WJEC AS/A LEVEL MEDIA STUDIES
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ADMINISTRATION

Where can I find the entry codes?

The entry/course/specification codes can be found on page 53 of the specification.

Are there any textbooks for WJEC AS/A2 Level Media Studies?

There are WJEC endorsed textbooks that are primarily designed for those following the Eduqas specification, however some of the content is also relevant to those following the WJEC specification, and there are overviews and helpful indicators throughout which are solely pertinent to the WJEC specification.

Where can I find grade boundaries for AS and A2 Level Media Studies?

The grade boundaries for the new specifications will not be set until the first awards so we advise real caution when predicting grades for these qualifications. It is better to work in bands when marking work and giving feedback.

Once the grade boundaries are available you can view them on the website. The 2018 grade boundaries for the WJEC AS Award can be found here. Please ensure you have selected all the correct options on the drop down menu.

Where are the CPD Materials for Media Studies?

The materials from the 'Next Steps' CPD events are available on the WJEC secure website under Resources > Subject Specific Support Material > CPD Materials > Media Studies CPD Material > WJEC AS/A Media Studies.

⚙ Options					
Subject	Level	Type of document	Publication Year	Language	Brand
Media Studies ▾	GCE ▾	CPD ▾	All ▾	English ▾	WJEC ▾

Enter free text search

SEARCH   Records found 6

Please note: Although you may have been given a username and password for the secure website from your exams officer, you may not have been given access to the Resources section. If you cannot find any of the above on the secure website, please see your exams officer in the first instance.

Is exemplar work available for each unit?

There are example responses for all units in the CPD materials on the WJEC secure website. These illustrate AS work in the different bands. The first assessment of AS in 2018 and A2 in 2019 will formally establish the standards and grade boundaries. The online exam review also gives examples of candidate responses to particular questions from the 2018 AS Unit 1 paper, with assessment commentary.

How should we request additional DVDs for the Unit 1 exam?
Email despatchqueries@wjec.co.uk with the details of your request.

How can I request DVDs for students with specific educational needs?
Email specialrequirements@wjec.co.uk with the details of your request.

Can learners resit individual units for this qualification?
Candidates may re-sit an individual unit ONCE only. The better uniform mark score from the two attempts will be used in calculating the final overall qualification grade(s).
A qualification may be taken more than once. However, if all units have been attempted twice, candidates will have to make a fresh start by entering all units and the appropriate cash-in(s). No result from units taken prior to the fresh start can be used in aggregating the new grade(s).

If a learner resits Unit 2 or Unit 4, can they improve and re-submit work, or must they submit a totally new production?
Learners are permitted to improve and re-submit their work.

SET PRODUCTS

Where can I access the set products?
The historical set products for Unit 3, Section B: Magazines can be found in the set products booklet on the WJEC Media Studies website.
Centres are responsible for accessing the set products for all other units. Details of all the set products can be found in the specification.

When will the set products change?
As stated on page 11 of the specification, the set products for both components will be reviewed periodically and changed where necessary. This does not necessarily mean the set products will change when reviewed; there are no current plans to change any of the set products.

UNIT 1 & UNIT 3

What are the recommended timings for Unit 1?
Learners are advised to spend approximately 1 hour and 10 minutes on Section A, including studying the unseen audio-visual resource, and approximately 40 minutes each on Sections B and C. This guidance is provided on the front page of sample assessment materials and 2018 exam paper.

What are the recommended timings for Unit 3?
Learners are advised to spend approximately 50 minutes on each of sections A, B and C. This guidance is provided on the front page of the sample assessment materials.

Will the unseen resource for Unit 1, Section A always be audio-visual?
No; the unseen resource might be print or audio visual, as detailed on page 22 of the specification.

How many times will learners be shown an audio-visual resource?
If there is an audio-visual resource in Unit 1, learners will be shown the audio-visual resource three times. They will be allowed one minute to read Question 1, and then they will view the resource. The second viewing will immediately follow during which learners are allowed to make notes. Learners will then have a further five

minutes to make notes, followed by a third and final viewing during which viewers are allowed to make notes. Once the third viewing has finished, learners should answer Question 1.

In an exam response, is it better for learners to explore a small number of points in a lot of depth or to cover a larger number of points in less depth?

Learners need to address all elements of the question that is set and be guided by the number of marks available. There is no prescriptive approach to an exam question and there are different ways to fulfil the assessment criteria. However, learners do need to address the question in sufficient depth to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. The SAMs give further indications of the likely responses at the different bands of the mark scheme.

Which areas of representation do we need to teach in relation to Unit 1, Section A?

The focus in this topic is on the construction of representations of gender, ethnicity, age and issues, as detailed on page 16 of the specification.

What products should learners study in preparation for Unit 1, Section A?

On pages 14 – 16 of the specification, information is provided that details how to select appropriate products that learners should study in order to prepare for the analysis of the unseen resource in the examination for this section. Examples of products are provided. The conceptual framework is also detailed, as are the theories that learners should study for this section.

In the Unit 1 Section A question, should learners only analyse the unseen resource, or do they need to refer to set or other products analysed in class?

Learners should focus on their analysis of the unseen resource only. The additional products studied in class provide learners with knowledge and understanding of the form and allow them to develop their analytical skills, but the assessment is based on the unseen resource.

Should learners refer to theory in Unit 1, Section A?

Learners can discuss and apply theories/critical perspectives to the unseen resources if appropriate and relevant. If required explicitly by the question, learners should use critical perspectives.

For Unit 1, Section B, is there a specific edition of the set newspapers that learners should study?

No. However, learners should study one current/recent significant news event and learners must consider how the event is represented and disseminated across the news media studied. The event must be a 'hard news' item, such as one related to politics, crime, foreign affairs or economics.

Are learners required to study all of the episodes in the set text television crime drama series for Unit 3, Section A?

No, learners need to study the set episode in detail, as assessment will be based on this episode. While learners may find it interesting and informative to watch further episodes, for example to discover how the narrative progresses, this is not a requirement. The set episode is given in the specification.

Do learners need to study the full episode or Hinterland: Devil's Bridge as in the DVD or just the first part as was shown on television?

Learners need to study the full episode, which includes the two parts that were shown on television.

Do learners need to study the full episodes of the historical crime dramas, such as episodes 1:1 and 1:2 of Prime Suspect?

We would expect that learners be familiar with the whole episodes, which in the case of Prime Suspect, is in two parts. It may be that time restricts centres from showing the whole series, and if that is the case, we would recommend that learners view the episode in their own time to study in class.

In Unit 3, Section B, do learners need to study the paper version of the online magazine?

The set product is the online version only. However, learners should develop knowledge and understanding of magazines as an evolving media form in terms of the relevant textual, industry and audience issues they illustrate (page 36 of the specification). It may therefore be appropriate to look at the paper version as part of the wider study of that product.

In Unit 3, Section B, do learners need to be familiar with contemporary editions of the historical magazine that they are studying, including any digital content, for example the current website for *Vogue* or *Woman?*

The set edition of the historical magazine is the focus of the study, and *Woman's Realm* is no longer published. However, learners should develop knowledge and understanding of magazines as an evolving media form in terms of the relevant textual, industry and audience issues they illustrate (page 36 of the specification). It may therefore be appropriate to look at contemporary editions as part of the wider study of that product.

In Unit 3, Section C, do learners need to experience gameplay of the set texts?

Yes, this is advised so that learners can fully engage with the codes and conventions of video games, construction of the diegetic world and the constructed representations. 'Walk-throughs' are available on sites such as YouTube that make gameplay accessible.

Do learners need to refer to theory in their responses to all questions in Unit 3 and Unit 1?

Learners should only refer to theory where relevant and appropriate. The question may explicitly ask learners to discuss a critical perspective, in which case it would be expected that learners focus their response on that critical perspective. However they can also discuss other critical perspectives if relevant and appropriate.

How much reference to/use of theory should learners include in a response?

This really depends on the question. If a question asks learners to apply a named theory, then this theory should be considered in detail. If a question asks learners to apply 'relevant theories' then learners are able to select the theories they feel are most relevant and should discuss these in detail. If a question does not specify a theory or theories then learners may, of course, apply relevant theories in their response. Indeed, in order to achieve marks in the higher bands, learners are likely to apply theories. However, they may also refer to relevant theoretical approaches, without naming specific theories, to support their points and this is perfectly acceptable. The indicative content in the Sample Assessment Materials gives further detail of how learners might use theory in a response.

In Unit 1 and Unit 3, learners need to study industry issues. What should we do if a significant aspect of the industry changes after we have covered the set product?

Learners will study the set products at a time of your choosing during the course and this will form the basis of their knowledge and understanding. If a very substantial change occurred (for example a change of ownership) then we would expect them to be aware of this as the specification requires them to study the evolving nature of the products; however they could still discuss the product at the time they had studied it to exemplify the audience and industry issues at that time.

How much context should be taught?

Context is only assessed at A2. Learners need to study the relevant contexts for the set products for Unit 4 as detailed in the specification. We recommend that teachers start from the set product and explore the contexts in which they were produced.

How much context is required in the exam?

This depends on the question. If a question assessing AO1 asks learners to consider, for example, how a context or contexts have influenced a set product (e.g. SAMs Unit 4 Question 1(a) and 1(b)), then context should be a key focus within the response. If a question does not specifically ask learners about contexts, they may still refer to context if it is relevant to the question.

UNIT 2 & UNIT 4
ADMINISTRATION

What is the NEA submission deadline?

For AS and A Level all marks and work must be submitted by the 15th May. This date is the same each year and does not change, even if it falls on a weekend.

How are marks and work submitted for moderation?

Marks for all learners in your cohort must be submitted on the Mark Input System via the secure website. Once you have submitted your marks the system will automatically generate your sample. All assessed work, including the coversheets, for the sample candidates only must then be uploaded to SecureAssess. Your exams officer will have received key codes for all candidates to allow you to do this. Please ensure all work is clearly labelled and uploaded according to the specific elements of the unit. For example, for Unit 2: Cover sheet, Research (one document), Planning (one document), Production (one document), Reflective Analysis.
For further information on SecureAssess and the process of uploading work please see our Guide to E-Submissions and the E-Submissions Video Guide.

What should I do if there is an error with the submitted marks?

If you notice an error with the marks entered on the Mark Input System once you have submitted them you will need to contact gce@wjec.co.uk. Please include your centre details, the candidate details, the subject and component, the old mark and the correct mark.

What should I do if there is an error with the work submitted for moderation?

Once a key code has been used and work has been submitted that key code will not work again. If there is an error in the work that has been uploaded, you will need to contact e-assessment@wjec.co.uk to request additional key codes. Please include your centre details, candidate details, the subject and component.

Is there a requirement to annotate work for Unit 2 and Unit 4, for example the Investigative Research, Development Outline, Production and Critical Analysis?

No, there is no requirement to annotate work for Unit 2 and Unit 4. We have moved to the electronic submission of the NEA, and so centres should submit the work electronically using the file formats listed in the e-submission guidance. Detailed comments and examples on the cover sheet to explain the rationale for the marks awarded must be included in place of annotation.

How should teachers record evidence of internal standardisation?

In centres where there is more than one teacher responsible for assessing NEA work, internal standardisation should take place. This can be recorded by a brief comment on Section B of the cover sheet. The final marks awarded should be clearly evident.

How should we assess work that is under - or over - the specified limits for length/ quantity?

There is no penalty for work that is under the specified limits for time and length, as this is likely to be self-penalising. There is a 10% tolerance for work that is over the specified limits for time and length. If a production exceeds the limits by more than 10%, the teacher/assessor should not mark the additional work submitted beyond this limit, as candidates can only be credited for work that falls within the stipulated limits for time and length. Please see the first page of the Unit 2 and Unit 4 marking grids for detailed guidance on applying the marking criteria.

Can the coversheets be completed and signed digitally?

Yes, both handwritten and typed/digital signatures and forms are acceptable.

BRIEFS

Can learners work in groups to complete Unit 2 and Unit 4?

Learners can work individually or in pairs if creating an audio-visual product. If working in pairs, one learner will be responsible for camerawork and the other learner will be responsible for editing, including sound. Research, planning, and the reflective analysis must be completed individually. Please see pages 23-24 and 43-44 of the specification.

If working in pairs, should learners comment on their own work only or the whole production in the reflective analysis?

Learners should comment on the whole finished product in the reflective analysis.

Can learners star in their own productions?

We would advise that learners do not appear in their own productions as they should be focusing their attention on construction of their product. Instead, non-assessed participants can be used as models or actors. Unassessed participants may operate sound and lighting equipment under the direction of the assessed learner.

How long should learners spend on their Unit 2 and Unit 4 production?

It is recommended that learners complete their Unit 2 production within a time-period of approximately 32 to 40 hours and their Unit 4 cross-media production within 40 – 48 hours. This is to enable an appropriate balance between work for the production and for the examination units.

Can learners create a product in Unit 4 in the same genre as they have studied in Unit 3?

Yes, the specification does not prohibit this. However, learners cannot research a set product that they have studied in Unit 3 for their investigative research, as the research must be the learner's own, independent study.

Can learners work on the same genre for Unit 2 and Unit 4, for example, they complete the film brief in Unit 2 and create a film magazine in Unit 4?

Yes; there are no prohibited combinations. What is imperative is that all of the requirements of the brief are met in terms of industry context, target audience, and so on.

When will the set briefs change?

The set briefs will be reviewed annually and any changes to production briefs will be published on WJEC's website two years in advance of their first assessment.

RESEARCH

In Unit 2 Research, do learners discuss all three products within the word limit of 600 – 750 words?

Yes.

For their Investigative Research, can learners choose a focus that they have studied as part of Unit 1 or Unit 3, such as representation of gender?

Yes, learners are permitted to do this.

In Unit 4, how should learners construct their Investigative Research titles?

When creating the title, we advise that the key guidelines are to keep the title simple. Learners should mention the concept that is being researched, mention the text, and make sure that their focus is narrow enough to allow them to draw appropriate conclusions that they can then use to inform their production. Examples would be as follows: 'A study of the representation of women in the BBC's 'Killing Eve' (episode 1)' or 'An investigation into the use of crime drama conventions in the BBC's 'The Bodyguard' (episode 2)'.

In Unit 4, should the learner's investigative research be based on one edition or episode of the chosen product or a range?

We would advise that learners select a specific edition or episode to focus on, although we would expect that, in the course of their research, they have looked at more than one edition/episode and they might refer to others in brief. However, the close analysis and main focus of research should be more narrow, such as an edition/episode, and in fact it would benefit learners to focus specifically on what they are planning to create (the opening sequence of the TV programme, for example).

In Unit 4, should learners analyse products that are linked to both of their productions, or just focus on just one?

Learners' research should be explicitly linked to their main production; however, their findings may inform both their main and their secondary production option.

Should learners refer to critical perspectives in their investigative research?

Learners must refer to critical perspectives such as those listed in the specification, but may also refer to other appropriate, relevant critical perspectives if they wish.

Should learners research a product that is from the same industry context as the one for which they will be creating their product?

We would advise learners to research a product from the same industry context as the context for which they're creating a product. The concept that the learner will be exploring in their investigative research will be inherently linked to the industry context of the product. Therefore, in order to meet the requirements of the highest bands of the mark scheme that require that the learner demonstrates a highly consistent use of conventions relevant to the specified genre and industry, the learner would benefit from researching a product from the same industry context.

This will prove difficult for learners producing a magazine for TCO London; for those learners, we would expect that they research a product that is from a similar industry context so that they can demonstrate their understanding of an appropriate industry context.

Can learners research a product that they have studied elsewhere on the course?

No; the research investigation must be independent work, and therefore learners must not research a text that they have already studied in class.

ADVERTISING AND MUSIC VIDEO

Can learners create their productions around existing artists?

No, learners should create their own artists in line with the requirements of the brief.

Can learners create a video for an unsigned artist or band?

Yes, this is acceptable. Learners should research artists/ bands in the same genre to develop their knowledge and understanding of codes and conventions.

For the music video option, how important is it that learners find a song by an artist who is signed to the type of label specified in the brief?

Learners should 'invent' a new artist or band for their music video and it is this video that must adhere to the industry context specified in the brief. However, the chosen song must allow learners to create a video for the specified industry context – for example, a mainstream pop song is unlikely to be appropriate if learners need to create a video for an independent label. While not essential, selecting a song by an artist signed to the type of label specified in the brief is likely to enable learners to conduct appropriate research and create a product that meets the requirements of the brief.

Learners need to select a song that does not have an official music video; however, can they choose a cover version or remix of a song that has an existing video?

No, as it is the song (rather than a particular version of the song) that must not have an official video.

What about a song that has a recording of a live performance or a fan video?

If there is a simply a live concert performance of the song that has been recorded but is not an official video then this would be fine to use, as would a fan video.

What about a song that has a lyric video?

If the lyric video contains imagery or animation, it **does** count as a music video and should be avoided. If the lyric video is just text on a screen or over a static image, then it would not count as a music video and would be fine to use.

What if the song does not have a music video that has been released in this country but has released in a different country?

This would still count as an official music video and therefore the song should be avoided.

If a learner selects and creates a production for a song that does not have an official video but then the record company releases the chosen track as a single with a music video at a later date, what should the learner do?

If the learner has commenced the production prior to the release of the video, then they may proceed. The crucial factor is that they should not be influenced by the official video. Please add a comment to this effect on the cover sheet to alert the moderator.

FILM

Do the measurements need to be accurate when creating products such as posters, for example?

We would expect that learners are working to the correct ratios when producing posters. Where this is not possible, such as would be the case with a billboard poster, we would expect that the ratios be accurate but the size of the product be reduced.

How long should a storyboard be?

There is no specific limitations on how long the storyboard should be, however we would expect that, in order for the planning to demonstrate an appropriate level of detail, storyboards should be between 16 and 24 frames in length, and it should detail all aspects of planning such as sound, editing, shot type and duration, and so on.

TELEVISION

Can learners use any found footage?

Learners are permitted to use 30 seconds of found footage in an audio-visual or online product. Learners can be rewarded for selecting the footage but not for creating it. The found footage must be in addition to the time limit prescribed in the brief.

Does the product chosen for research need to be produced by the institution specified in the brief, or can it simply be produced for the institution? For example, could learners research The Big Bang Theory for E4?

It needn't be produced by the institution; The Big Bang Theory would be considered an appropriate comparable product for this brief.

MAGAZINES

Can learners create a magazine that is not currently offered by Bauer Media such as men's lifestyle?

Candidates can produce something that is not currently offered by Bauer Media provided that it is something that could feasibly be produced by Bauer, considering the industry context and the products that Bauer does produce. Therefore, given that Bauer does create magazines targeting men, and does create lifestyle magazines, a men's lifestyle magazine would be a product that Bauer would feasibly create.

Are learners able to use templates for print work, for example a magazine cover?

Learners may use a blank template for outline sizing purposes only. Learners must be responsible for the layout and design of their print work.

Learners are required to create an original title for the magazine – must they avoid older magazines or those produced in different countries?

As far as possible, learners should create a new title for their magazine – they should conduct research at the planning stage to try to establish that there is not another magazine with the same title.

Do learners need to design their own masthead?

Yes. This may mean that they design a new font using software, such as Glyphr Studio, or it may mean that they use an existing font. However, the font used must not be one that has been used for another magazine's masthead; the design of the masthead must be the learner's own and must establish a sense of the magazine's own brand identity.

Do all images need to be original? For example, could learners use found images of celebrities?

Learners are permitted to use one found background image per page of print or online product. All other images do need to be original, so learners should not include found images of celebrities. Learners could 'create' their own celebrities for their magazine work. Non-original images cannot be assessed; learners can be rewarded for selecting the image but not for creating it.

The briefs stipulate that learners cannot use existing brands. However, if they are creating a magazine that features images of, for example, fashion/clothing or camera equipment, do they need to create their own brand for these products?

The requirement relates to brands of media products, so learners should not create their own edition of, for example, *Grazia* magazine; they should create a new magazine. If they feature images of particular products, they do not need to 'invent' a new brand, although if they were to include a feature article with a new young designer for example, they could of course invent a new fashion label.

Does the magazine need to include images of people?

Learners are assessed on their ability to apply knowledge and understanding of representations of individuals, groups and issues/events. They are most likely to be able to demonstrate this ability and access the higher levels of the marking criteria through constructing representations of people (as opposed to cars or food, for example).

Can learners draw their own original images if appropriate to their chosen genre of magazine?

Learners need to adhere to the requirements of the brief which may specify that photographs or locations for photography are included. However, if the brief refers only to 'images' and if the research demonstrates that drawn images are a convention, learners may edit their own, original hand drawn images into their production. They should, of course, be mindful of the requirements of the mark scheme to use media language to communicate meanings and construct representations.

ONLINE/ NEWS IN THE ONLINE AGE

Do the measurements need to be accurate when creating products such as a website leaderboard and skyscraper, for example?

We would expect that learners are working to the appropriate sizes and correct ratios when producing products for websites, wherever possible.

How should learners submit their website productions for moderation?

Learners should submit the URL for their website on the cover sheet.

Can learners use software such as Wix and Wordpress to create their website?

It is acceptable for candidates to use web design software or templates in the online options of the briefs. However, candidates must be responsible for the design of the website and all content (such as written text/language, images, audio-visual material) must be original.