GCE AS EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**MEDIA STUDIES
AS**

SUMMER 2023

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EDUQAS AS MEDIA STUDIES

GCE AS

Summer 2023

COMPONENT 1: INVESTIGATING THE MEDIA

General Comments

It was encouraging to see how centres and candidates had taken on board the feedback from the previous summer series. Candidates generally demonstrated a good level of knowledge and understanding, both of 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, particularly with the Representation extended response, showing that they had been well prepared for the demands of this component. Most candidates attempted all questions and there were very few incomplete papers.

The quality of handwriting and essay writing skills proved problematic for some candidates, particularly with regards to the extended response questions. The Media Language response had less confident responses suggesting more focus is needed in future with unseen analysis of newspapers.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Q.10 Compare how the representations of gender convey values   **[25]**
In your answer you must consider:
- the similarities and differences in the representations of gender
- how far the representations relate to relevant media contexts.

Assessment Objectives: AO2 1 and 2:
Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to:
- analyse media products, including in relation to their contexts and through the use of academic theories.
- make judgements and draw conclusions.

This is an extended response question where candidates are assessed on the quality of their written response including the ability to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, relevant, substantiated and logically structured.

In this response the bullet points were included to help the candidates structure their answer and to guide them in what to include. All bullet points must be covered but not in the same amount of detail. The more able candidates were able to address the focus of the question and to analyse both products making relevant comparisons. It was essential for this response that candidates demonstrated effective essay writing skills and could employ subject specific terminology.

Candidates attaining marks in the higher bands effectively applied their knowledge of the theoretical framework. These candidates were able to explore more detailed aspects of representation and demonstrated clear engagement with the idea of gender construction in relation to relevant contexts such as toxic masculinity, double standards and inequality between men and women, challenging patriarchal ideologies.

Many candidates identified 'The Man' as greedy with capitalist values, sucking life out of a small community in the workplace/subway like a vampire would suck the life out of their prey. There was some excellent and relevant application of theory from the likes of Liesbet van Zoonen and Stuart Hall. Candidates awarded in the higher bands explored both products in detail referring to visual, technical, audio and written elements of media language highlighting both the similarities and differences. To be placed in these bands, comparing the two products in detail was essential. It was pleasing to see how candidates at this level engaged with ideologies and complex aspects of representation in an informed way.

Responses in the middle band focused on more straightforward or obvious aspects of representation. For example, the use of clothing or the use of colour. These responses tended to focus more on one product.

The responses of less able candidates did not address the focus of the question and were largely undeveloped. Some candidates misread Taylor Swift's music video representation by interpreting 'The Man' as a role model for the audience, or perceived Swift as subconsciously objectifying women and being irresponsible for younger audiences, therefore misjudging the music video's social / political commentary on gender inequalities.

Very few candidates were underprepared for this response. However, with some responses there was a tendency to simply describe the key features of the two products and reference to relevant contexts was absent, or brief and undeveloped. Others tended to rely on the analysis of the music video extract from 'The Man' as that was available in the exam or were over reliant on the set 'Kiss of the Vampire' film poster. Some candidates were unable to access higher bands, as they were either too general with their exploring of contexts or did not engage with them at all. It is important that the theoretical perspective chosen is valid, relevant and can be used to support the points the candidate wishes to make about the product. There were several examples of candidates who tried to drop in theories which were at worst, irrelevant and at best, not applied appropriately such as Stuart Hall's Reception theory.

Candidates in the higher bands made perceptive judgements and conclusions about the relevant media contexts supported by specific examples from the products and were able to effectively relate these to the construction of gender within the zeitgeist. The reference to contexts in the middle range responses were generally straightforward and simple.

Q.20   Explore how the combination of elements of media language influences meaning   [10]

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

The unseen product selected for this question was a front page for The Daily Mail (June 8, 2020). This proved to be a divisive product. It proved accessible for candidates who had prepared well through their study of newspaper products. It was encouraging to see that candidates across the mark range were able to analyse the text in detail through various media terminology and contexts. The more able candidates clearly addressed the question exploring the combination of elements of media language that influenced meaning, including:
- language techniques
- newspaper codes and conventions
- selection of images
- shot type and angle of images
- layout and design of newspaper.

The more able candidates accessing marks in the higher bands were confident in discussing the combination of image and language devices used by the producers and linked this appropriately to The Daily Mail's right-wing political agenda. Responses at this level tended to remain focused on the question and would discuss the impact of the varied techniques in relation to ideological values of the newspaper. The unseen product allowed candidates to approach their response from a range of different starting points. There was some excellent, detailed analysis demonstrating understanding of the theoretical framework and application of relevant theory such as Stuart Hall's Conceptual Roadmap and George Gerbner's Cultivation theory. More sophisticated responses applied the language of semiotics and/or binary oppositions appropriately to develop their analysis further, which is to be encouraged.

Candidates in the middle of the mark range often identified media element techniques and their associated connotations but would either not explore them in enough detail or would steer into detail with typically more written techniques rather than the combination and lost focus of the question. They produced a reasonable and straightforward analysis of the newspaper extract but tended not to cover a broad range of points. It should be noted that without exploring the combination of media elements of media language, candidates could not access the higher bands.

As the unseen is always taken from one of the forms studied for Section A, the expectation is that the candidates will be able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework in relation to the selected form. There were many candidates awarded marks in the lower bands as they were not focused to the question. A common error was to refer to The Daily Mail as the Daily Mirror and its left-wing political agenda and therefore completely misreading the unseen material and its approach to influencing meaning on its audience. Some candidates compared the unseen newspaper to the set Daily Mirror material studied and therefore lacked focus on the question asked. Other candidates in the lower bands were referring to The Daily Mail as a broadsheet, not a tabloid and misunderstood codes and conventions of the newspaper. A few candidates downloaded all they knew about the Daily Mail with limited to no analysis. There were some purely descriptive answers which would offer basic application of knowledge and understanding to analyse the product. The limited/ undeveloped understanding made it difficult to award higher than Band 2. There appeared to be many brief responses that just quoted from the article with no reference to written codes such as language devices and limited analysis of meaning. These responses showed limited understanding of the theoretical framework and used limited media terminology.

Q.30   Assessment Objectives

Q.31   Give one example of a British public service radio station   [1]

Assessment Objectives: AO1 1a:
Demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical framework of media.

Responses largely referred to BBC Radio 4 or a variety of BBC radio stations. However, some candidates misread the question referring to a British public service broadcaster and therefore wrongfully answered with just the BBC. Some candidates said BBC 4 or BBC Sounds, which were also not credible.

Q.32   Briefly explain two characteristics of public service broadcasting   [4]

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

Overall, most candidates offered two valid characteristics and explanations. Popular responses explored the obligation to cater for specialised/diverse audiences, to be neutral/impartial, to inform/educate and/or to be reliable. The explanations were often linked to licence fee and remit of a public service broadcaster to benefit producer and/or audience. Some candidates identified characteristics but did not fully explain them or lacked clarity and therefore did not fully answer the question. There was some confusion with a few candidates stating a public service broadcaster such as the BBC is 'free' whereas others were unclear with the characteristic and/or explanation offered and in doing so, were not focused to the question.

**Q.33   Explain how social and cultural contexts may affect radio production.
Refer to Late Night Woman's Hour to support your points.   [10]**

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

In this question, candidates were rewarded for drawing together knowledge and understanding from across the full course of study, including different areas of the theoretical framework and media contexts. Some candidates struggled with this question, largely because they were too audience theory heavy in their responses rather than focusing on how cultural contexts would affect the radio industry.

Candidates in the higher bands tended to lead with social and cultural contexts related to the radio industry and were aware of how these would affect the production of Late Night Woman's Hour episodes. They would then effectively offer detailed examples from the radio production including for example episodes 'Home' or 'Love Island' to support their points.

Candidates in the middle band tended to have an imbalanced response. They offered satisfactory context and some (but not always) appropriate reference to examples from the radio production. Some candidates in this band tended to have more focus on one over the other. There were at times implicit reference to panellists and content without explicitly referring to a specific Late Night Woman's Hour episode.

Many candidates in the lower bands tended to offer limited reference to specific radio episodes and their contexts to answer the question. Some candidates in the lower bands tended to write an audience appeals response with little industry focus.

There was surprisingly limited industry theory applied to responses with a tendency to apply more audience theory instead including Hall's Reception theory or Blumler and Katz's Uses and Gratifications theory. More able candidates were able to incorporate industry theories and theoretical perspectives including Curran and Seaton, and Hesmondalgh. Weaker responses tended to mention these theorists without using them to further their analysis of the radio industry. Lower band responses tended to be quite brief too, indicating that some candidates would benefit from working on using time more efficiently in the exam.

Q.40

Q.41   Identify two ways in which advertisers categorise audiences. [2]

   Assessment Objectives: AO1 1a:
   Demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical framework of media.

   Like Q32, this question led to a variety of diverse responses. Many candidates identified specific ways within demographic or psychographic profiling such as age, gender, social class, aspirers and reformers. Some candidates identified ways through Hartley and Fiske's characteristics with credible references to political allegiance and religion. However, some responses explored the process of categorising such as '… through their choice of channels' or '…through where and how they advertise' and therefore lost focus of the question. Stating just demographics or psychographics was not specific enough and so was not credible.

Q.42   Explain how producers of advertisements target audiences. Refer to the set WaterAid Advertisement franchise to support your points.   [8]

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

   This question required the candidates to refer to the set 'Rain for Good' WaterAid advertisement and how the producer's construction of it would target audiences. It was encouraging to see how well candidates knew the text and referred to examples of its construction to target specific audiences. More able candidates gave an introduction briefly discussing the background behind the charity advertisement and the need to subvert conventions as target audiences had been desensitised by past emotion provoking techniques.

Some candidates were overtly analytical (although these were techniques used by the producer) at the expense of applying audience targeting language.

Candidates in the higher band would apply Hall's Reception Theory confidentially particularly in relation to the dominant / hegemonic reading intended by the producer and linked this to targeting.

Some responses in the lower bands were descriptive and/or lacked reference to the set charity advertisement. A few candidates referred to incorrect WaterAid advertisements.

It was pleasing to see the majority of responses had been much lengthier than previous papers, suggesting candidates had prepared well for the demands of this question and the paper overall.

Summary of key points

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

MEDIA STUDIES

GCE AS

Summer 2023

COMPONENT 2: INVESTIGATING MEDIA FORMS AND PRODUCTS

General Comments

Candidates responded positively to the demands of this investigative, in-depth paper. Most were able to demonstrate their enthusiasm for, and engagement with, at least one specialist section, if not across all three. Many candidates were able to embrace all three sections with a confidence and fluency that was impressive; they were able to refer to specific aspects of their set product in depth in detail in order to substantiate their responses, which showed that they had been thoroughly prepared for this component. They could explore and apply relevant aspects of theory to enhance their understanding of the set product. In this way they could demonstrate their conceptual understanding of the theoretical framework by using it as a lens to enlighten their analysis. It was gratifying to see how well centres and their learners seem to have recovered from the gaps in learning imposed by the Covid 19 pandemic and candidates approached this exam with a sound understanding of its requirements. There were few incomplete papers as most candidates made some attempt to answer all questions.

It was noticeable that some candidates did not recognise the implications of certain command words, and how they are linked to particular assessment objectives. This could be a key area to focus on in preparation for the examination. Some candidates struggled to identify which key concept the question was asking them to focus on, in particular the questions on misrepresentations and media language. Therefore, they did not engage with the question set, which immediately limited them to the lower bands.

On the whole, most candidates showed a good grasp of theory that they were able to explain and apply, so demonstrating their knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework. They were also able to explore their set products by analysing specific aspects to show how it had been impacted by its context of production through changing social and historical time periods or through developing technologies as the specification requires them to. There were fewer responses that merely listed theories or mentioned a theorist's name in brackets, which should be discouraged as it tends to obscure the analysis of the set product itself and does not demonstrate any conceptual understanding.

Comments on individual questions/sections

SECTION A: TELEVISION - Questions 10, 20 and 30

Explain how marketing strategies promote television programmes.
Refer in detail to **Life on Mars / Humans / The Returned** to support your answer.

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

As this was an AO1 question, textual analysis was not required. The emphasis was on knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework with a focus on the television Industry: how marketing strategies are used to promote television programmes.

Most candidates were able to grasp some of the requirements of this question with enthusiasm and demonstrated a clear understanding of some of the marketing strategies that had been used. Some of the more able candidates were able to accurately refer to the production contexts of the BBC or Channel 4 as public service broadcasters. They demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of the requirement for these broadcasters to successfully promote their programmes in order to attract audiences and achieve good ratings to justify their funding mechanism- either the license fee, or to attract advertising revenue.

However, many candidates did not directly address the question in terms of the command words 'explain how' the strategies used actually promoted their set programme. Instead, they were able to recognise, and then describe some of the features of marketing that had been used at the launch of the programme. The effect of this was that they focused on how the set TV product attracts it audience, rather than going into details of the specific marketing strategies, which very much limited their scope: they would straightforwardly write about who was in it and their star appeals, cite intertextual references, and refer to genre and narrative structure, rather than explaining how these were explicitly used in the marketing.

Some candidates limited their responses to focusing on genre, seemingly responding to a predicted question such as 'how genre can be used to attract audiences' rather than the set question. Obviously, the nature of the AS exam is to assess how candidates are able to select and apply relevant K&U to respond to a question that may take them by surprise. To achieve a higher band grade, candidates need to engage with the question set, and explicitly demonstrate a detailed understanding of explicitly named marketing strategies –web sites, posters, trailers, DVD covers, viral marketing campaigns, press pack information, and where it has been evidenced, premiers and chat shows and so on. Some candidates were able to achieve this with confidence and an impressive array of detail.

Life On Mars:
Some candidates had a good knowledge and understanding of a wide range of the marketing strategies used by the BBC for Life on Mars (LOM). This included an awareness of the production company's press pack, and how this was used in other media for the launch of the programme, with photos and interviews that could then be published in other media, in magazines such as the Radio Times.

Many candidates assumed that LOM was disadvantaged in terms of its marketing because it was released in 2006, before the age of YouTube and social media, demonstrating that they were not aware of the BBC's innovative website for the programme developed at that time, with its character profiles, time travel experiences back to 1973, trivia quizzes, and games. Also, to note: John Simm had not played The Master in Dr Who before Life on Mars was broadcast in 2006. A lot of candidates seemed to think this was the case, and so he attracted Dr Who audiences, but it was rather the other way around as Doctor Who (Season Three) was broadcast in 2008, and therefore built on the success of his role in LOM.

Humans:
Many candidates had a good grasp of C4's innovative marketing strategies for Humans, reflecting its own brand identity, and using social media and guerilla marketing tactics to create a buzz campaign. They were able to discuss specific publicity stunts and the creation of the hyperreal marketing campaign that included setting up fake companies, store fronts and comic con appearances. Some were also able to discuss actors' appearances on TV chat shows or the Radio 1 Breakfast show at the time of the launch of the programme. The effect of this was that they clearly demonstrated their understanding that this enhanced that buzz to get everyone talking about it, so fuelling the viral campaign.

On the other hand, some candidates had very limited understanding of marketing strategies and simply described a close up of Anita in a poster, without any further development, or they referred to the use of the colour green in the poster to signify the sci-fi genre. It was disappointing that they were not able to embrace a wider, more industry focused approach to how the programme was marketed, and why and how they had used the strategies that they did.

The Jinx:
There were very few responses for this documentary option. Of the responses available, many were very good and displayed a perceptive understanding of how this high-profile marketing campaign was constructed around the various layers of truth and reality of this 'true crime' documentary, its narrative storytelling and the interplay of actual current events feeding into its central enigma: 'is this a murderer?' For example, Jarecki's previous film based on the same story, the screening of this documentary series and how that interplayed with events in reality, reports in newspapers, magazines and TV news, as well as the ethics of the final episode being promoted as 'true crime' even as events unfolded with Durst's arrest. Many candidates had a very good grasp of this pitch as a marketing ploy. They were also able to demonstrate a good understanding of how the programme fitted into its HBO institutional context, and as such, marketed as a reputable quality programme with high production values.

SECTION B: MAGAZINES – Questions 41, 51 and 61

Briefly explain Gerbner's cultivation theory.
Refer to the set edition of Woman/ Woman's Realm/ Vogue to support your response. [5]

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

Most candidates were able to respond to this question with confidence and a satisfactory level of knowledge of the theory, at least referring to the idea that exposure to repeated patterns of representation over time can shape and influence the way in which people perceive the world around them. Some candidates were able to expand upon this very narrow understanding of Gerbner's theory and explain further ideas for example regarding mainstream values, mass behavioural change or resonance.

There were a number of difficulties with this short question:

- Some candidates had learned key words from the theory by heart but could not use the terms to explain the theory in a coherent way or apply it to the magazine.
- Many candidates had a good understanding of the theory but did not respond to the second part of the question, so they were not able to show their understanding by referring to specific textual examples from their chosen magazine.
- Conversely, some used their magazine to illustrate a partial knowledge of the theory.
- Some had a detailed K&U of the theory, but exemplification was either flawed, too brief or superficial.
- Some were able to express good K&U of both but were not able to demonstrate a detailed and accurate K&U of the theory together with confident exemplification.

It would be good practice to get learners into the habit of rehearsing this type of short question which can be applied across all areas of the specification: Explain the theory to demonstrate your knowledge. Refer to and apply it to a specific textual example to show your understanding.

SECTION B: MAGAZINES – Questions 42, 52 and 62

Explore how particular social groups may be misrepresented in the set edition of Woman / Woman's Realm / Vogue **[15]**

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

As this question assessed AO2, the focus should therefore be on analysis, as indicated by the command word 'explore'. Here, the candidates are implicitly being asked to explore how representations have been influenced by their historical context of production which makes us interpret representations differently from the perspective of the present day.

Many candidates struggled with the focus of this question, including some of the more able candidates who did not identify that it was asking them about how 'misrepresentations' of different social groups in the set issue are influenced by their context of production. To respond to this question, candidates needed to analyse their set product in relation to its 1960s context, and possibly also through the use of academic theory. A significant number did not even recognise that a question about misrepresentations was asking them about the key concept of representation; they seemed to misread it and veer straight to a discussion of audience and/or industry. There were some very strong and detailed responses that just missed out on relating possible misrepresentations to historical contexts, even implicitly, which was a shame. In addition, there tended to be a lot of industry background in the responses, suggesting for example that the reason Woman's Realm folded was due to its misrepresentations. Some explored the way contemporary Vogue magazine now celebrates diversity and so they thought that was better, which was valid, but tended to be more general observations about the magazine itself. They did not then develop their response to make an explicit comparison of the six decades difference of change in Vogue's social and cultural contexts, by illustrating their point by exploring specific set articles or adverts from the set product.

On the other hand, there was a lot of evidence of good use of relevant theory in this section, where candidates were able to discuss and apply various representation concepts from Hall, Butler, hooks and Gauntlett, through their analysis of detailed specific examples from the text, exploring the set issue through the theorist's perspective. This was excellent and should be encouraged as a way of preparing more effectively for this type of 'explore/ analysis' question.

SECTION C: ONLINE MEDIA - Questions 70 and 80

Option 1: Alfie Deyes
How far does technology impact on media language in online products?
Explore Alfie Deyes/Zoe Suggs to support your answer. **[20]**

Assessment Objectives: AO2 1 and 2:
Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to:
- analyse media products, including in relation to their contexts and through the use of academic theories.
- make judgements and draw conclusions.

This question seemed to cause candidates a lot of trouble and it was generally answered poorly. There was either too much focus on the development of digital technology, which seemed to invite a narrative response; or the focus was on simpler aspects of Media Language, such as mise en scene, dress codes, hairstyles, and colour- aspects of media language that are not impacted by technology at all. Both types of response then missed the exact focus of the question which was the impact of one upon the other. Very disappointingly, a significant number did not understand the basics of the term 'media language' and thought it was referring to speech.

There were a few very good responses in the higher bands who were able to engage with the question, explicitly exploring the extent of the impact of technology on the media language used by online texts, supporting their argument with some detailed exemplification. There were some references to appropriate theory, but the focus here should be on constructing a coherent and well substantiated argument, based on the candidate's own analysis of the text.

Some candidates over-complicated the question and veered off into long discussion of Zoella/Alfie as a brand, advent calendars, homophobic tweets and so on, and instead of focussing on Media Language, they diverted straight to audience including many long-winded uses of audience theory (Reception Theory and Fandoms in particular).

Quite a few candidates missed the objective of forming a cohesive argument for this question. Some higher band candidates directly addressed the 'how far/ to what extent' part of the question, and they recognised that this enabled them to construct their argument for this extended response question where the emphasis is on expressing a coherent and substantiated argument. When candidates directed their attention to this aspect of the question, they could develop their analysis in a logical and coherent way; they were then able to make judgements and draw conclusions from their analysis, for which they could be rewarded.

It would be worth spending time practicing this type of 'how far / to what extent' type of question which will always invite an extended response with the assessment objective (AO2): Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to make judgements and draw conclusions.

Summary of key points

- Centres should ensure candidates are fully aware of the four key conceptual areas and develop their confidence in applying relevant aspects of the theoretical framework associated with that key concept, particularly Media Language and Representation. Prepare for the examination by studying past questions and identifying which key concept is the focus of that question, and planning what could be discussed.
- Centres should ensure candidates to develop a full knowledge of different aspects of their set product rather than just one poster, one front cover, or one scene. This is an in-depth investigative component, comprised of rich texts with lots to explore, so if candidates have a thin repertoire of examples, their responses will inevitably be limited.
- Prepare candidates for the examination by training them to recognise the implications of certain command words, and how they are linked to particular assessment objectives. Candidates could rehearse short questions, in response to key command words, across all areas of the specification. For example: 'Explain the theory to demonstrate your knowledge of the theory. Refer to and apply it to a specific textual example to show your understanding of the theory'.

- Explore' a given aspect is asking them to analyse the set product, perhaps through a given context. Both could be useful plenary exercises and good practice for both short and longer questions. Teacher could refer to the section in the EDUQAS A level/AS level Guidance for Teaching that focuses on command words and what is expected in a response.

- Centres could encourage good practice by revising the 'how far/to what extent' type of question, which will always invite an extended response with the assessment objective 'apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to make judgements and draw conclusions' (AO2). Candidates could be encouraged to routinely complete their paragraphs to fulfil this objective.

MEDIA STUDIES

GCE AS

Summer 2023

COMPONENT 3: MEDIA PRODUCTION

General Comments

A majority of centres and candidates submitted full productions as detailed in the briefs and work reflected the range of briefs, however, tended to favour and focus on the print-based options. As with previous years, the most popular briefs were the magazine or film marketing briefs. It was good to see most candidates had been encouraged to select their own genre to work within, and the work demonstrated a range of genres. For some candidates it is necessary to advise them on the suitability of the genre and the need to consider how well they can meet the conventions of this genre. Some centres offered a range of briefs; however, in the main, centres tended to follow one or two briefs.
Generally, there was parity in the assessment across the briefs. Candidates responded positively to the briefs and were able to produce work that demonstrated their knowledge and understanding of media forms and genre conventions framed by theoretical framework. It was clear that centres had set appropriate tasks in order for candidates to meet the requirements of the brief and the need for the assessment to be independently developed and produced. All centres are advised to access exemplar work on the WJEC secure site to ascertain the standards for Component 3.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Administration

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

Coversheets

A majority of the coversheets were completed appropriately, including signatures of candidates and teachers and dates to authenticate the work. Most candidates identified research undertaken to inform their production and link to the brief.

Most candidates did complete the Statement of Aims and Intentions in Section B of the coversheet as required. It is essential candidates include a word count on this sheet and adhere to the word limit of 350 words.

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

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

Candidates must respond to the set brief for the year of assessment. Briefs are released annually, on 1st September in the year prior to assessment.

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

Most candidates adhered to the more detailed requirements of the brief in terms of length and features. However, centres should be reminded that simply meeting the requirements of the brief is not enough to place the work into the higher bands for Column 2. The first bullet point of column two of the marking grid does require a consideration of how conventions are used relevant to the chosen form, genre and industry context of the set brief. In some cases, this was not considered and consequentially, some candidates were over-rewarded for meeting the requirements of the brief.

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

The audio-visual material included in the online options should adhere to the requirements of the brief and should also consider the conventions of this piece of production. For example, an interview should make use of appropriate cinematography, sound, and lighting, and editing needs to be considered in order to meet the requirements of the production brief in terms of adhering to the codes and conventions of a media production, but also the appropriate use of media language. It is essential to ensure if the brief requires audio-visual material for the websites, this is included, if this is not the case, the production must be awarded appropriately.

The list of minimum requirements were mainly fulfilled, although some candidates need to pay particular attention to the total number of images, word counts, and length of audio-visual material as laid out in the briefs.

Statement of Aims and Intentions

It is essential that candidates have undertaken appropriate research into similar media products before writing the Statement of Aims and Intentions. Candidates should reference their research to explain how they will apply this knowledge and understanding to the creation of their own productions. A number of candidates did not mention their research at all, and as a result, their Statement of Aims and Intentions were often descriptive. As with previous years, candidates continue to struggle with applying their knowledge and understanding of the industry context. Candidates should be guided to begin with the specified companies detailed in the brief and select case studies based around those companies' output. There was some evidence of standardised or formulaic Statements of Aims and Intentions, whereby candidates had clearly been directed to mention particular theorists. This does not necessarily meet the requirements of the brief as the theorists were at times, name dropped or lacked relevance, rather than engaged with or applied to the production. Whilst guidance should be given to candidates to support their development and engagement with theories, this needs to encourage candidates to develop their own knowledge and understanding and application of theory rather than paying lip service to the theory.

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

Production

As mentioned, a majority of candidates followed print briefs (magazine or film marketing), with a very small number following the music marketing online brief. A variety of genres were produced and a majority of these were assessed appropriately. However, a number of centres had assessed work generously, with some centres not applying assessment consistently for all candidates, resulting in the rank order not being agreed. It is essential that centres apply the assessment criteria accurately across all briefs and candidate work to ensure fairness of the assessment process.

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

It was good to see that nearly all candidates used original images for their production.

Brief 1: Television
> No candidates from the samples completed this brief.

Brief 2: Magazines
> All submissions for this brief were print based this year, with no candidates or centres attempting to create an online website for a magazine.

A wide range of genres were engaged with, and it was mostly evident that candidates had researched their genre and developed their knowledge and understanding of the conventions of magazines and the genre.

The most common issues with this brief were students that did not consider the industry appropriate detail and conventions of the genre of magazine. This was evident where magazines did not follow a conventional layout in terms of use of columns for the double page spread or contents pages, and where key information such as page numbers, barcodes, prices were not included.

Some candidates did not clearly engage with the need for an appropriate mode of address, which resulted in a lack of ability for the production to clearly engage and address audiences, suggesting candidates need to develop their appreciation for this as a key focus. The magazine brief was commonly over-rewarded in light of the above-mentioned issues.

Brief 3: Film Marketing

A number of candidates completed the film marketing campaign, and only a few of these completed the online option.

Responses for both options commonly demonstrated appropriate genre signifiers and understanding of conventions by candidates. Some candidates did not show a clear understanding of industry whereby conventions and mode of address could be mainstream or independent, demonstrating a lack of clear understanding of the difference in mainstream versus independent.

Some candidates did not conform to recognised elements of DVD/BluRay covers, whereby candidates did not conform to the layout, use of thumbnails, blurbs or age ratings.

It should be noted DVD or BluRay covers should be uploaded to the correct scale / size and as one document rather than separate documents for the spine, front and the back. Some candidates did not complete the production to an accurate size and this should be considered in the assessment.

Brief 4: Music Marketing

No candidates submitted the music video option; however, a few candidates did submit the music marketing online option. As with previous years, the core concern was that few candidates engaged with appropriate case studies or researched the industry. Thus, production work did not clearly reflect industry conventions at times and showed a more generalised approach to music marketing.

Centres are advised to guide candidates to select artists and genres that closely match those listed in the brief and to prompt candidates to engage with industry context to ensure the brief can be met. A common issue with the music marketing website was the quality of the video page, whereby some candidates included 'interviews' with the artist; however, the use of media language in terms of framing, lighting, sound quality, and mode of address was not appropriate to engage an audience. This often led to over-rewarding, whereby the website did not clearly convey the genre, industry, or utilise media language to address the audience.

Summary of key points

- Centres should guide candidates to complete appropriate research, with a focus on the brief to ensure candidates are engaging with appropriate case studies and industry context. This is particularly relevant when considering industry context as this was the weakest element within the Statement of Aims and Intentions. Researching appropriately will support the candidate to ensure a clear understanding of genre, style, tone, and industry is developed prior to developing the production.

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