



External Assessment Report 2010

Subject	Media Studies
Level	Intermediate 2

The statistics used in this report are pre-appeal.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers/lecturers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published question papers and marking instructions for the Examination.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

There was a marked increase in passes at A, B and C grades. The average score for both Paper 1 and Paper 2 was the highest that has been attained. There was, however, a wide variation in marks and a mixed response to the questions, both in Paper 1 and Paper 2 (Unseen Analysis).

Paper 1

Section 1: Media Analysis

Few candidates chose to answer Question 4, which asked about institutional factors and at least one other Key Aspect.

Section 2: Media Production

Markers commented that quite a few responses to the reflective essay, Question 1, tended to deal less with the Key Aspects and become more of a diary type of answer.

Paper 2: Unseen Analysis

Many candidates performed well in this part of the examination, where texts such as film posters, DVD covers and film trailers were used.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Paper 1

Section 1: Media Analysis

Candidates answered well Question 2, which asked about representation and at least one other Key Aspect.

Section 2: Media Production

Candidates tended to justify choices and decisions well in both the Advertising Brief question (Question 2) and the Scenario question (Question 3). This was widely commented on by Markers.

Paper 2: Unseen Analysis

Candidates performed well in this part of the examination, particularly where texts such as film posters, DVD covers and film trailers were used. Candidates performed generally better in language questions.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Paper 1

Section 1: Media Analysis

Many of the weaker answers to Analysis questions were due to a lack of integration of the Key Aspects selected. These candidates' answers tended to ignore the specifics of the question and become answers explaining two or more Key Aspects separately. All the questions in Section 1, Media Analysis, require the candidate to explain how one Key Aspect has influenced or has been influenced by one or more Key Aspects. The lack of integration lowered the marks available to candidates whose answers showed that they were well-informed about the Key Aspects they had chosen.

Also, some candidates gave quite lengthy explanations using not one media text but referenced a television series or news programme in general. Specific episodes or bulletins should be referenced as the text used in the Analysis section.

Section 2: Media Production

In Question 1, the Reflective Production question, weaker responses were characterised by candidates giving a production 'diary' or narrative of the production process, ignoring the specific Key Aspects and specific planning stage as required by the question.

Weaker answers were also characterised by identifying production choices that were planned, but not justifying these choices sufficiently. The better answers did explain the reasons for production planning choices.

Also, where candidates considered institutional constraints, weaker answers gave a list of limitations without any explanation of how they planned to overcome these or solve the issue they had identified. The strongest answers did identify institutional constraints and explain how these were tackled in the planning stage.

In Question 3, the Scenario question, some candidates weakened their answer by giving lengthy justifications for their choice of audience or choice of medium. There is no need to do this. The scenario question asks candidates merely to state these. These lengthy justifications consequently meant quite a lot of time being wasted that could have been profitably spent justifying decisions and choices about technical and cultural codes and identifying specific production issues.

Also in the Scenario question, some candidates did not identify production issues specific to the scenario, instead identifying rather generalised issues that could apply to almost any production. The identification of production issues in the Scenario question should be specific to the scenario given.

Paper 2: Unseen Analysis

Some candidates had to deal with an Instrument of Assessment that was not constructed using questions from the Unseen Analysis Intermediate 2 question bank. Some of the questions were unrelated to either categories or language – for example questions on audience or institution. These questions are self-penalising. The Unseen Analysis

Intermediate 2 question bank is the exclusive source for the Instrument of Assessment of Intermediate 2 Unseen Analysis.

Please consult the Unseen Analysis Intermediate 2 Question Bank here:
http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/Media_Studies_Unseen_Analysis.pdf

As in previous years, candidates found difficulty answering questions on the medium and the form of the unseen text. This is a common feature of Unseen Analysis: questions on medium and form seem to give candidates little scope to develop a satisfactory explanation. Answers are often very restricted and display a lack of confidence. Perhaps these two categories are seen by candidates to transcend the particulars of the unseen text, and therefore cannot be tackled using the familiar strategy of looking at the details of the unseen text for evidence. Markers remarked on the fact that candidates who explain other categories construct well developed answers.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

There is no need in the Scenario question to justify either target audience or the choice of medium. There is only the requirement to state these.

It may be helpful to remind candidates that they must focus on one single text in their answer to Section 1, Media Analysis questions – for example, one episode from a television series, one news bulletin, one episode from a soap opera.

The Instrument of Assessment for Unseen Analysis must be constructed using questions exclusively from the Unseen Analysis Intermediate 2 question bank.

Please consult the Unseen Analysis Intermediate 2 Question Bank here:
http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/Media_Studies_Unseen_Analysis.pdf

There is a requirement to integrate the chosen Key Aspects when answering questions in Section 1.

Media Analysis

These links must be made explicit in the answer. It may help candidates to make a short plan before writing the Analysis answer, to ensure that they are addressing these specifics in the question. The Analysis question selected by the candidate should be chosen with care. The best answers will offer relevant and insightful textual reference when explaining the specific nature of the influence of one Key Aspect on one or more other Key Aspects.

For example, the possible ways that two Key Aspects can be linked are as follows:

- ◆ narrative and audience
- ◆ narrative and representation
- ◆ narrative and institution
- ◆ audience and representation
- ◆ audience and institution
- ◆ representation and institution

Analysis questions give candidates a choice. The particular choice should offer the optimum opportunity to explain how one Key Aspect is influenced by one or more other Key Aspects. These 'connections' could be the focus of practice. It may be that some of the above combinations offer limited opportunities for candidates, given the particulars of the media text. Candidates may become aware of the best combinations to attempt.

However, candidates who integrate explicitly should make explicit connections in part (b) about the nature of the influence they wish to explain. Spelling out the nature of the link between the Key Aspect(s) in one or two sentences at the start of the second part of the answer may help keep the answer specific and relevant to the question.

In the Reflective Production Question (Question 1), the specific stage and Key Aspect and at least one other should be the focus of the answer, and not diary-type statements. Candidates could become more familiar with the specifics of this question by making notes of specific details of choices and decisions taken in production that would enable a strong answer to be made.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2009	779
Number of resulted entries in 2010	906

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark — 100				
A	13.4%	13.4%	121	69
B	22.0%	35.3%	199	56
C	25.5%	60.8%	231	44
D	11.5%	72.3%	104	38
No award	27.7%	100.0%	251	—

General commentary on grade boundaries

While SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions which will allow a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional C boundary) and a well prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional A boundary), it is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level.

Each year, therefore, SQA holds a grade boundary meeting for each subject at each level where it brings together all the information available (statistical and judgemental). The Principal Assessor and SQA Qualifications Manager meet with the relevant SQA Head of Service and Statistician to discuss the evidence and make decisions. The meetings are chaired by members of the management team at SQA.

The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the exam is more challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.

The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the exam is less challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.

Where standards are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.

An exam paper at a particular level in a subject in one year tends to have a marginally different set of grade boundaries from exam papers in that subject at that level in other years. This is because the particular questions, and the mix of questions are different. This is also the case for exams set in centres. If SQA has already altered a boundary in a particular year in say Higher Chemistry this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter boundaries in their prelim exam in Higher Chemistry. The two are not that closely related as they do not contain identical questions.

SQA's main aim is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and all levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as Arrangements evolve and change.