



## External Assessment Report 2013

|            |                |
|------------|----------------|
| Subject(s) | Media Studies  |
| Level(s)   | 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 an overall slight improvement in both Paper 1 and Paper 2 compared to previous years.

## Areas in which candidates performed well

### Paper 1, Section 1: Media Analysis

Candidates did well where they concentrated on two Key Aspects and structured their answers. As in previous years, fewer candidates chose to answer Question 4, which asked about two institutional factors and at least one other key aspect. Questions on Narrative (question 1) and Representation (question 2) were mainly answered well.

### Section 2: Media Production

The Advertising Brief (question 2) was answered well by many candidates who devised fully justified treatments.

The Scenario (question 3) was not attempted by many candidates, but there were some well justified responses amongst a range of marks for this question.

### Paper 2: Unseen analysis

Markers commented that there were some outstanding responses, with impressive understanding of **both** Categories and Language from some centres.

## Areas which candidates found demanding

### Paper 1, Section 1: Media Analysis

Some Markers commented that some candidates could not write about two Key Aspects in the Analysis answers.

Some candidates found it difficult to write about two audiences in question 3, suggesting this may not have been the best 'fit' for the choice of Analysis question.

### Section 2: Media Production

- ◆ Question 1 (Reflective question): for some candidates the response was imbalanced, spending too much time writing about production constraints rather than linking to audience. Also, weaker answers did not reference Key Aspects, and Markers commented that some candidates were not writing clearly enough about the specific brief they were given.
- ◆ Question 2 (Advertising brief), promoting tourism to Scotland: some candidates who used Scottish stereotypes did not justify their use — a missed opportunity, Markers commented.

## **Paper 2: Unseen analysis**

Lack of textual exemplification characterised the main difficulty, answers being limited to identification rather than exemplification. Markers commented that perhaps some moving image texts were a bit too demanding for some candidates.

# **Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates**

## **Paper 1, Section 1: Media Analysis**

In the Analysis Section questions at least two Key Aspects must be dealt with. The Marking Instructions state that some imbalance is acceptable in the answer, and that each Key Aspect need not be dealt with equally. Some Markers commented that some candidates could not write about two Key Aspects. Candidates should perhaps take time to plan the answer to ensure that at least two Key Aspects are dealt with.

The Analysis question answers should be based on one professionally-produced text. A 'text' is referred to in the Arrangements document as 'a single entity which has some form of closure; or which had been produced for purchase/consumption as a single entity: for example, one episode of a broadcast series/serial; one magazine; one cinema film; one music video.'

## **Section 2: Media Production**

As in previous years, many weaker Reflective question responses did not explain how the specified key aspect — Audience — was used in the planning stage. Instead, these answers tended to give over-generalised responses, or referenced all stages of the production process. More practice in how to use the Key Aspects in the reflective essay would greatly help candidates in the future.

Candidates should know the specifics of the Advertising Brief question. They do **not** have to justify the choice of medium or deal with production issues for the Advertising brief.

## **Paper 2: Unseen Analysis**

Ensure the text chosen for the Unseen Analysis is rich and suited to the cohort's knowledge and interests, and is not overly complex or difficult to 'read'.

Avoid questions on the medium of the text, since these often produce confused responses, it has been found. Markers commented that giving candidates only two Categories questions, one of which is Medium, is too limiting — candidates may not do well as a result. Questions on Genre, Purpose and Tone produce much more focused answers, enabling candidates to deal readily with specific details in the text. These three Categories questions give candidates scope to do well. This is important when dealing with an unseen text within a limited time, under exam conditions.

Candidates do not always show secure knowledge of the meaning of the term 'character formatting' (Print). If this Print question is to be selected, candidates should be given opportunities to practice how to develop full answers.

In Language questions, candidates should have practice in developing answers that explain the impact of specific techniques, the effect on meaning of signs. Answers should be structured so that this is highlighted.

Candidates should not be given stationery that restricts the amount of space for answering Unseen Analysis questions.

**Statistical information: update on Courses  
Intermediate 2**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>Number of resulted entries in 2012</b> | 758 |
|---|-----|

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>Number of resulted entries in 2013</b> | 895 |
|---|-----|

**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                             | 16.6% | 16.6%  | 149                  | 69          |
| B                             | 22.0% | 38.7%  | 197                  | 57          |
| C                             | 23.4% | 62.0%  | 209                  | 45          |
| D                             | 12.8% | 74.9%  | 115                  | 39          |
| No award                      | 25.1% | 100.0% | 225                  | -           |

## 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.