produce such components from scratch. Some candidates' print work did not conform to the brief's requirements for different images across the products, two photography locations and three characters and this not being acknowledged was a common area of overmarking.

The Task 2(a) film websites were generally successful, though a broad range was seen. The best work recognised that such websites would be visited by those whose interest in the film had been piqued and now wanted further information. The synopsis and character or story page, when carefully planned, did this. Some candidates profiled actors, rather than characters, and therefore did not hit this element of the brief. Most embedded audio-visual content was an interview with the producer, though some candidates seemed confused about what such a role entails with the interviewee coming across more as a director.

Like the equivalent task for Brief 2, most Task 2(b) submissions were of the audio-only variety. Success here was mixed. Most candidates included all of the required elements, such as a studio setting and another location, as well as the interview. A frequently missing aspect was a feel that this was for a breakfast programme. This could have been simply achieved by references to 'last night's premiere' or other (non-film) items coming up in the programme. Instead, many candidates produced programmes that appeared to be specialist film programmes.

Brief 4: Music Marketing

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

*You should create a cross-media production for an **independent record label** (such as Heavenly, Warp or Fader Label) **targeting a specialised audience of 18-35 year olds** who have a specific interest in your chosen genre of music.*

This brief was a minority choice, but usually tackled with real enthusiasm by those taking it. The independent industry context and specialised audience were embraced by most candidates, who created a suitable artist or band. There remain a few examples of where existing artists/bands have been marketed, which is not appropriate. Candidates should invent their own artist/band from scratch and market them across the two tasks. They are, of course, allowed to an existing song (without an existing music video) for Task 1, but this should be presented as if the candidate's fictional artist/band has made it.

The quality of music videos (Task 1) varied. The best included a range of shots and a clear narrative. Candidates often used research effectively to decide on how to structure their videos, with conventions such as cutting between the narrative and performance footage often seen. Such candidates often interpreted the lyrics creatively (often metaphorically) to convey the narrative (and, by extension, genre). Less successful music videos were often missing elements (lip-synced performance footage being the most common) or did not convey a strong narrative, which often led to less purposeful representations. These videos often had overlong shots that were not edited to the beat of the music.

Task 2(a), requiring candidates to produce a website for their artist/band, was only rarely submitted. Where it was tackled, candidates often successful in maintaining a coherent style, in line with the music video. Images were often used well to do this, though many candidates missed the opportunity to enhance the representation of the artist through the text. The embedded audio-visual footage was nearly always an interview with the artist/band and often helped build the ideology behind their music.

The music magazine offered by Task 2(b) was undertaken much more often. Nearly all candidates produced a specialist music magazine, often focusing on a particular genre, and many used visual codes effectively to target their audience. Interviews were used effectively to further the representation of the artist/band, though a number of candidates omitted to include details of the making of the music video, which was required by the brief. Like Brief 2 Task 1, some candidates did not conform to magazine form conventions and generous marking could occur where this was not recognised.

Summary of key points

- Research is very important to the success of the cross-media production. This research should encompass not just the genre and audience, but also the industry context and the media form itself. Once complete, candidates should then take time to apply this research when planning.
- Candidates should craft a succinct Statement of Aims and Intentions, outlining their plans precisely (such as naming actual media language to be used) and justifying them with reference to their research.

- Gathering of footage, such as filming and photoshoots, should be carefully planned for, with the construction of representations and mode of address being considered.
- When producing work, candidates should remember that they are producing a cross-media production and pay equal attention to both tasks, considering how they will work together.
- Candidates should ensure that the conventions of the media form are employed, with a particular focus on the layout of print work and shot types in audio-visual work.
- Assessors should make sure they consider all bullet points in each column of the mark scheme when deciding upon a mark and use the exemplar material available on the WJEC Secure Website to support their interpretation of the mark scheme.



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