



National  
Qualifications

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# Media

# Assignment

# General assessment information

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This pack contains general assessment information for centres preparing candidates for the Assignment Component of National 5 Media Course assessment.

It must be read in conjunction with the specific assessment task(s) for this Component of Course assessment which may only be downloaded from SQA's designated secure website by authorised personnel.

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This edition: September 2016 (version 1.2)

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# Contents

Introduction	1
What this assessment covers	2
Assessment	3
Marking Instructions	10

# Introduction

This is the general assessment information for the assignment for National 5 Media.

This assignment is worth 50 marks out of a total of 100 marks. The marks contribute 50% of the overall marks for the Course assessment. The Course will be graded A-D.

Marks for all Course Components are added up to give a total Course assessment mark which is then used as the basis for grading decisions.

This is one of two Components of Course assessment. The other Component is a question paper.

This assignment has two sections.

**Section 1**, titled 'Planning', will have 25 marks

**Section 2**, titled 'Development', will have 25 marks

This document describes the general requirements for the assessment of the assignment Component for this Course. It gives general information and instructions for assessors.

It must be read in conjunction with the assessment task for this Component of Course assessment.

## Equality and inclusion

This Course assessment has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to assessment. Assessments have been designed to promote equal opportunities while maintaining the integrity of the qualification.

For guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs, please follow the link to the Assessment Arrangements web page: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html)

Guidance on inclusive approaches to delivery and assessment in this Course is provided in the *Course Support Notes*.

# What this assessment covers

This assessment contributes 50% of the total marks for the Course.

The assessment will assess the skills, knowledge and understanding specified for the assignment in the *Course Assessment Specification*. These are:

- ◆ Consideration of possibilities and problem-solving in planning and production processes
- ◆ Application of knowledge and understanding of the relevant key aspects of media literacy
- ◆ Evaluation of the impact of actual or likely constraints on media content

# Assessment

## Purpose

The purpose of this assessment is to generate evidence for this Component of the added value of this Course by means of an assignment.

## Assessment overview

In the assignment for National 5 Media, candidates plan and develop media content in response to a negotiated brief. The assessment task will be set and externally marked by SQA and conducted in centres under the conditions specified by SQA. Separate information will be given on arrangements for submission of evidence.

The candidate may have a brief to plan and develop a piece of media content in its entirety, or to plan and develop one part of media content which can be combined with the work of other candidates to make a complete piece.

Candidates will submit their finished content, along with responses to planning and development questions.

The finished content must be either in print form or saved on a CD, DVD or other portable memory device, and be readable by standard media players.

Assessment should take place when candidates are ready to be assessed, but at a point early enough to allow them to complete the assignment by the submission date. In order to complete the assignment, candidates will need to have skills in analysing and creating media content. It is therefore recommended that the assignment is undertaken once most of the work for the *Analysing Media Content* and *Creating Media Content* Units is complete.

Before they begin the assignment, candidates should know and be able to apply the key aspects of Media (categories, language, narrative, representation, audience and institution) and understand the relationships between these in terms of the content and contexts of media production. They will not be expected to demonstrate knowledge of all the key aspects in the assignment, but a successful approach to the tasks given will necessitate clear understanding of them.

Candidates should also have an understanding of the production process, and the constraints which may impact on this, along with production skills relevant to the medium in which they will be working. This will help them to make active decisions about what they wish to include in their media content and why, and how to go about making the final content.

The assignment has been developed to ensure that all candidates are assessed in the same way, regardless of the technical capabilities of the equipment at their disposal, or the medium, form or genre they will be working in.

Consequently, the instructions for the assignment direct all candidates to adopt a common approach regardless of their brief or resources.

In Section 1: Planning, evidence that the candidate has actively planned content by carrying out appropriate research and making decisions based on this is assessed. Candidates follow five steps:

1. Negotiate the brief
2. Generate ideas
3. Carry out research
4. Finalise plans
5. Explain planning

Steps 1-4 help candidates decide what they will make and directs their research and planning. This research and planning is assessed in Step 5.

In Step 5, candidates answer a set of questions which require them to describe the findings of their research into audience, institution and content, and explain how this influenced their plans.

Assessment judgements are based on the explanation of the relationship between the research and plans. Five marks are available for each of the following areas:

- ◆ Audience
- ◆ Internal institutional factors
- ◆ External institutional factors
- ◆ One relevant key aspect of content
- ◆ A second relevant key aspect of content

In Section 2: Development, evidence that the candidate can use media techniques and codes to create impact or convey connotations is assessed. Candidates follow two steps:

1. Make the planned media content
2. Explain the use of media techniques or codes

In Step 1, candidates make their planned media content using media techniques and codes.

In Step 2, candidates select and identify five examples from the developed content that they think best demonstrate their ability to create impact or convey connotations. They then describe the media techniques or codes used, and explain the impact or connotations intended.

The finished content and explanations are considered together. Assessment judgements are based on the extent to which candidates demonstrate knowledge, understanding and application of media codes to create impact or convey connotations. This may be evident through their developed content, through their explanations, or through a mixture of the two. Up to 5 marks are awarded for each example.

It is acknowledged that some candidates may be able to produce content of a very high finish, but some may not, despite their creative intentions. Artistic or technical skills are not assessed because the Course does not have a specific focus on these, and because of possible resource implications within the centre which may make a high technical finish difficult.

Where a candidate has a brief to plan and develop their own piece of media content, the candidate is expected to work independently to complete the assignment. However, if during the making of the content more than one person is required for technical reasons, candidates can organise assistance from others, with permission from the assessor. An example of this is where a candidate is making a moving image text and requires one person to present a piece to camera, and another to film. The candidate is unlikely to be able to effectively carry out both of these roles alone, and would therefore require some assistance. Candidates should give clear instructions to anyone helping them and must take all decisions about the content and technical aspects of the work themselves.

Where this situation is likely to arise, a system whereby groups of candidates crew for each other could be organised. Careful production scheduling and resource management would be necessary, and assessors can provide assistance as necessary in this regard.

During the process, it is recommended that candidates keep a production log or diary to record their ideas, research, plans and so on. This is not mandatory and is not assessed in the assignment; the recommendation is made to support candidates and encourage them to keep a clear record of their work which will help them to complete the assignment. If they wish, assessors can provide candidates with *pro forma* production logs or recommend a format for recording information.

The role of the assessor is to give reasonable assistance prior to and during the activity, as outlined in the assessment conditions below.

In particular, the assessor has a prominent role in providing resources and setting the brief.

### **Resources**

Candidates may require some assistance in gaining access to resources, space, people, organising assistance from others, creating a production schedule, and so on. Assessors can provide resources or assist as necessary in this regard.

## Setting the brief

The requirements for setting the brief are open enough to provide for personalisation and choice by the candidate. Candidates can use a brief provided by the centre, or discuss ideas with the assessor and agree on the brief together. Each candidate should have their own, individual brief, but that could relate to a whole class or group project. The brief must include the following information:

### *An instruction or stimulus*

The *instruction* might be to make an advert, content for a magazine or website, a trailer, a factual programme, or something else, for a particular purpose. Alternatively, a *stimulus* might be used. This could be an experience, a theme, an extract from a book, a news story, or anything else that can suggest an idea for media content.

### *A target audience*

Candidates should know the age group and gender of the target audience, as well as anything else that is relevant about them.

### *The level of finish expected*

Taking into account the resources available, the brief must specify clearly the level of finish expected in Part 2 of the assignment. Although a completed product may be the most desirable for the candidate, this is not necessary if the resources are not available for this. In particular, this may be the case in relation to moving image content, or a brief which uses a narrative extract as a stimulus.

The level of finish expected might be a complete media text, or part of one. It might be storyboards, detailed plans and sketches, or something else. Candidates need to be absolutely clear about the level of finish expected.

When setting the brief, the following should be considered:

- ◆ The brief should ask the candidate to plan and develop content which is for a particular purpose and audience, and which uses a range of appropriate media codes. No medium, form or genre is necessarily more appropriate than another, but care must be taken to ensure that the brief given to or negotiated by the candidate is not overly ambitious, and allows them to achieve the assessment criteria to the best of their ability. There is no prescribed length or amount of content to be made, but an appropriate brief might specify a single print advert, a 30-second trailer, one or two pages of a newspaper, magazine or website, or an edited/storyboarded sequence of up to 12 shots, for example. The requirement to plan and use a range of media codes to achieve a purpose, target an audience or convey meanings is more important than the length of the piece, as is setting a brief which involves stimulating research into audience, institution and content.

- ◆ Where the media content to be planned and developed is part of a group or class project, care must be taken to ensure that each candidate has a brief which is appropriate to the demands of both parts of the assignment.
- ◆ The assignment should build on the work completed for the *Analysing Media Content* and *Creating Media Content* Units of the Course.
- ◆ A candidate's ability to respond to the potential contained within a brief may be constrained by more than his/her creativity. The resources available from centre to centre will vary considerably, and may have an impact on what can and cannot be produced. The brief must be compatible with the available resources.
- ◆ Candidates' interests, abilities and characteristics should be taken into account. As much of the brief as possible should be negotiated by the candidate. Some will need more support and direction than others in negotiating the brief.

## Assessment conditions

Assessors must exercise their professional responsibility in ensuring that evidence submitted by a candidate is the candidate's own work.

This assessment will be carried out over a period of time. Candidates should start at an appropriate point in the Course. This will normally be when they have completed most of the work on the Units in the Course.

This assessment has two sections:

- ◆ Planning, which should be completed over a period of time
- ◆ Development, which should be completed over a period of time.

Any written evidence which meets the requirements of this Component of Course assessment should be between 750 and 1,500 words.

There are no restrictions on the resources to which candidates may have access.

Candidates must undertake the assessment independently. However, reasonable assistance may be provided prior to the formal assessment process taking place. The term 'reasonable assistance' is used to try to balance the need for support with the need to avoid giving too much assistance. If any candidates require more than what is deemed to be 'reasonable assistance', they may not be ready for assessment or it may be that they have been entered for the wrong level of qualification.

Reasonable assistance, for example advice on how to develop a plan, may be given on a generic basis to a class or group of candidates. It may also be given to candidates on an individual basis. When reasonable assistance is given on a one-to-one basis in the context of something the candidate has already produced or demonstrated, there is a danger that it becomes support for assessment and assessors need to be aware that this may be going beyond reasonable assistance.

Candidates may seek clarification regarding the wording of a brief or specification or instructions for the assessment if they find them unclear. In this case, the clarification should normally be given to the whole class.

Assessor input and advice on the candidate's plan is acceptable in order to allow the candidate to progress to the development stages of the assessment.

Where a candidate has a brief to plan and develop their own piece of media content, the candidate is expected to work independently to complete the assignment. However, if during the making of the content more than one person is required for technical reasons, candidates can organise assistance from others, with permission from the assessor. An example of this is where a candidate is making a moving image text and requires one person to present a

piece to camera, and another to film. The candidate is unlikely to be able to effectively carry out both of these roles alone, and would therefore require some assistance. Candidates should give clear instructions to anyone helping them and must take all decisions about the content and technical aspects of the work themselves.

This is not the same as collaborative groupwork, where candidates may share responsibilities and tasks. Groupwork approaches as part of the preparation for assessment can be helpful to simulate real-life situations and promote team-working skills. Where a candidate is working independently to plan and develop a piece of media content, groupwork is not appropriate once formal work on the assignment has started.

However, where a candidate has a brief to plan and create a piece of media content within the context of a class or group project, groupwork is acceptable, providing that all evidence submitted by a candidate can be authenticated as the candidate's own work.

The assignment will be conducted under some supervision and control. This means that although candidates may complete part of the work outwith the learning and teaching setting, assessors should put in place processes for monitoring progress and ensuring that the work is the candidate's own and that plagiarism has not taken place. Mechanisms to authenticate candidate evidence include, for example:

- ◆ Regular checkpoint/progress meetings with candidates
- ◆ Short spot-check personal interviews
- ◆ Checklists which record activity/progress
- ◆ Photographs, film or audio evidence

## **Evidence to be gathered**

The following candidate evidence is required for this assessment:

- ◆ Responses to the planning stage questions
- ◆ Responses to the development stage questions
- ◆ The developed media content

The finished content must be either in print form or saved on a CD, DVD or other portable memory device and be readable by standard media players.

Where a candidate has planned and developed media content as part of a group or class project, the same piece of media content may be submitted by more than one candidate, providing that the responses to the development stage questions clearly reference the candidate's own work.

# General Marking Instructions

## Part one: general marking principles for National 5 Media assignment

*This information is provided to help illustrate the general principles applied when candidate responses to this assignment are marked. These principles are used in conjunction with the specific Marking Instructions for each section. The marking schemes are written to assist in determining the ‘minimal acceptable response’ rather than listing every possible correct and incorrect response.*

- (a) Marks for each candidate response are always assigned in line with these general marking principles and the specific Marking Instructions for the relevant section.
- (b) Marking is always positive, ie marks are awarded for what is correct and not deducted for errors or omissions.
- (c) For credit to be given, points must relate to the question asked.

## Part two: Marking Instructions for each Section

### SECTION 1: PLANNING

In Section 1: Planning, the candidate is assessed on evidence that they have actively planned content by carrying out appropriate research and made decisions based on this.

Candidates answer five questions, each based on one of the following research areas:

1. Audience
2. Internal institutional controls
3. External institutional controls
4. One key aspect of content from: categories, language, narrative, representation
5. A second key aspect of content from: categories, language, narrative, representation

For each research area, the question is as follows:

Describe what you discovered during your research into **[specified area of research]**, and explain how this influenced your plans. (5 marks)

The general marking principles for this question are as follows:

**Where candidates are asked to *describe*...**

Candidates must make a number of relevant, factual points, or state characteristics and features, as appropriate to the question asked. Points made do not need to be in any particular order. Candidates may provide a number of straightforward points or a smaller number of developed points, or a combination of these.

Up to the total number of marks allocated:

- ◆ 1 mark should be given for each relevant point.
- ◆ Each subsequent mark can be given for development of a relevant point.

**Where candidates are asked to *explain*...**

Candidates must make points that relate cause and effect and/or make relationships between things clear. Where a number of points are made, these do not need to be in any particular order. Candidates may provide a number of straightforward points or a smaller number of developed points, or a combination of these.

Up to the total number of marks allocated:

- ◆ 1 mark should be given for each relevant point of explanation
- ◆ Each subsequent mark can be given for development of a relevant point.

**Example:** In my research into external controls I found out through the Advertising Standards Authority that children should not be made to feel unpopular for not buying a product that is advertised to them. *(1 mark for description of research)* This affected my plan to show one boy getting more friends than another because he had the game I was advertising. *(1 mark for effect on planning)* I decided to alter the narrative to show them all having fun with the game at the end so that it was the game that was represented positively, as well as both boys, not just one. *(1 mark for development)*

The specific Marking Instruction for this question is over the page:

Question	Max mark	The following marking instructions apply to <u>each</u> question in Section 1.
1	5	Candidates are expected to describe at least one research finding by including relevant, factual points or stating characteristics and features, as appropriate to the focus of the research.
2	5	In the explanation of the influence of research on planning, the candidate must make points showing a causal relationship between the research findings and planning, and describe a resultant planning decision made.
3	5	There is no specific balance of research finding to planning decision required. Sometimes a detailed research finding will result in a simple planning decision, or vice-versa.
4	5	For each area of research, award up to 5 marks as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Award 1 mark for a description of a research finding.</li> <li>◆ Award a second mark for an explanation of how a specific planning decision was influenced by the research finding.</li> </ul>
5	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Subsequent marks can be awarded for developed or additional research findings or influence on planning.</li> <li>◆ A maximum of 2 marks in total can be awarded where only standalone research or planning points are given.</li> </ul>

## SECTION 2: DEVELOPMENT

In Section 2: Development, evidence that the candidate can use media techniques or codes to create impact or convey connotations is assessed.

Candidates select and identify five examples from their developed content that they think best demonstrates their ability to create impact or convey connotations. They describe the techniques or codes used to make each example, and explain the intended impact or connotations of these. The explanation may be in general terms, or linked to audience, purpose or anything else that is relevant.

It is acknowledged that some candidates may be able to produce content of a very high finish, but some may not, despite their creative intentions. Artistic or technical skills are not assessed because the Course does not have a specific focus on these, and because of possible resource implications within the centre which may make a high technical finish difficult.

The finished content and explanations should be considered together. Assessment judgements are based on the extent to which candidates demonstrate knowledge, understanding and application of media techniques or codes to create impact or convey connotations. This may be evident through

their developed content, through their explanations, or through a mixture of the two.

The specific Marking Instruction for this question is as follows:

For **each** of the five examples selected and identified by the candidate:

Allocate a mark out of 5 by applying the criteria below. The marker should award the mark in the band descriptor which most closely describes the evidence presented. If the descriptor has two marks available:

- ◆ Where the combination of finished content and explanation almost matches the band descriptor above, the higher of the two available marks should be awarded.
- ◆ Where the combination of finished content and work just meets the standard described, the lower of the two available marks should be awarded.

<b>The following marking descriptors apply to each example selected in Section 2. Award a maximum of 5 marks for each example.</b>	
<b>Marks</b>	<b>Band descriptor</b>
<b>5</b>	The candidate has insightfully applied knowledge and understanding of how to manipulate media techniques or codes to create impact or convey connotations.
<b>3-4</b>	The candidate has validly applied knowledge and understanding of how to manipulate media techniques or codes to create impact or convey connotations.
<b>1-2</b>	There is a description of the techniques or codes used but the intended impact or connotation is basic and/or unclear.
<b>0</b>	There will be no evidence that the candidate understands how to manipulate media techniques or codes to create impact or convey connotations.

## Administrative information

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Published: September 2016 (version 1.2)

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### History of changes

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
1.1	Minor clarifications to 'Marking Instructions for each Section' on pages 12 and 13.	Qualifications Manager	September 2014
1.2	Minor clarification to the 1-2 mark band descriptor for Section 2 on page 13.	Qualifications Manager	September 2016

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