**MS3 Guidance**

**MS3: MEDIA INVESTIGATION AND PRODUCTION**

The MS3 unit contributes to synoptic assessment, and as such it represents A2 standards of attainment. It is expected that students will build upon the knowledge, understanding and skills already gained at AS level. Students will demonstrate an integrated understanding of texts, audiences and institution through a written investigation leading to a production outcome. This unit is centre assessed and externally moderated.

Students are required to demonstrate:
- Individual and independent research skills
- The ability to use their research to inform a media product
- Technical and creative skills
- The ability to evaluate the product exploring the validity of the research undertaken

Students will submit three pieces of linked work comprising:
- A research investigation focused on one or more of the following concepts: **genre**, **narrative**, **representation**. (1400 – 1800 words)
- A production which arises out of the research
- An evaluation which explains how the research has informed the production (500 – 750 words)

**The Research Investigation:**
This piece of work will be done **individually**. Students will formulate their own research field of study that is focused on one or more of the concepts of **genre**, **narrative** or **representation**. The teacher should have an instrumental role in negotiating the title for their assignments, reminding students that there must be clear potential for the **development of the investigation into a production piece**.

**The Production:**
Digital media such as web sites and print based productions must be undertaken **individually**; audio and audio-visual productions may be undertaken either individually or in small groups of no more than 4 students. Students working in groups must all have a clearly defined production role which allows them to demonstrate a significant and definable contribution to the production. The production should reflect what the student has learnt through their research and should demonstrate creative and technical skills.
- Digital media productions should be 3 – 4 pages in length, with the majority of the images being generated by the student.
- Audio and audio-visual productions should be 3 – 4 minutes in length. (Shorter ones, in the case of animation may be agreed in consultation with the Principal Moderator.
- In the case of campaigns, students may combine audio-visual and print. Print-based material **must** be produced individually. The **audio-visual product only** may be produced individually or by a small group.

**Please note:** Students must present their productions in a different media form than to used at MS2

**The Evaluation:**

The main purpose of the evaluation is to explore how the research undertaken informed the production.
GUIDANCE ON GROUP WORK

- Groups members must collaborate early on in this unit in order to agree discrete areas for investigation that will offer each student relevant and separate contributions to the construction of a common product.

- The investigation MUST be undertaken individually, so students who wish to produce audio or audio-visual productions in a small group must ensure that their contribution to the production reflects their research. For example if a group decides to base their production work on the construction of the opening sequence for a new horror film, one student may research and write about the representation of women in horror films; another may research the narrative structure of the openings of horror films and a third the genre conventions apparent within horror films. It is therefore essential that students working in groups decide upon their production and individual research investigations from the outset.

- A definable contribution is one which enables each individual candidate to account for their own part in the production task. If in doubt, please contact the Principal Moderator.

Guidance on Teaching MS3

- Teaching MS3 and MS4 through an integrated approach in the second year of the course may help to develop a deeper understanding of industry and related issues which will then help students to formulate their research projects and related productions.
- As an introduction to the unit, teachers may wish to revisit the key area of genre, narrative and representation and link them to the study of media industries.
- Teachers may want to give students guidance on a range of different research methods for example, qualitative and quantitative research skills
- Students will need to be given opportunities to develop their writing skills. In their investigations, students should aim to set a clear research agenda, explore key texts, apply research undertaken, consider audience issues, contexts/changes, address relevant issues, trends and debates and draws intelligent and independent/original conclusions.
- Students will need time to formulate their titles in consultation with teachers. If they wish to work in groups for their production, they will need to collaborate at this stage in order to ensure they are choosing separate areas for research that are all relevant to their intended production.
- Although specific marks are not awarded for the planning process, at A2 the best productions will obviously arise out of thorough planning.
- Students may need advice on selecting the most appropriate format for their evaluation.

GUIDANCE ON POSSIBLE INVESTIGATIONS

The examples below have been grouped into complimentary tasks. In the first section there are tasks suitable for individual students. An example of a possible area for investigation is given first and then there is a suggestion for a possible production which could develop out of the investigation. In the second section there are suggestions for individual research investigations which may lead to a group production.
SECTION 1: INDIVIDUAL INVESTIGATIONS AND PRODUCTIONS

- An exploration of the representation of teenagers in (two or three) British films.
- Campaign material for a low budget UK ‘teenage-rights-of-passage’ film
- An analysis of the representation of two stars from mainstream and alternative music.
- The official fan site for a new artist (this could utilise MySpace or YouTube)
- An analysis of news photographs: their structure and narrative appeal
- A series of anchored news photographs for a specific newspaper
- Do film promotional websites follow the same conventions? A close analysis of (two or three) contrasting sites
- A web site promoting a new film (this could become a group production with the insertion of film footage shot by the students)
- How far are Soap Operas a representation of real life? (A close analysis of two contrasting programmes)
- Three to four page magazine spread launching a gritty new soap opera.
- Exploring the representation of gender in men’s magazines.
- Three magazine pages for a new men’s magazines which challenges stereotypical representations.
- Analysing representations in teen magazines
- A photo story for a new teen magazine
- How do cause adverts represent issues?
- Three print cause adverts aimed at teenagers (e.g. anti drugs)

SECTION 2: GROUP INVESTIGATIONS AND PRODUCTIONS

Research Titles:
- An investigation into how genre conventions are used to raise audience expectations in film trailers.
- An analysis of the narrative structure of three contrasting trailers.
- A study of the representation of heroes and villains in three trailers

Production:
- A trailer for a new film.

Research Titles:
- Exploration of the narrative structure of two narrative-driven music videos
- A study of gender representations in two (or three) music videos
- Explore the genre conventions of two music videos

Production:
- A music video for a new band

Research Titles:
- Investigating the styles of two radio presenters.
- Deconstructing reality: how are issues represented in radio programmes?
- A comparison between two radio news bulletins from contrasting channels
Production:
- The opening section of a new talk based radio programme

Research Titles:
- An examination of the genre conventions in documentaries (two or three) aimed at teenagers.
- How are teenagers represented in documentaries?
- Exploring the narrative structure and editing techniques in two short Channel 4 documentaries.
- Three minute wonder documentary exploring a local issue.