



GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

MEDIA STUDIES

SUMMER 2016

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

Unit	Page
Unit 1 – Thinking About the Media: Investigating and Planning	1
Unit 2 – Creating for the Media: Investigating and Producing	4

MEDIA STUDIES

General Certificate of Secondary Education

Summer 2016

Unit 1 – Thinking About the Media: Investigating and Planning

It is pleasing to report on a very successful examination session. This year's topic of Advertising and Marketing (film trailers for Section A and film posters for Section B) proved accessible for candidates at all levels of ability and provided a wide scope for them to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills in Media Studies. There were very few incomplete scripts and it was encouraging to see a close comparison between marks awarded for Section A and Section B of the paper. The quality of responses demonstrated candidates' real enthusiasm for, and engagement with, the subject. Candidates performed particularly well in their responses to the film trailer in Section A and the designs created for the film poster in Section B, many of which demonstrated real imagination and flair.

Section A

Question 1

The film trailer X+Y proved particularly accessible for candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of camerawork. Most candidates could identify a number of camera shots, using technical terminology, and offer an explanation of how they were used in the trailer, most often to explore the narrative and character.

Higher level responses in Level 4 were rewarded for an excellent sense of camerawork and sophisticated explanations, often exploring how the trailer showed aspects of different cultures through the establishing shots of universities or other countries. Many higher level responses explored the use of the camera to show a point of view (of the main character or other characters in the film), with detailed accounts of how the camerawork was used to show aspects of storyline, narrative and themes.

Question 2

This question was successfully addressed in the main and, although the topic of editing can be challenging, most candidates found the stepped nature of the question accessible. The vast majority of candidates could identify two different types of editing such as a cut between the images shown or the application of sound as an editing technique. Many candidates referred to jump cuts, which was wholly appropriate, and cuts or transitions between shots such as fades and dissolves, although this was less in evidence. Many candidates used the term 'montage' which was appropriate in explaining the trailer as a sequence of collected shots from a range of scenes from the film.

Explanations of the editing techniques were often detailed and at Level 4 there were many candidates who demonstrated an excellent knowledge and understanding of how film trailers use a montage of images and scenes to build a narrative which includes key action and enigma codes, but may well break the usual conventions of continuity editing in attempting to attract audiences to the text.

Question 3

Again, the vast majority of candidates were able to offer sound responses to this question and explain how genre is shown in film trailers. Candidates referred to a wide range of examples of film trailers and demonstrated their knowledge and understanding of genre, particularly through the use of symbolic, audio, action and narrative codes. Candidates awarded the higher level marks often demonstrated knowledge of wider organisational issues such as the importance of stars and directors and the appeals of subgenres and hybridity.

Less successful responses to this question offered rather generalised points and did not refer in detail to examples from their chosen film trailer text. A small number of candidates referred to the examination resource material only and were therefore awarded no more than three marks.

Question 4

The majority of responses to this question successfully explained why film trailers are shown on the internet. The most common reasons cited were the accessibility of the internet for contemporary users and the widespread use of a wide range of mobile devices. Most responses were detailed and valid with some better answers explaining in detail the use of platforms such as Youtube and Twitter, and the wider use of social media to share film trailers, often referring to viral marketing.

Candidates achieving higher level 3 and level 4 marks often demonstrated a confident sense of the wider organisational issues and the importance of the internet to contemporary distributors and audiences. Some excellent level 4 responses demonstrated a real sense of the distribution issues involved, combined with the wider uses and gratifications of the internet.

Section B

Section B proved particularly successful in enabling candidates to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to the advertising and marketing topic, in particular in the contemporary use and design of film posters. Some of the posters designed by candidates under the constraints of the examination were quite breath-taking and demonstrated real creative and imaginative flair, combined with an excellent knowledge and understanding of the codes and conventions of these types of print products in contemporary settings.

Question 5

Task 1

The vast majority of candidates were able to offer an appropriate name for the new film and provide a least a basic explanation. Candidates who achieved the higher marks offered more detailed explanations and, at best, used effective media language to explore the genre issues raised by their new film and its title.

Task 2

Most candidates offered two appropriate places in which the posters could be displayed. Popular answers involved cinemas and billboards, train stations or public transport. A number of candidates identified areas of the print media where posters are displayed such as newspapers and magazines and a small number offered explanations for the display of posters on the internet and electronic media or mobile devices. The very best responses explored the appeals of posters, through their codes and conventions, in particular locations and the promotion of a unique selling point for their new film.

Task 3

A wide range of film poster designs were seen, often of a very high standard, with most candidates demonstrating at least some ability to design a poster. At the highest level the posters were characterised by excellent design skills combined with a sophisticated knowledge of the codes and conventions of these types of products. The creativity and imagination in evidence was, at times, outstanding and candidates demonstrated high level skills in choosing a name for a film, with an engaging narrative in evidence in the images chosen on the film poster. Many candidates used colour to present their ideas and made the finished design hugely appealing to audiences.

A small number of candidates used the incorrect age certificate on the poster which unfortunately demonstrated a lack of understanding of the brief set - to design a new film poster for a 12A certificate audience.

Task 4

The task was generally completed in a satisfactory manner, but far too often candidates explained the place in which the poster was displayed, rather than giving a detailed explanation of the codes and conventions used. Most candidates mentioned the colours used on the poster, the props, the stars' names and directors, but there was little detailed explanation of the technical codes used such as camera shots and angles, the typographic codes used, the design and layout or the setting, locations and mise-en-scène which would have explained in more detail how the poster attracted a younger audience.

Task 5

The final question on the paper was generally answered in less detail, however many candidates were able to offer a number of reasons for the continued importance of film posters, even in the increasingly digital age where print media suffers from huge competition. Most candidates explored the importance of locations for film posters and how they are seen in everyday life by film fans, often relating this to younger audiences. Fewer responses explored the continued appeals of film posters through their generic conventions of typography, still images and language codes but a small number of higher level responses explained the importance of film posters through their iconic nature/ cultural significance, their centrality to wider marketing campaigns and their enduring appeal even in the increasingly digital age. A small number of candidates did make a valiant attempt to argue that film posters have much less importance in the digital age of the internet but are still an important part of marketing a film.

Advice to Centres:

Provide opportunities for candidates to explore a wide range of camerawork such as a range of camera shots, angles and movement.

Encourage candidates to use their own case studies when answering examination questions.

Read the set brief in Question 5, particularly regarding the target audience for the planned text.

MEDIA STUDIES

General Certificate of Secondary Education

Summer 2016

Unit 2 – Creating for the Media: Investigating and Producing

Unit 2 continues to offer challenge and rigour to candidates of all abilities through the three controlled assessment tasks which, with appropriate task setting and rich investigation texts, provide opportunities to stretch the most able both academically and creatively whilst enabling lower ability candidates to develop greater media knowledge and understanding and apply this to their own production work.

Task setting:

The majority of centres accurately interpreted and confidently applied the specification requirements when setting each controlled assessment task. Much of the work sampled in candidates' portfolios successfully met the demands of the assessment criteria. The requirement to explore at least three topics and three different media forms, including the statutory print-based textual investigation and one audio-visual form, was in evidence in the wide range of media topics and forms studied.

The controlled assessment requires centres to select titles for genre, representation and narrative investigations from the prescribed list of set questions in the specification. Investigation titles should not be devised by centres or candidates. Most centres offered candidates the opportunity to investigate appropriate texts and selected suitable controlled assessment titles, however this continues to be an area of concern in some centres. Moderators commented that the use of inappropriate or inaccurate task setting often compromised candidates' ability to demonstrate their skills and meet the assessment criteria. It is imperative that this highest level of control is followed as it ensures candidates can access the assessment criteria and thereby focus explicitly on the appropriate study area of their investigation.

Some centres failed to ensure that textual investigations were based on different topics, a small number of centres used the exam topic for production and some candidates did not offer a print investigation, which is not optional. Centre moderation reports highlight good practice and offer constructive advice to centres, they draw attention to any issues and centres should ensure that they address these in the next assessment session. In summary, centres must ensure that candidates submit one genre investigation and at least one print investigation across the investigations. The examination topic may only be used for one investigation and cannot be used for production.

Assessment criteria application:

The vast majority of centres' assessment of candidates' work was considered fair and consistent, with rank order being upheld. In a small number of centres, marks were not agreed for a number of reasons. Generous assessment was addressed through adjustment of marks to maintain parity between centres.

Textual investigations require candidates to refer to other related examples in order to achieve level 2 upwards. Best practice was seen in centres where candidates independently used a wider range of well-selected examples in the same form. Candidates who presented different genres or different forms in their choice of wider examples were less effective in meeting the assessment criteria. Likewise, candidates who compared texts rather than investigating one text were also compromised. As stated in previous reports, this approach inevitably leads to a comparative outcome and is not advised. Some centres choose to have complete control over the selection of both the core investigation text and the wider examples, resulting in entire cohorts using the same evidence and restricting independent responses. For some centres, this approach ensures effective delivery of the specification for particular groups of learners but it is not considered best practice. Centres should avoid heavily structured and scaffolded approaches as this inhibits individual responses from candidates, making it difficult to differentiate outcomes and accurately apply the assessment criteria.

The level 3 assessment criteria require candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the concept of audience address; in the vast majority of cases this area of study was well documented and accurately assessed by centres. This was an area of concern in a small number of cases and centres may find it helpful to access the exemplar material available on the secure website that illustrates the way in which candidates can meet the criteria.

The main issue regarding accurate application of the assessment criteria remains at level 4, with respect to candidates' ability to analyse and respond to the key study area of organisations. Centres are reminded that, in order to achieve level 4, candidates must analyse, investigate and respond to their investigation texts using the media concepts of audience/user and organisations as set out on page 24 of the specification. In a number of centres, candidates demonstrated excellent and even sophisticated abilities in most of the criteria but did not consider organisational factors, and yet were still awarded level 4 marks.

Moderators once again noted an over reliance on, and over rewarding of, theoretical referencing in some centres. Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Todorov, Propp, the Hypodermic Needle, Male Gaze and Feminist theorists were sometimes quoted at the expense of secure analytical skills and media knowledge, supported by accurate application of media terminology. Moderators continue to report that some reference to media theories is clearly not understood by candidates; that is not to say that theorists should not be taught to or used by candidates to underpin their investigations, but secure knowledge and application of the three areas of study is a prerequisite to meeting the assessment criteria.

Candidates obviously enjoyed their production work and the vast majority engaged fully in all three areas of study (genre, representation and narrative). Research and planning should directly inform productions and be used to: demonstrate typicality of the production; explore wider examples; identify codes; apply media terminology; recognise and plan features of audience address and consider aspects of control and regulation and, where appropriate, marketing and promotion. Evaluation is not a description of production processes; it should reflect on how effectively the areas of study have been applied, and for candidates awarded marks from upper level 3, the assessment criteria require evaluation of issues raised when distributing the candidate's production. A number of centres over awarded candidates in this element of the Unit 2 portfolio because they did not accurately apply the assessment criteria.

There is much to celebrate regarding the quality of production work submitted. It was often creative and engaging for the intended audiences. Magazine front covers and their related contents pages or double page spreads were, as always, very popular. Other print options including CDs (the front and back cover plus spine and at least one page of an insert for the first CD of a new performer or band), website home pages and related pages were also popular options. Moderators saw some exceptionally creative short film extracts, documentaries and podcasts. Indeed it is heart-warming to witness the ways in which Media Studies candidates embrace a wide range of new technologies to create such engaging media products.

Assessment of production work was generally secure, but it continues to create challenges for a small but significant number of centres. The generous application of marks, notably at both lower and upper level thresholds, was evident across all elements but continues to be more common in the production work.

Factors such as the quality of production values, use of original images, design and layouts, language codes and copy accuracy should be taken into account when ascribing the level descriptors to production work. In order to achieve upper level 4 marks, candidates must demonstrate a sophisticated level of creativity and control that engages users and audiences and, most importantly, generates high production values. Candidates should not rely on found images at this highest level, including found moving images. Newspaper and magazine front pages and related pages again proved a little problematic due in part to over reliance by candidates on pre-populated templates. A3 portrait layout, editing issues such as pixelated images, font size and excessive white space prevent candidates from generating high production values. Too many centres still fail to offer candidates opportunities to take original images and rely too heavily on found images. Other productions that were problematic included comics which did not make use of available technology. Audio-visual productions should consider the quality of shot framing, mise-en-scène, camera work, sound or visual editing as well as representations and narrative constructions used to appeal to the intended audiences. Overly long, poorly executed productions should be reflected in the marks awarded. Centres are advised to apply the sub level descriptors to guide their assessment judgments. Where candidates fail to submit a complete production, this also needs to be factored into the awarding of marks.

Finally, candidates working on group productions must be assessed on their individual specific role of editing or filming, no other role can be awarded marks. Candidates are also required to undertake individual research, planning and evaluation, in addition to their individual production role. This is an important point to consider when planning the course.

Textual resources:

Moderators commented positively on the way the vast majority of centres made good use of rich texts in all three areas of the textual investigations. Print texts in the form of the examination topics, film posters and print based adverts, were as, ever the most popular options. Magazine front covers, local and national newspapers, DVD covers and computer game covers were also much in evidence. Audio-visual texts for investigation included TV adverts, extracts from films and film trailers, opening titles from television dramas, sitcoms and news programmes. A smaller number of centres used audio and interactive media, but these forms featured more prominently in the production tasks.

Presentation of Moderation Sample:

It is really important that centres meet the published deadline for controlled assessment submission. A number of centres, for a range of reasons, failed to meet the deadline. Where communication with WJEC was maintained the impact of this was minimised and measures put in place to ensure the moderation continued efficiently. It is very important that centres make direct contact with the Subject Officer if there are any issues related to the moderation sample submission.

Centres should be mindful when presenting the sample for moderation that all administrative procedures have been accurately completed and internal moderation undertaken. Errors, such as inaccurate marks submitted onto IAMIS or unauthenticated ME2 and 3 forms lead to delays in the moderation process. It is a requirement that all ME2 and ME3 forms are signed by teachers and candidates to authenticate the work. It is the responsibility of the centre to ensure all work is that of the candidate. Textual investigations and individual research are, more than ever, reliant upon internet research and it is imperative that centres screen candidates' use of sources and teach them to include appropriate referencing where appropriate, bringing to their attention the implications of not following this important requirement.

Centres are requested to send only completed portfolios and, where this is not possible, to substitute the candidate's work for a portfolio on a similar mark. It is really important that Unit 2 work is annotated, using phrases from the assessment criteria to enable moderators to see where and how the centre has awarded marks. Moderators expressed concern that a large number of centres had no teacher annotation at all - annotation does not need to be detailed but it must be present.

The organisation of individual portfolios is also important and centres should ensure that the work is easily accessible. Hard-backed folders, metal ring binder art books, large A3 files and excessive plastic pockets are all problematic. Each section within the portfolio should also be clearly labelled so that the location of each piece of work is evident, this is particularly important in the research and planning sections of production. It is very helpful to moderators if the sample is sent in rank order.

If centres wish to submit any sample evidence in a multimedia format, it must also be available as a hard copy and be annotated. Whilst WJEC is keen to embrace candidates' use of digital technology, for moderation purposes evidence has to be accessed quickly by multiple users. Host websites are often protected by user passwords and codes, which are not always responsive and pen drives can carry viruses. Therefore audio and audio-visual evidence should be supplied on compatible DVD formats and all textual investigations submitted as a hard copy.

In summary, the Unit 2 controlled assessments produced some outstanding quality and wide-ranging outcomes that reflect the dedication, hard work and commitment of candidates, teachers and centres alike. This report celebrates such achievements, as do the vast majority of individual centres' reports.



WJEC
245 Western Avenue
Cardiff CF5 2YX
Tel No 029 2026 5000
Fax 029 2057 5994
E-mail: exams@wjec.co.uk
website: www.wjec.co.uk