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# **GCE EXAMINERS' REPORTS**

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**GCE  
MEDIA STUDIES  
AS/Advanced**

**SUMMER 2023**

Grade boundary information for this subject is available on the WJEC public website at:  
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### **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.

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# MEDIA STUDIES

## General Certificate of Education

Summer 2023

### Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced

#### AS UNIT 1: INVESTIGATING THE MEDIA

##### General Comments

It is apparent from papers viewed that this year's Unit 1 examination was engaged with confidently overall. Learners for the most part were familiar with the expectations and demands of each question and the requirements of the assessment objectives. From this it may be discerned that on the whole learners were prepared for the paper and managed their time effectively across the three sections.

##### Comments on individual questions/sections

Q.1 Explore how audiences are positioned to respond to the WWF advertisement. [40]

In your answer you should consider:

- how media language communicates meaning
- Stuart Hall's reception theory

**AO1:** Responses will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of audience and media language from the conceptual framework.

**AO2:** Responses will apply knowledge and understanding of audience and media language to analysis of the audio-visual advert considering how audiences are positioned to respond.

The question required candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of audience positioning and the ways in which media language communicates meaning. The bullet points served to focus responses with the second bullet point requiring answers to consider Stuart Hall's reception theory. The resource material proved to be rich and accessible for candidates across the band range. Candidates were able to explore many different aspects of media language appropriate to moving image media such as: camera shots, movement, editing, and pace combined with consideration of sound codes, particularly the use of voice over in relation to the images. Responses focused on the ways in which the selection and combination of different elements of media language communicated meanings and positioned audiences to respond, and so all aspects of the question were incorporated. Best responses thoroughly explored the advertisement referring to details and considering the purpose of the advert and meanings encoded within to ensure audiences responded in the intended way which demonstrated knowledge and understanding of Hall. From the outset, successful answers used the stem of the question to focus their approach and considered *how audiences are positioned to respond* which kept responses focused on the question. The question also required reference to Stuart Hall's reception theory, and this was approached in different ways. Some candidates' responses embedded Hall's encoding model throughout and referred explicitly to this process.

These responses tended to be more assured however some responses did show knowledge and understanding of Hall by addressing the different ways audiences *might* respond, for example, if the audience negotiated a response or challenged the meanings intended. Some candidates addressed *audiences* explicitly considering who the likely target audience would be and linked this consideration to different models of categorisation. The vast majority of responses had a secure sense of the aims of the campaign advert and of its typical codes and conventions as outlined in the specification, which demonstrated good preparation for this type of advert. While the question set required reference to and application of Hall, other critical perspectives were referred to; most commonly Barthes but also Gerbner, Gauntlett and Bandura. Where these perspectives were used appropriately in response to the question they were rewarded. Overall, the resource material allowed for interesting, detailed, and varied responses. Learners were well prepared for an audio-visual resource as evident through the references to specific details within the advertisement. Best responses engaged with all aspects of the question and used subject specific language in order to communicate their knowledge and understanding. The vast majority of the responses were of an appropriate length for a 40-mark question. It was a pleasure to see candidates respond so well to this question.

## Section B: News in the Online Age

Q.2 (a) Explain the advantages of online news platforms for audiences/users. [10]

**AO1:** Responses will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of aspects of audience from the conceptual framework.

This was a straightforward question that asked candidates to demonstrate knowledge of the benefits of online news platforms for *audiences/users*. It is important for candidates to keep a focus on the question asked and to tailor their knowledge of news in response to that question. Candidates overall were able to make a range of valid points with the best responses giving accompanying detailed explanations of how online news benefitted users usually in relation to more traditional patterns of news consumption. Some responses did not focus on the advantages *for audiences/users* and instead wrote about advantages of online news platforms for news organisations and in doing so lost some focus on the question. Some responses made relevant points but were limited by brevity as for a ten mark question a range of points is expected. Although *application* of knowledge is not a requirement for this AO1 question some responses did refer to specific examples of online news platforms in order to support their explanation. It is important that the command word in a question is considered as *explain* suggests that initial points are supported and expanded to demonstrate the *understanding* element of this assessment objective. Some responses referred to critical perspectives particularly end of audience theory which although not a requirement was rewarded where it was used purposefully. Overall, this question was unproblematic, and the majority of candidates engaged with this question.

- Q.2 (b) How does media language construct versions of reality. Explore the representation of a hard news story in two news products you have studied.

[20]

**AO1:** Responses will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of media language and representations.

**AO2:** Responses will apply knowledge and understanding of media language and representations by analysing two news products studied.

For this question, candidates are expected to have studied products set by the WJEC. The AO1 and AO2 assessment objectives are equally weighted with ten marks for knowledge and understanding and ten marks for application of knowledge and understanding through analysis. The question asked candidates to explore how media language constructs ‘versions of reality’ in relation to two set news products. The majority of candidate responses did show understanding of the phrase *versions of reality* and fully engaged with the role of media language in constructing versions of the same news stories and how the story was presented differently according to the ethos news products analysed. Best responses also showed understanding of how the combination of different elements of media language such as the use of images and written language helped to communicate points of view and values. Responses in the middle band tended to be more straightforward but still showed understanding of the way in which news products shaped the way in which a news story was represented with balanced application of the two news products studied. There were a range of appropriate hard news stories studied including: political news stories notably *party gate*, the war in Ukraine and human tragedies. However, this year there were many rubric infringements that had been overcome in previous years. Some of these rubrics occurred through responses referring to news products that are not set by the WJEC and are not featured in the specification. There were many references to *The Sun* and *The Daily Mail* neither of which are set products. Other rubrics included responses that only referred to one set product not *two* that was specified in the question or even responses that referred to two newspaper options. Some candidates did not name the set products being referred to so making their answers quite generalised.

As this section proved the most problematic in terms of rubric infringements by candidates it is advisable that the specification is referred to when planning to teach this unit. The specification states that centres must select products for study from the list provided. Candidates must study one option from each of the groups listed which include: a newspaper and its online equivalent; a news website and radio news online.

## Section C: Film Industries – from Wales to Hollywood

- Q.3 (a) Explain the role of film regulation in the UK. [10]

**AO1:** responses will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of aspects of media industries and regulation.

This question required candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of media industries [AO1]. The candidates were asked to explain the role of film regulation in the UK. Best responses were able to engage in a knowledgeable and focused way on the regulatory framework, clearly explaining the role of the BBFC and possibly some of the challenges faced with the impact of new digital platforms. Some candidates used the films they had studied for this section to support and develop points leading to the detailed explanation needed for the top band. Unfortunately, there were many candidates who did not seem to know what was meant by *film regulation* and either did not attempt to answer the question or wrote about the film industry without any relevant engagement with regulation itself which was disappointing. However, those candidates who had clearly studied the regulatory framework of film in the UK were able to explore the role of regulation for both audiences and filmmakers.

- Q.3 (b) Steve Neale states that genres involve repetition and difference. Explore this idea in relation to the film made in Wales you have studied. [20]

This question requires that candidates show knowledge and understanding in relation to the question asked and apply that knowledge and understanding to the film made in Wales that was studied in class and chosen from the set product options: AO1 and AO2 are equally weighted in this question.

Responses in the higher bands demonstrated knowledge and understanding of *genre* particularly the principles of repetition and difference related to audience recognition and expectations, and the importance of genre for the film industry. An explicit referencing of Neale was expected with the best answers engaging with the *explore* aspect of the question as candidates evaluated the extent to which the film made in Wales, they had studied showed instances of repetition or difference to other genre films. The best responses referred in detail to the film studied to explain how the film was typical or different to what audiences might expect. Responses explored aspects of narrative, characters, settings, situations, the technical codes such as lighting, editing, camera work and so on related to specific key scenes, which is necessary for the AO2 assessment objective. Responses in the middle band focused on more straightforward or obvious aspects of film genre and the key principles of repetition and difference, while those in the lower bands showed limited knowledge of what was meant by repetition and difference although most candidates understood what was meant by genre. There were few rubrics in this question, and it was good to see the full range of options studied. Candidates overall knew their films really well and were able to select relevant aspects to support their analysis.

## Summary of key points

Overall, the areas of the paper were taught well by centres as learners knew what was expected of them in terms of assessment objectives and response length. As a result, there was good time management across the paper. There was also some strong use of critical perspectives across questions as learners were keen to demonstrate what they had learned, and they were able to adeptly apply these appropriately.

However, it was disappointing to see the number of rubric infringements in Section B question 2b and the number of not attempted responses in 3a.

- It is advised that candidates are instructed explicitly as to the set products they must refer to in the actual exam according to the question asked.
- In Section B question 2 candidates should avoid over generalising and use specific examples from their set products to support points made.
- Candidates need to address all of the facets of a question in their response and so when teaching exam technique deconstructing the question is a good approach to take in class with learners as a starting point.

## **MEDIA STUDIES**

**General Certificate of Education**

**Summer 2023**

**Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced**

### **AS UNIT 2 : CREATING A MEDIA PRODUCT**

#### **General Comments**

Moderators reported seeing some excellent work again this year. It was good to see that there were very few rubric infringements with most centres meeting the requirements of the Specification by selecting the appropriate brief and option for their candidates. Some centres seemed unaware that there had been updates to some briefs – these can be found by downloading the current version of the specification. Very few centres submitted incomplete work for moderation. Most centres opted for Brief 1 or 3, with very few opting for Brief 2. More centres appear to be offering print rather than audio visual and some centres offered their candidates a choice. A significant minority of candidates exceeded the word limits for their Research and Reflective Analysis. Centres must adhere to the requirements on page 54 of the Specification and penalise candidates who exceed the limit. Work that falls outside the word limit cannot be assessed.

#### **Comments on individual questions/sections**

##### **Administration**

Most work was uploaded by the deadline and was easily accessible to moderators. It would help enormously if centres could label folders clearly with the candidate's surname and what it is: for example: surname, research; surname, planning etc. Tags like media work, coursework, John's work, Kate's final draft etc. are not helpful.

Cover sheets were accurately completed in the main, making it easier to see how assessment had been applied. A notable exception was the lack of dates and initials for reviewing the work from a small minority of centres as well as completing and signing of Section C and D. Both are essential. Annotation on the work itself would be helpful to the moderation process so that moderators can better understand how centres have awarded marks.

##### **Research**

Many candidates submitted relevant and detailed research which adhered to the requirements outlined on page 23 of the Specification. Research is a key element of the NEA, as it is this that should inform candidates' Planning and Production. Consequently, the materials selected by candidates for their research must be relevant to the brief – there were some examples of candidates researching texts unrelated to their Production. As mentioned above, there were several examples of candidates who had far exceeded the upper word limit (4000 words plus in some cases) however centre comments and the marks awarded did not reflect this. Work that falls outside the specified word limit cannot be assessed.

Theory must be relevant and well anchored, and assessment must take into consideration the relevance and application of it. Some candidates did not focus on all the media concepts assessed in this element – genre, representation and audience.

With reference to Brief 1, Option 2 and Brief 3, Option 2, too many candidates researched only magazine adverts or theatrical film posters – rather than researching other forms that they are required to produce (for example digital banner posters).

It should be remembered that this is not a piece of textual analysis, but a piece of research to inform the rest of the NEA.

## **Planning**

This was the first year that Planning has been assessed since 2019. Inevitably, there were some issues at a significant minority of centres. Only storyboards can be assessed for the AV briefs, nothing else. Some centres had included extraneous information (e.g. mood boards, plot outlines etc) which cannot be assessed. Storyboards are pre-production tasks and should therefore not contain stills from the Production. For print and online briefs, only draft versions of each page can be assessed. Centres should not assess any other material when awarding marks for Planning. Draft pages should comprise of images and text but should be more developed than basic diagrams showing elements such as ‘Title’, ‘Credit block’ etc and bear a resemblance to the finished Production. Many centres had presented well-developed planning that reflected the research findings of their candidates.

## **Production**

Once again, many candidates produced some wonderfully creative texts – for example some brilliant music videos and some extremely well-crafted film advertising texts were seen by moderators - but there is still a tendency amongst a significant minority of centres to over reward Production work. More care must be taken when applying the mark scheme. There are three distinct columns under which candidates may be awarded marks and the requirements should also be linked back to the candidate’s selected brief. For example, a candidate who has produced advertisements for Brief 1, Option 2 must have applied an understanding of representations of gender and age to be awarded (good) marks under column 2. An advertising campaign with no people in it cannot achieve this. Technical skills were also generously awarded in some cases, particularly where pixelated and blurred images were used.

Some further points:

- Candidates must use original photographs in their print work (5 or 6 as a minimum, depending on the brief).
- Many candidates need to pay more attention to the industry and audience requirements.
- of their brief. For example, too many horror films (Brief 3, Option 2) continue to have 18 certificates when the specified audience is ages 16 – 25 and the young professional audience for Brief 1, Option 2 was sometimes ignored.
- Candidates opting for Brief 2 must pay close attention to the details in column 3.

## **Reflective Analysis**

The Reflective Analysis has a very specific purpose. Candidates must analyse and evaluate their Production work in relation to the 3 texts used in their Research. They should focus on the key genre conventions incorporated into their productions, the representation issues raised by the production and how media language (and other conventions) has been used to target the specified audience. Candidates who simply evaluate their own Production work with no reference to these elements are not adhering to the specification requirements and assessment here was often too generous as a result. Some candidates referenced texts not studied in their Research.

Candidates who called their Reflective Analysis a 'Reflective Analysis' tended to produce much better work than those who called it an evaluation, a write-up or even a report. They were often more focused and coherent.

## **Summary of key points**

- Candidates must adhere to the requirements of their selected brief and centres should check that briefs used are current.
- Research, Planning and Production should clearly link and work should develop in a logical sequence.
- Word limits must be adhered to for the Research and Reflective Analysis. Candidates who exceed the word limits (+/-10%) should be penalised by centres as outlined on page 54 of the specification.
- Production Assessment is outlined under three separate columns in the mark scheme, but candidates do not have to be awarded within the same band for each column. Indeed, this may well not be the case.
- The Reflective Analysis must adhere to the requirements outlined on page 29 of the specification. Candidates must refer to all three texts selected for their research and refer to the bullet points outlined.

## **MEDIA STUDIES**

### **General Certificate of Education**

**Summer 2023**

### **Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced**

## **AL UNIT 3 : MEDIA IN THE GLOBAL AGE**

### **General Comments**

Due to potential disruptions in teaching time as a result of potential national lockdowns, the Unit 3 paper was adapted to consider the needs of candidates and restrictions were duly placed on the taught specification for 2023. Centres were instructed not to teach the European Crime Drama, the Alternative Magazine and to only teach two Action Games (forgoing the Game in Other Genre choice) for the final section.

All centres abided by these alterations to the rubric.

Nonetheless, the paper still provided a variety of questions which encompassed the specification of the subject. Candidates were instructed to engage with questions that entailed knowledge of industry, social/historical contexts and critical perspectives. Centres understood the fundamental requirements of the specification. Candidates found the paper accessible and there were strong responses across the cohort.

### **Comments on individual questions/sections**

#### **Section A:**

Television AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key concepts and critical perspectives of media AO2: Apply knowledge and understanding of the key concepts of media studies to analyse media products.

- Q.1 (a) How does the crime drama genre reflect historical contexts? Explore examples from Hinterland and the historical crime drama you have studied. [30]

This question required that candidates used the case study Hinterland along with their chosen historical drama in reference to the specification requirement that 'learners should have an awareness of the historical significance of television, its evolution within the media and how it changes in response to industry and audience factors' along with how 'products relate to their wider historical contexts'.

Answers often focussed on gender roles within the show, and more successful responses linked these representations to genre contexts, i.e., Catrin being a female antagonist as well as a female victim, with a morally complex motivation. Close attention was similarly applied to the historical texts. Led by the question, candidates looked at the challenge to contextual patriarchy within Prime Suspect, and more sophisticated answers tackled how the product presented corruption within the police: an evaluation within the genre. More successful candidates referred in knowledgeable detail to media language: how the camera, sound or other technical codes were used to communicate meaning.

Prime Suspect was the favoured historical product, with Cracker second: effective answers focused on the specific historical events referred to in that product and McGovern's socially motivated reputation as a producer. Morse was a close third, the unreconstructed lead character providing a fruitful point of comparison to Mathias. Candidates brought in Neale to strong effect when explaining the dynamic nature of genre, and more successful responses honoured the genre aspect of the question in detail.

- Q.1 (b) How does the crime drama genre reflect social contexts? Explore examples from Hinterland and the historical crime drama you have studied. [30]

This question aimed to cover 'how media products are shaped or informed by particular cultural influences such as genres, styles, movements and the work of other media producers' and 'how audience responses to and interpretations of media products reflect social and cultural circumstances'. When candidates chose a historical crime drama to compare with Hinterland, again Prime Suspect was by far the most popular choice. The response to this question was again successful. The question was approachable to less able candidates, who accessed the question via the visible gender politics of the products. More confident candidates probed further, examining how crimes in chosen products happened to girls and women, and the ways in which this both reflected social contexts but also served genre expectations. Although most responses chose to discuss gender, the products allowed for varied approaches to this question with other candidates fashioning strong arguments concerning Cracker's evaluation of class, and the reflection of tabloid fears in Touching Evil. Again, more sophisticated responses engaged with deep analysis of media language and representation, while others approached the question applying straightforward, but suitably selected, plot details. Purposeful application of critical theory was often characteristic of a successful response.

## Section B: Magazines

AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key concepts and critical perspectives of media.

AO2: Apply knowledge and understanding of the key concepts of media studies to analyse media products.

- Q.2 (a) Van Zoonen argues that the display of women's bodies as 'objects to be looked at' is a core element of western patriarchal culture. Explore this idea in relation to the mainstream and non-mainstream magazines you have studied. [30]

This question asked candidates to explore the mainstream magazine and the historical magazine studied in reference to the specification requirement that learners look at 'how social and cultural groups are represented' and 'how representations embody values, attitudes, beliefs, ideologies and discourses, which may be reinforced across a range of media' within the framework of Van Zoonen's axiom. Candidates applied Van Zoonen fluently and 2a was the favoured second question, perhaps indicating how relevant candidates perceive Van Zoonen to be.

Cosmopolitan and Men's Health were the principal choices for the mainstream magazine, while the historical choice was evenly represented. Candidates were agile when applying theory, adapting their approach and challenging the critical perspective with regards to the almost exclusively masculine content of Men's Health. Some original candidates built upon Van Zoonen by explaining how magazines such as Cosmopolitan display women for an active female audience, with these constructions not necessarily functioning as propaganda for a patriarchal culture. Furthermore, more successful candidates engaged in deeper media analysis of the texts and used other critical perspectives to support their answers. Occasionally, there were analytical references to print iterations of the products wherein candidates deconstructed front covers, despite page 36 of the specification clearly stating that the contemporary magazines studied should be online versions.

- Q.2 (b) David Gauntlett states that the media today offer us a diverse range of stars, icons and characters from whom we may 'pick and mix' different ideas. Explore this idea in relation to the mainstream and historical magazines you have studied. [30]

This was an accessible question wherein the essence of Gauntlett's perspective concerning the media of today and then was suited to the nature of the products, and appropriately applied to contemporary and historical magazines. The aspirational nature of magazines and how the industry 'maintains varieties of audiences' using content was investigated. Candidates approached this question with foci regarding 'how audiences may be positioned by representations and may respond to and interpret them' and 'how audience responses to and interpretations of media representations reflect social and cultural circumstances', successfully applying the content of their chosen products to the respective social contexts of the products' target audiences, i.e., the spornosexual ideologies of Men's Health were often mentioned to as a contemporary phenomenon acknowledged by the magazine. Responses used clear application of detail from products which developed a variety of arguments. More sophisticated candidates wrote about how media institutions exploit the idiosyncratic needs of audiences via advertising and idealised representations. Critical perspectives beyond Gauntlett were judiciously used to further responses, and, once again, more successful candidates engaged in deeper media analysis of the texts and the way in which media language and mode of address communicates meaning to audiences. There was a similar problem with the use of print magazine exemplar, rather than online press, to answer the question.

## Section C: Video Games

AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key concepts and critical perspectives of media.

AO2: Apply knowledge and understanding of the key concepts of media studies to analyse media products.

- Q.3 (a) How do technological changes influence the video games industry? Explore with reference to the two action-led franchise games you have studied. [30]

This was a versatile question which could be approached from a variety of angles. Candidates often reviewed the verisimilitude of graphics and gaming, with more ambitious responses linking such discussions to Baudrillard. Another ubiquitous perspective was Bandura, who candidates engaged with in order to develop arguments regarding the developing realism of games. GTA was a very popular choice here, although there were some very interesting explorations of Tomb Raider, too: the latter focusing on how representations of Lara Croft have evolved due to cultural contexts and technological change. Candidates discussed how interactive gaming sustains the industry, with sensible application of Jenkins. More niche aspects of technological change were explored when candidates looked at the phenomena of 'modding' and how audiences can remix productions to reflect their own identity and social contexts. Exploration and application of how games use media language, and subject specific terminology, almost always proved to support and bolster responses.

- Q.3 (b) How important are other media industries to the video games industry? Explore with reference to the two action-led franchise games you have studied. [30]

Candidates approached this question from several different angles, providing a selection of successful responses. Some candidates looked at media supplementary to the video game product like the films made of the Tomb Raider franchise and Assassin's Creed, the comic book versions of Mass Effect, exploring how these products promoted the video games and built upon the narrative and representations within. Other candidates explored marketing materials, and, in the case of more able responses, how this material was distributed and exhibited on different platforms, acknowledging the 'multi-platform nature of the contemporary media and the centrality of online and social media platforms in distributing, accessing and participating in the media'. Candidates who applied the idiosyncratic use of media language within products and explored the multi-platform nature of video games were successful when answering this question.

In general candidates answered Section 3 last, which occasionally resulted in truncated responses as time ran out.

## Summary of key points

- More successful candidates had a secure and applicable understanding of critical perspectives and were able to use these theories across the paper in a variety of interesting and purposeful ways.
- The modern magazines should be taught with respect for their digital distribution and format.
- It is imperative that media contexts- social, cultural and historical- are continued to be taught with fealty to their definitions on page 12 of the specification.
- Candidates should be encouraged to apply considered evaluation of how media products use media language to create meaning.
- Candidates should be encouraged to evaluate questions and recognise their polysemic nature, before adapting their understanding accordingly.

## **MEDIA STUDIES**

### **General Certificate of Education**

**Summer 2023**

### **Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced**

## **AL UNIT 4: CREATING A CROSS MEDIA PRODUCTION**

### **General Comments**

It was pleasing to see how candidates had worked effectively to fulfil the full requirements of the Specification this series, following the disruptions and adaptations of the Covid period. It was encouraging to see that the majority of candidates had engaged well with the different elements of the briefs and some excellent work was evident once again this year. A small number of centres did not adhere to the requirements outlined for each element of this Unit meaning that those candidates could not fully address the assessment criteria. This often resulted in these candidates being over-rewarded. Centres are to be reminded that only work which falls within the specified word counts can be assessed. Once again this year, most centres appeared to have offered candidates free choice of brief with some taking a whole centre approach. The majority of centres opted for Brief 2, the print option but there was an increase in the number of candidates choosing Brief 1 and it was encouraging to see more evidence of audio-visual work presented for moderation.

### **Comments on individual questions/sections**

#### **Administration:**

- This element was generally well completed with plenty of evidence of good practice including clearly labelled files, organised candidate folders, detailed cover sheets and personalised candidate comments which justified awarding.
- Most centres met the May 15<sup>th</sup> deadline, where this had not been possible, centres applied for a formal extension from the WJEC.
- While most centres successfully uploaded the work of all candidates using appropriate file formats, moderators reported far greater issues with missing work, the use of inappropriate file formats or a failure to upload the work of all candidates in the sample this year.
- Whilst it is no longer a requirement to annotate individual pieces of work (but much appreciated by the moderator), the expectation is that the comments on the cover sheets should reference the mark grid and fully reflect how marks were awarded with brief examples from the work itself. Without this, it difficult for moderators to understand how the assessment criteria has been applied.
- It is a requirement that the coversheets are completed in detail by both assessors and candidates, although not all centres complied and, in these instances, cover sheets were incomplete. Many candidates omitted to fill out the section relating to the Completion of Cross-Media Production including details of products, including their length, or the URL of a website has been produced, which is an important element of contextualising the work.

- It is worth noting that some centres only included a global mark for the Cross-Media Production element on the cover sheet and not two separate marks, one for each column of the assessment grid, making it difficult to understand how the final judgement had been reached.
- Still prevalent this year but to a much lesser degree were generic assessor comments lifted word for word from the specification without any personalisation to the individual candidate.
- Centres should note that the GDPR consent form should be completed with participant details, even if they do not give permission for the work to be shared as a resource.

## **Investigative Research**

There was evidence this year of some excellent Investigative Research essays which showed a clear sense of purpose and a high level of engagement, which were a pleasure to read.

### **The most effective investigative research work demonstrated the following:**

- Research focused on a product comparable to candidates' chosen Production.
- The product selected for research was comparable to those produced by publishers/broadcasters stipulated in the respective briefs.
- The investigation focussed on one edition of a magazine or episode of a TV programme was and analysed effectively.
- The focus of the research was on one key concept of either genre, narrative, or representation as outlined in the Specification.
- The use of clearly referenced sources such as textbooks, journals, essays and academically credible websites cited in a bibliography of at least 5 items.
- Application of Critical perspectives to candidates' primary research; the best work used the Harvard referencing system or similar referencing systems, including footnotes.
- Perceptive arguments and conclusions were constructed via thorough research which demonstrated an understanding of a key media concept.

### **Common issues identified through the moderation process which limited the effectiveness of the Investigative Research and, in some cases, created problems throughout all elements of candidates' work were:**

- Research that focused on an overview/history of a product; this was especially apparent where candidates had chosen Brief 2 (Print) .
- Lack of exploration on conceptual research in favour of industry research resulting in a general textual analysis.
- An exploration of more than one key concept in in Investigation.
- More than one product being researched.
- Research was not linked to any specific media product resulting in a generalised overview.
- Research which encouraged a focus on audience, rather than on a key concept as outlined in the Specification.
- Description rather than analysis, for example, description of the basic visual codes or a simple narration of the plot at the expense of exploration and analysis of the technical features of the texts.
- Reference to candidates' intentions for their own Production.
- Investigations that were too brief and therefore self-limiting due to a lack of exploration of the concept chosen for research.

## **Development Outline**

Development Outlines tended to adhere to the requirements of the Specification and were fairly well written on the whole. It is important to note that this element should not offer a submission of research findings but rather the focus must be on the candidates' plans for their production, informed by their research. There were a few minor cases where the Investigative Research and Development Outline were merged. Some candidates incorporated a concluding paragraph to the Investigative Research outlining their findings alongside intentions for their production, which is not the requirement for this element, making it difficult to establish how marks were reached. The Development Outline and the Investigative Research are two discreet tasks and should be submitted for moderation as such. Most candidates had been fairly accurately assessed for this element with the majority placed in the correct bands.

### **The most effective displayed the following features:**

- Key findings from the Investigative Research were outlined clearly in either bullet point or continuous prose. Either was acceptable.
- A clear sense of how the findings would be developed into the Production.
- Word limits were adhered to which helped to focus candidates.

### **Some issues which limited the effectiveness of the Development Outline:**

- Some candidates wrote about their production process as well as the completed production rather than focus on how investigation findings would be developed in their cross-media production.
- Some candidates offered an overview of their research findings without exemplifying how it would develop their cross-media production in order to demonstrate their creative intentions.
- Some candidates referred to additional research not discussed in the Investigative Research.

## **Cross-Media Production**

Moderators reported seeing some impressive production work this year where the standard of all elements was technically and creatively excellent, adhering to all the requirements set out in the brief. Band 5 work also typically reflected sophisticated knowledge and understanding of media language derived from highly relevant research where the intentions from the Development Outline were realised. In general, there was greater over-rewarding for the Production element where codes and conventions of the genre and form were not as high as the marks awarded compared to national standards. There were many instances of candidates being placed within the correct band but of marking being generous within the band.

### **The most effective Productions displayed the following features:**

- A highly competent realisation of the brief, with all elements produced to an equal standard.
- A detailed development of research findings and conclusions into the production artefact/s.
- Convincing use of the relevant genre conventions of the media forms produced, including their industry contexts. Detailed intentions in the Development Outline helped achieve this.

- Representations which were purposefully constructed through sustained use of appropriate media language.
- Levels of technical competence appropriate for the marks awarded, for example, effective editing, appropriate shot choice, effective layout and design.
- In audio-visual productions the genre codes were effectively constructed through mise-en-scene, character representations and audience address using effective narrative and production codes and values.
- Inclusion of the required amount of original footage and images.
- All elements of the Production produced to an equal standard.

#### **Common issues which limited the effectiveness of the Production included:**

- Research findings and conclusions only tenuously applied; most often where candidates failed to investigate an appropriate comparable product, or more than one comparable product. In these cases, the production was not representative of the genre/form studied for research.
- Relevant codes and conventions of the media forms produced not adhered to, most commonly with the print-based productions, where there were issues such as missing page numbers, pricing or edition numbers; often due to candidates not having analysed appropriate texts in their Investigative Research.
- Some magazines were produced using screen shots from the audio-visual element rather than original images produced for the print productions. This practise doesn't allow candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of industry use of promotional and marketing materials.
- Lower levels of technical competence than the specification requires.
- An insufficient number of original images or footage.
- Candidates failing to produce all elements of the brief or producing them to an unequal standard.

#### **Critical Analysis**

For this element, candidates are required to analyse how the media concept researched in their Investigative Research is reflected in their Cross-Media Production whilst providing reference to relevant critical perspectives. The Critical Analysis serves a specific purpose. It is not an evaluation of the production process and final production pieces. The focus should be on how candidates' chosen key concept has been used in the production and the reasons for the approach taken in creating each element; as well as a justification as to how key aspects of the production meet the industry and audience requirements of the brief. Candidates who evaluate their own production work with no reference to these elements are not adhering to the Specification requirements. Where this was the case, assessment was generous, though overall this element was generally accurately assessed. Where there was over-rewarding, candidates, for the most part had been placed in the correct bands.

#### **The most effective Critical Analyses demonstrated the following features:**

- A focussed application of knowledge and understanding of media language, representations, industries, and audiences and how they impacted the production.
- An effective ability to evaluate the use of key media concepts in the production work in relation to the research findings and conclusions.
- Effective communication of ideas with appropriately selected and applied Critical Perspectives.
- Sustained use of Media Language.

### **Less effective Critical Analyses were characterised by:**

- Discussion of the production processes such as choice of main image, selection of mise-en-scene elements or hindrances during the creation of the print work or filming and editing in the case of audio-visual work.
- A consideration of areas for improvement in each element of the production, often discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the work.
- The introduction and discussion of new research / texts which did not appear in the investigation.
- The lack of explicit reference to the concept researched which often led to a lack of analysis of that concept, as required by the Specification.

### **Summary of key points**

Unit 4 requires that candidates must adhere to the requirements of their selected brief in order to fully meet the requirements set out by this Specification and thus meet the Aims and Objectives of the assessment criteria. Centres are encouraged to contact the media team at WJEC if there is any clarification required on the specification requirements. Exemplar work is available of the WJEC secure site for reference of national standards within each band.

- The Investigative Research had clearly been well taught with many candidates demonstrating excellent knowledge and understanding of their chosen concept and further applied that concept to structure an effective analysis of their chosen research product.
- Once again, this year, Critical Perspectives were generally well applied with very little evidence of theory downloading which was encouraging. Where this was apparent, or where there was a lack of relevant and appropriate theory, it was difficult for candidates to demonstrate the required understanding of their chosen concept. Those candidates who reached the higher assessment bands had selected appropriate theorists relevant to their chosen concepts and were able to apply these aspects to structure a more effective and detailed textual analysis of the research product.
- Work of candidates in the higher assessment bands featured the inclusion of a wide range of subject specific terminology, which was used with consistency across each written element of Unit 4.
- The most frequent over-rewarding was seen this year was in relation to the Investigative Research and Production and in some cases, this was significant. In many instances, the Investigative Research had been generously assessed where candidates failed to apply Critical Perspectives to primary research in the form of detailed textual analysis. Another feature of over rewarding was the lack of focus on a clear research concept with a tendency towards general textual analysis.
- There was some evidence of candidate work being significantly under the word count meaning that the opportunity for exploring the chosen concept in detail was lost and thus self-penalising. Making full use of the word count is to be encouraged to present as much of the research findings as possible.
- It was encouraging to see a wide range of research being employed once again this year and notably, the rise of original theorists' work referenced as expected in an academic investigation with very few candidates drawing research purely from inappropriate, on-line sources such as Wikipedia, Slide share and blogs.
- A very small minority of candidates did not include a bibliography, as required.

- A few candidates failed to investigate a product comparable with their cross-media production; this was evident where candidates had investigated magazines from publishers other than those stated in the briefs.
- Productions tended to be over-rewarded for two reasons; Productions were over-rewarded for inconsistent use of conventions of the form or for lack of technical competence and included blurred or pixilated images, cover lines cropped off the page, text covering the main image, placement of images and copy in print work. In some cases, where the codes and conventions of the form produced were not apparent, it was possibly because candidates had not investigated an appropriate comparable product. This was particular to print-based work.
- There were also issues with some candidates failing to adhere to the required number of original images and / or word count for the articles in print work.
- Candidates who achieved the higher assessment bands had paid particular attention to the technical skill highlighted in those levels.
- Where issues of over-rewarding was seen in audio-visual work this tended to be related to candidates not adhering to the generic conventions of the comparable product analysed as part of their investigative research.
- Some work was over the required time limits. Centres are to be reminded that only work which falls within the Specification limits can be assessed.
- A minority of centres did not upload all elements of unit 4 making it difficult for moderators to understand how final folio marks were reached.



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