

Media Studies Development: latest news (September 2015)

Reminder: the final assessment for the current GCSE and AS/A level specifications will be Summer 2018.

Background

You'll be aware that in April 2015, after lengthy discussions between Ofqual and Awarding Organisations, GCSE and GCE Media Studies were amongst some 40 qualifications which were allowed to continue to the initial stages of development for first teaching from September 2017. Those initial stages were closely monitored by DfE and Ofqual to ensure that the subjects met their strict conditions (DfE are responsible for the content of specifications and Ofqual for assessment).

The consultation stage

After a lengthy process, DfE and Ofqual have now confirmed that the subject content and assessment objectives for both GCSE and GCE Media Studies can proceed to the public consultation stage (planned to be open from 10 Sept 2015 – see DfE and Ofqual websites). Although technically qualifications can be withdrawn throughout the development process, Media Studies is now in a much stronger position to be developed for first teaching from September 2017. Assuming all does run smoothly through the next stages, new, accredited specifications are planned to be available for teachers in the Autumn of 2016.

Stakeholders

A significant group of stakeholders was required to shape the development of the subject content – effectively, the minimum content which Awarding Organisations must include in their specifications. We are very grateful to those representatives from universities, the Bfi, the MEA, Creative Skillset and teachers who gave up time to advise on the development of the subject content.

Public Consultation

The subject content (which DfE is responsible for) and the assessment objectives (Ofqual's responsibility) should be open for consultation on DfE's and Ofqual's websites from 10 September to 5 November. We'd like to encourage you to respond!

What you'll see in the subject content

Both the Subject Content and the Assessment Objectives are formal documents and won't read like a specification. The Subject Content provides the framework for the minimum content which Awarding Organisations must include in their specifications. The Assessment Objectives set the framework for assessment with percentages allocated to each.

As with all subject developments, you'll realise that reformed qualifications are to be made more demanding, particularly at GCSE (see below).

Key changes from the previous specifications

GCSE

- there will be a significant increase in demand with the new specification (in line with all reformed GCSE qualifications)
- controlled assessment – to be called 'non-examination assessment' in reformed specifications – will be 30%
- production work must be individual and may not include film-based productions
- a greater emphasis on theoretical approaches within the subject
- media forms and products for study to be specified by the awarding organisation

- a requirement to study media products from different historical periods, products candidates would not normally engage with and emerging , future developments in the media
- a requirement to study how media products reflect the social, historical, political and industry contexts in which they are produced
- film to be studied only in the context of cross-media study, rather than as a primary object of study

A level and AS

- there will be a noticeable increase in demand with the new specification
- internal assessment – to be called 'non-examination assessment' in reformed specifications – will be 30% at both A level and AS
- the AS is a separate qualification which does not count towards the two year A level
- the structure of the AS will however overlap with the first year of a two year A level and will thus be 'co-teachable' with it
- production work must be individual and may not include film-based productions
- a requirement to study a wide range of specified media theories
- media forms and products for study to be specified by the awarding organisation
- a requirement to study media products from different historical periods and global settings, products candidates would not normally engage with and emerging , future developments in the media
- at A level, a requirement to study media products produced 1) pre-1950, 2) for a non-English speaking audience, 3) outside the commercial mainstream, 4) targeting or produced by a minority group
- a requirement to study how media products reflect the social, cultural, economic, historical, and political contexts in which they are produced
- film to be studied only in the context of cross-media study, rather than as a primary object of study

Outline timetable for Development

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| Sept and Oct 2015 | Initial stages of WJEC's Eduqas specification development: GCSE, A level and separate AS |
| Nov and Dec 2015 | Consultation with teachers over initial ideas for the specifications through CPDs and its website Awarding Organisations respond to results of DfE and Ofqual public consultation on Subject Content and Assessment Objectives. |
| May (tbc) 2016 | Specification & Sample Assessment Materials submitted to Ofqual for accreditation |
| Autumn 2016 | Accredited specifications made available to teachers, schools & colleges |
| Autumn 2016 & Easter 2017 | Events and CPDs to launch new specifications |

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| Sept 2017 | First teaching of new specifications (first assessment of GCSE and A level, Summer 2019/first assessment of separate AS, Summer 2018) |
| Summer 2018 | Final assessment of current, 'legacy' specifications (GCSE and AS/A level) |