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

Online Results Analysis

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

Annual Statistical Report

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper 1: Exploring Film</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper 2: Exploring Film outside Hollywood</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlled Assessment</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

On the whole the paper continued this year to be successful in allowing students of a wide range of abilities to demonstrate what they had learned and the application of such. Candidates were able to demonstrate successfully macro and micro analysis, industry awareness and creativity - the three main elements being assessed in this paper.

Question 1

This remains a solidly accessible and effective opening question, which enabled candidates to respond successfully and very few fail to grasp its overall intent.

(a) Although most candidates did identify an example of a special and/or visual effect, such as Superman flying or changing clothes in the phone box, centres are again reminded that the trigger word ‘identify’ should signpost the need for a specific example from the extract; although only a very small percentage of candidates did not make their response extract specific. A simple reference to ‘flying’ as an answer is not sufficient and candidates should be prepared to identify a specific example from the extract, a popular example being ‘Superman flying to Lois rescue’.

(b) Candidates engaged well with the idea of ‘why’ to equate it with making meaning. Most were able to explain how the special and/or visual effect worked on different levels. Be it as a way to show Superman’s power(s) and/or to excite / entertain the audience. The guidance for this kind of question should always be to keep the effect on the audience uppermost in any answer, even if explained from the perspective of director’s intention.

(c) The quality of response remains good for this question. The use of the descriptor ‘involve’ opened up a range of effective responses from the candidates. Most responded effectively in terms of the meaning of their chosen aspects, sound, camera and mise-en-scène being popular choices. Centres are reminded that candidates should be advised to respond directly to the question as it is asked. As usual candidates should cover only two micro features if they are to access the full mark range. Many answers addressed the, sound and camera in the extract and there is a good degree of confidence among candidates with regards to their use of correct terminology. In handling mise-en-scène centres should remind candidates that unless one aspect is dealt with in great depth and detail then we would expect at least 2 to qualify for the highest marks. Editing continues to be less well handled and centres should remind candidates that both style of transitions and the pace of cutting are the two central components to discuss here. Guidance on time management for (c) should still be stressed as answers on the second micro feature are often the weaker of the two (and was occasionally omitted entirely).
Question 2

Question 2 did seem to be slightly more problematic here than previous years. Some candidates seemed ill prepared for the topic of narrative. Centres should remind candidates that there are 6 potential genre areas based on the typical codes and conventions. Any one of setting, themes, characters, props or significant objects, narrative and style could feature in this question. The broad issue of similarity/dissimilarity or typicality being the underpinning of any response here.

(a) Candidates that identified a clear feature of Superhero narratives here set themselves up well for parts b and c. Some candidates were vague or nominated aspects of the clip that were not directly a narrative feature. If, however they discussed their nomination’s role in the narrative in 2b) then credit was given. Some candidates did answer with unsuitable suggestions that related to costume or character, aspects tested in this question in previous years. Centres should remind candidates that, at least initially, question 2 is still linked to the question 1 extract. So a clear example here could be ‘Superman rescuing Lois is the narrative formula of the hero saving the day’

(b) The best candidates discussed specific narrative features or ideas well here in terms of their typicality, the more vague answers largely referred to ‘all Superhero Movies use...” Most candidates were able successfully to interpret the term ‘typicality’ within the context of genre codes and conventions. The best answers were those that were able to give specific points of common usage that form the basis of the chosen aspect’s typicality.

(c) Successful answers here, in common with part a, were those that were able to nominate a clear narrative features and ideas across more than one film. Some answers veered into narrative theory such as Todorov but were only rewardable where they discussed them in the overall genre context. The best candidates for this question were able to draw on analysis and knowledge of a broad range films they had studied, the absolute bare minimum here is two films to compare and contrast. Answers ranged from the very basic response of describing where the chosen aspect of narrative appears, through similar usages, and the better answers dealt with both different and similar usages of the chosen narrative trope. The very best answers looked at how the narrative trope was used in subtly different ways across the genre and discussed why certain narrative appeared again and again without, seemingly, damaging the appeal of the genre to large audiences. Again, answers that consisted of lists or descriptions could not access the higher marks. A possible answer here may be ‘A narrative feature of all Superhero films is when the Superhero uses their powers to protect people, especially his ‘love interest’. Here in this set piece Superman save Lois from falling and the crowd from the helicopter. In The Incredible Hulk he fights The Abomination at the end to save people in Harlem and his love interest Betty Ross. In V For Vendetta V shows of his superior skills in escaping from the TV studio but this time it is different as he saves his eventual love interest Evey after she saves him. At first he saves her to protect himself from what she might tell the Finger men kidnapping her from the TV presenters house. This is different as his motivation is not the straight forward love relationship at first that we see in Superman and the Incredible Hulk (1).’
Question 3

Responses to question three, which attempts to assess knowledge of aspects of the industry elements of Hollywood filmmaking, seem now to be handed more confidently by the candidates. Most now discuss the examples in terms of how the examples concerned engage with and encourage people to go and see the film. And ultimately generate revenue for the studio. This year we looked for the candidates to consider the wider commercial (and to a lesser extent creative) reach of cinematic universe style franchising prevalent in Superhero films without such a direct emphasis on issues of marketing and promotion. The main theme of successful answers was how by extending and linking properties and merchandise across a range of properties the potential for mutually supporting commercial gain is increased. How anticipation, 'hype' or 'buzz' can be heightened and sustained through this approach across a range of activities and strategies. Responses fell into three broad categories: the lower mark responses typically described features from the items in the resource materials with non-existent or a very basic awareness of how they functioned to generate interest. Those in the middle ranges were able to take one or more examples from the resource material and discuss how this would engage or excite both fan and general audiences with some notion of how they were linked across the franchise. The higher order responses demonstrated a clear understanding of the difference between a tie-in and a spin off, necessary to gain the higher order marks. This then allowed the candidates to demonstrate an understanding of how many of these could work together in a continual and ongoing engagement with audiences of all types. Indeed, some more sophisticated responses discussed well how the strategies differed between Marvel and DC and the relative effectiveness of different approaches.

It should be remembered that this question is the main focus of what the candidates have studied in regard to the mainstream film industry and its commercial nature. Their answers are expected to reflect this knowledge and understanding. Marketing (as a major and essential feature of distribution) should always be a clear focus but other supporting concepts such as the nature of modern communication techniques and commercial franchising that serves to support and expand the marketing function are also important.

Candidates should also be clear on the requirements of this question. Whereas more media-style textual analysis of connotation and denotation (much rarer this year) may be useful, this is not the main aim of this question. Candidates need to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the commercial (marketing and promotion) role of the resource material and their own examples. They should aim to identify and discuss features which are designed to generate interest and engage audiences and be able to understand associated concepts such as the marketing creating 'hype' and/or 'buzz' and ultimately selling tickets.

Question 4

Question four was answered reasonably well this year although not without a couple of issues. The difference between tie-in and spin off did create a problem in a few cases but the main issue seemed to be the time honoured misreading of the question. There were also a few instances of candidates who did not complete it. Candidates should be reminded of two main things in regard to question four. Firstly, they should leave sufficient time to complete the question and secondly, they need to recognise that a major part of the question is being creative – they are required to come up with their own ideas!
(a)&(b) This was completed by virtually all candidates although some explained rather than described their items. The questions a) and b) are looking for a named items and 2 or three points of description of what it would look like or include rather than explaining how it would act to interest an audience or generate income. The candidates who did best here were those who took their lead from the stimulus material in suggesting ideas of their own.

(c) Again this year the quality of answers here tended to reflect how much attention had been paid to the bullet point advice as to form and content. Some candidates failed to appreciate or read clearly that the poster was for their spin off project although they were not penalised heavily for this as we were mainly looking for the creative use of poster and genre conventions. Candidates need to recognise that an 8-mark question will require them to respond in reasonable depth and thus shape the style of their response appropriately. The best answers reflected Superhero codes and conventions within the format of a poster. Candidates should be reminded that the resource material contains an example of the required format if issues of form need clarification; although this year the resource materials were examples of a teaser style candidates were not penalised for taking their lead from them particularly if this was reflected in their annotation. Annotation again proved a limiting factor for some candidates. They should be reminded that it is their opportunity (particularly for the less artistic) to explain and clarify their design choices; without it the higher marks cannot be accessed. Candidates should also be encouraged to use colour here as it can be a very useful reflection of Superhero movie codes and conventions.

(d) This year only a few candidates seemed to miss out the final part of the last question. Where timing is a potential issue candidates are advised to practice wherever possible. Most made good attempts to explain how one or both of their ideas would increase interest in the film and engage with specific audiences. Some did elect to explain one idea and provided that they did it in sufficient depth were still able to be rewarded the full mark.

Conclusion

Overall the response to the paper and its questions was wide and well informed. Both the candidates and their teachers should be commended on the good work that the majority of centres have obviously put in over their course of study. Thank you.
**Introduction**

The 2017 paper appeared to be received well by centres with students of all abilities able to access the marks. Most centres are now familiar with the expectations of the paper and the stepped questioning format allowed candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of their chosen text. The most popular films continue to be *Tsotsi*, *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* and *The Devil's Backbone* and these also remain some of the most successful. More centres appeared to study *The Wave* this year, which was also pleasing to see.

Candidates continue to be well prepared for the exam and it was pleasing to see that less centres appear to be 'prepping' students by teaching one key scene and one key character. The more varied answers received this year showed more engagement and allowed students to demonstrate their own knowledge and understanding of the text. As in former years, the best examination papers had clearly studied their chosen films in real depth.

Issues which have been problematic in the past, such as misunderstanding questions or not recognising key terms, were much less frequent this year which is excellent. Candidates recognised and used key terms well and showed a good understanding of elements such as 'representation.' Students also used film language to support their answers much more than in previous years and this really helped candidates access the higher levels.

**Question 1**

Most candidates answered question one well and were able to identify an important scene within the film. Some did not specify which scene they were referring to, for example they selected ‘the opening scene’ or ‘the scene where Bruno and Shmuel are at the fence’ in *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*. In such cases, answers were only awarded one mark. Students need to identify which part of the opening they are referring to or (in the above example) which particular meeting at the fence they have selected.

In part B, the best answers discussed the importance of their chosen scene in terms of its effect on the characters, themes / issues and the narrative itself. Lower band answers here usually identified the scene and described it.

Part C gave students a choice of film language elements to discuss. Some candidates chose to look at all aspects of film form. This often resulted in answers that lacked specific detail and was subsequently reflected in the marks awarded. Similarly, although the question asked candidates to discuss the scene selected in part A of the question, a minority of students referred to a different scene and this impacted on their achievable grade. The best answers discussed the correct scene in detail, looking at the meanings and responses generated by one or two aspects of film language.
Question 2

Akin to last year, most candidates attempted all sections of question two, which was pleasing to see as it gave candidates every opportunity to gain marks. Almost all candidates identified two characters within their chosen film. Some students failed to name both characters, despite this being requested in the question. Where characters were not named, the marks were adjusted accordingly.

Students were able to describe a key scene in which both characters appeared and the best answers were detailed, often giving evidence of sights, sounds and even smells. Some candidates discussed the scene in terms of its impact on the story or the characters themselves and this was also acceptable.

Part C, which asked students to explore the similarities and differences between the two characters was generally approached well. All candidates discussed similarities and most also explored the differences. The more basic answers here focused on physical attributes. The best answers here, coupled this with personality traits and links to wider issues and themes.

As in previous years, some students selected characters in part A that did not appear in many scenes together or were not main characters within their chosen film. This resulted in students struggling to answer parts B and C in any real detail. It is therefore advisable for students to read all parts of a question before attempting an answer.

Part D allows students to really engage with the question and show their knowledge and understanding of their chosen film as they are given an opportunity to explore any theme or issue from the given list. The lower ability candidates tended to be more descriptive of scenes for this question. The most able candidates here referred to key sequences and analysed the film language used within these sequences to show how the theme or issue was communicated to audiences. Some students failed to discuss two key scenes as required and this was reflected in the marks awarded. Although we did not penalise, a lot of students appeared to confuse ethnicity with religion.

Question 3

Most centres appear to be comfortable with the lengthier and more challenging question three and the many answers given were very strong. Answers seemed less rehearsed than in previous years, which was good to see as it resulted in work that demonstrated more engagement with the question. The best answers continue to be those which demonstrated real engagement with the question, allowing students to draw upon their knowledge of the text studied. Lower band answers tended to rely on narrative description and personal response. There was a dramatic reduction in the number of candidates discussing incorrect texts which was excellent to see and students appeared to be discussing their chosen film in detail.

Reminders for centres:

- The best examination papers demonstrate an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the whole film rather than one key character / setting / theme.
- Film language / reference to key sequences should be encouraged wherever possible and not just where specified.
- Candidates should be encouraged to read all parts of a question before answering.
- Candidates should take note of the words in **bold** within the questions to ensure they are not writing about more than they need to. This will help to focus their answers.
This was the penultimate entry for the GCSE Film Studies controlled assessment and it is clear that the specification is well established and understood by most centres. The vast majority of the entries came from centres who have taught the course before and centres have clearly made use of previous moderators reports, CPD materials and exemplar made available via the WJEC secure website. Where problems did arise this was often connected to generous application of the mark scheme rather than a misunderstanding of the assignment briefs and what is required.

The Film Exploration component continues to generate a wide variety of approaches. The films selected varied from old Hollywood ‘classics’ to the most contemporary films. There is no doubt that the candidate’s personal engagement with the film is a big factor for both the research and micro analysis tasks and it is often clear when a candidate has chosen a film because they love it – this was always the idea behind this component. There were fewer examples of whole classes using the same film, but there were several instances where several candidates had chosen the same film. I understand that this can happen organically, especially with films that are very popular at the moment. I would strongly suggest that where this does happen, candidates must choose different sequences for their analysis to avoid any potential for plagiarism.

The Film Research is the key component which gives a sense of how much the candidates have learned about film institutions and industries. This is occasionally overlooked by some candidates who see the task as an opportunity to show how much they know about a particular film. It is worth reminding candidates that the focus of this task is not ‘how much do you know about The Hunger Games: Mockingjay P1?’ but rather ‘what does The Hunger Games: Mockingjay P1 reveal about industry practices?’ Therefore simply stating that Mockingjay took $122,000,000 in its opening weekend tells us very little, we should expect candidates at level 3 and 4 to be able to point out that this was in fact the highest grossing weekend of any film in 2014 and helped the film become the second highest grossing film at the box office for the year. They may then go on to speculate why this could be, for example use of stars, established franchise, pre-sold through successful book series, front-loaded opening weekend marking campaign including TV adverts… this was the kind of thing that was seen in the work of the best candidates.

In addition to this the best examples were economic with the material they present and work within the word limit. This requires the ability to pick out the most important details and use this as a platform to demonstrate their knowledge of the film industry. In some cases there was little evidence that any editing of the work had taken place and the worst examples simply regurgitated – or in some cases cut and paste – all sorts of information with no sense of why it was more or less significant. One example was a candidate who included the global takings for American Sniper ($547,000,000) in their findings but did not discuss why the vast majority – 64% in fact - of the takings came from the USA ($350,000,000) or the fact that there was very little appetite for the film in some territories (it only took $11,000 in India for example).
The Micro Analysis is one of the aspects of the portfolio where the moderation team see few issues. It is clear that most centres understanding this task and what is required. The best examples come from students who choose a sequence which is rich in film language and therefore gives them lots to say. There is no problem in guiding candidates as to which aspects of film language they should be focussing on and this could be dependent on the clip but also your own strengths as a teacher and the point at which this component is completed – for instance it may well follow a few weeks of in-depth teaching on cinematography in relation to Superhero films. I would like to see more subject specific terminology being used, especially at level 3 and 4. There are a wealth of resources (print and web based) in this area and it would help candidates to articulate their ideas more effectively if they could extend beyond the identification of diegetic and non-diegetic sound to discuss contrapuntal sound, or the hyper-reality created by foley work, or the vococentrism that means that characters can always be heard regardless of the noise that exists in the background.

Some fantastic ideas for films are pitched by candidates and many are able to show that they have a real understating of what currently sells. The log-line, which seemed to confuse many, finally seems to be understood by most and few candidates miss out key components from this task. Most are presented as continuous prose and written to be spoken. Few still rely on PowerPoint slides to present this and I often find that those who do include material that isn’t needed and does not enhance their pitch – for example lots of generic pictures of their chosen stars.

The pre-production always generates a wealth of interesting work and some centres have really established a knack for producing high quality artefacts for this component. There is a wealth of exemplar material available but I would always direct candidates to look at real industry output. For example those who are designing merchandise to tie-in with their film should be looking on Amazon to see what merchandise was produced for similar films. Many candidates produce iPhone covers, but when you ask them how many of their friends have film branded iPhone covers the answer is usually none. This is closely connected to audience, if you look at the merchandise for Jurassic world, it is heavily targeted towards young boys with pyjamas, back-packs and Lego kits being the key things licenced to carry the iconic Jurassic World artwork (logo). Like the Film Research, candidates should be reminded that the pre-production task is not simply about the quality of the artefact they produce, it’s about what that reveals about their understanding of film language or film industries. The Storyboard and Screen play (now the most popular option and one which we are carrying through to the new specification) are tasks which focus on knowledge and understating of film language and film storytelling devices. The marketing campaign and Magazine Cover/Contents are about industry and how their film would be positioned in the marketplace. Centres should play to their own strengths – if you teach industries very well, it will show in the marketing campaigns produced by students.

Posters seem to be the most popular choice for Production and the best examples are indistinguishable from professional output. Level 3 and 4 candidates view this as a campaign and will use the different posters to focus on different aspects of the narrative or different stars as a way of extending the audience appeal. The worst examples re-use one single image across three or four posters which are almost identical. There still remains an issue with original images which really limits some candidates. In some cases original images are absent, in others they are poorly taken and out of focus. Studying real posters is the only way to develop an understanding of what different components are selected for inclusion in these highly constructed artefacts. The best candidates use a range of photographs and have clearly considered all aspects of mise-en-scene to maximise the impact of their images.
Video is the second most popular option and will also feature in the new specification as a solo production option. Every year I am impressed by the standard of these and technological advances mean that candidates can now produce quite sophisticated film extracts with limited resources. The best candidates use this to show their knowledge of film language and put what they have learned into practice. Their remains in issue with some centres and candidates not clearly identifying their role and as I have said in previous reports, they must focus on camera, editing or sound and they should be assessed on that aspect. Magazine features and websites are less popular options, but I would advise any centre choosing these to look closely at professional output.

Finally I would remind centres that the Moderators are there to support you and are always looking to uphold the centres marks where possible, your annotation and notes on the FL1 cover sheet really help with this and I would encourage you to include as much annotation - with phrases drawn directly from the mark scheme - as you can as this gives a clear picture of how the assessment criteria has been applied.