



External Assessment Report 2013

Subject(s)	Media Studies
Level(s)	Intermediate 1

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 performance: The average mark for Paper 1 and for Paper2: Unseen Analysis was lower than in previous years.

Candidates varied in their level of knowledge and understanding. In Paper 1, there were candidates who did not attempt several large-mark questions in both the Media Analysis and Media Production sections.

In the Unseen Analysis, media knowledge was demonstrated, but answers varied according to the depth of textual reference. Some excellent rich texts were chosen. Markers commented that questions on the medium of the text were often achieving zero marks. Details in the Unseen Analysis flyleaf were sometimes inaccurately entered.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Paper 1

In Section 1, Media Analysis, the texts chosen were mainly rich and offered candidates many opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and understanding. Many candidates showed a good knowledge of the narrative structure question 3.

In Section 2, Media Production, the best answers for question 1, the reflective question, showed a good understanding of how to use research findings and how to overcome or deal with specific constraints. Also, target audience factors were clearly understood, and candidates wrote well about how the product had been planned and made to appeal to the target audience.

As in previous years, good answers on codes used in the production (question (1c) worth 16 marks) were well selected to exemplify the thinking behind their use.

Good answers for question 2 (the Advertising Brief question on promoting swimming as a healthy, fun activity) were characterised by good reasons given for design choices, including the ability to write about connotation.

Candidates who achieved high marks in question 3, the scenario question, justified decisions well.

Paper 2: Unseen Analysis

Candidates who achieved high marks in this component did well in questions on both Categories *and* Language. Questions on purpose and genre, technical and cultural codes were very well answered. Markers commented that less successful answers showed strengths in *either* Categories *or* Language.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Paper 1

In Section 1, Media Analysis, question 5 asked why a stereotype or non-stereotype was used. This question, worth 2 marks, was very challenging for all candidates. The grade boundaries were adjusted to take this into account.

In Section 1, Media Analysis, many questions required detailed textual reference. Weaker responses did not refer closely to the text that had been studied, where this was expressly specified in the question.

In Section 2, Media Production, question 1(d) on the effect of two institutional factors on the text — worth 8 marks — was not well answered by candidates, who seemed to be unfamiliar with what was required. Their answers were unfocused: they could not describe the effect of a specific institutional factor on the text they had studied. Similarly, question 1(b) on specific research (and worth 6 marks), was not well answered,

As in previous years, in the Advertising Brief (question 2) and in the Scenario question (question 2), candidates were asked to give reasons for their design decisions and treatment decisions. These questions required more than brief statements. Candidates who made quite detailed sketches or storyboards did not always justify choices in detail. More time spent on justifications would have improved the answer. Answers should describe in more detail the connotations of signs and codes chosen.

Paper 2: Unseen Analysis

As in other years, Markers again widely commented that candidates did not do well answering Unseen Analysis questions on the medium of the text — this question continues to elude candidates. As before, questions on the ‘form’ of the unseen text also have little resonance with candidates. For a few centres, an unorthodox instrument of assessment for the Unseen Analysis was constructed. For example, candidates were asked questions — worth up to four marks — on tone or on audience and anchorage. This is not acceptable practice.

Unseen Analysis Questions that do not offer candidates the opportunity to gain a full 20 marks — and that do not come from the Intermediate 1 Question Bank — can easily affect the grades candidates achieve.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Paper 1, Section 1: Media Analysis

Analysis questions focus on the candidate being able to describe how a studied media text has been constructed and how the influence of contextual factors, such as audience and institution, can be seen in specific ways. Many questions in this section are worth at least six marks, and often eight or more marks. Candidates should be prepared so that they can use **specific textual details** when responding to these questions.

Paper 1, Section 2: Media Production

Question 1, the Reflective question: candidates should be prepared to write **specific** answers. Knowing how to give relevant and specific details about their production process is the key to answering the Reflective question well. Candidates should know how specific research, specific audience factors, and specific constraints, impact on production choices, as well as codes used.

As we have said in previous years, group production offers the candidates a way of solving quite straightforward specific and limited (small-scale) production challenges. Candidates should be made aware that dealing positively with constraints is an important aspect of the production process. Candidates must be able to **describe a straightforward solution or solutions to specific institutional constraints imposed by the brief**, showing a viable solution. Familiarity with the specific connotation of codes and their reasons for use in the group production would boost candidates' answers.

In question 2, Advertising Brief, and question 3, Scenario, candidates who can justify their decisions gain higher marks. This involves describing connotations and ways to influence the target audience, how to manipulate meaning to create impact.

Paper 2: Unseen Analysis

There are still centres not using questions from the Intermediate 1 Unseen Analysis Question Bank.

Some centres are not giving sufficient balance between Categories and Language questions. There must be a minimum of eight marks allocated to both Categories and Language questions. Questions worth three marks are **not** permitted.

**Statistical information: update on Courses
Intermediate 1**

Number of resulted entries in 2012	671
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Number of resulted entries in 2013	636
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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	20.0%	20.0%	127	64
B	22.6%	42.6%	144	53
C	23.3%	65.9%	148	43
D	9.4%	75.3%	60	38
No award	24.7%	100.0%	157	-

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, SQA therefore 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 Business Manager 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.