



## External Assessment Report 2012

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

Overall, candidates performed less well than last year. There were many well developed responses to Papers 1 and 2. However, in Paper 1 some candidates did not address the specifics of questions, giving rather generalised answers. Markers commented that some candidates' time allocation between Section 1 and 2 was imbalanced with more time being spent on the Media Analysis Section than the Media Production Section.

## Areas in which candidates performed well

### Paper 1 Section 1: Media Analysis

Candidates answered particularly well in Questions 1 and 2, which asked about narrative and representation and at least one other key aspect.

### Section 2: Media Production

Successful answers justified choices and decisions in both the advertising brief question (Question 2) and the scenario question (Question 3).

### 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 Tone and Genre questions for Categories and in the Language questions. Rich texts were generally chosen for the Unseen Analysis: texts such as film posters, DVD covers and film trailers gave candidates plenty of scope. Thoughtful responses were produced by many candidates.

## Areas which candidates found demanding

### Paper 1 Section 1: Media Analysis

Many of the weaker responses to analysis questions were due to a lack of linkage of the key aspects selected. There was a noticeable imbalance in some candidates' Analysis answers – with one key aspect developed at the expense of the second, which was rather thinly dealt with. There was also a lack of textual referencing in some candidates' responses.

## 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.

Many weaker reflective production essays did not explain how the specified key aspect — Language — was used in the planning stage. Instead, these answers tended to give over-generalised responses or else referenced all stages of the production process.

In Question 2, the advertising brief question and Question 3, the scenario question, some candidates weakened their answer by not justifying choices and decisions effectively.

Also, it was noticeable this year that in the Advertising Brief question, some candidates spent quite a bit of the essay justifying the medium of their advert and also considering production issues. Neither of these is a requirement of the Advertising brief question and is self-penalising.

## Paper 2: Unseen Analysis

As in previous years, candidates found difficulty answering questions on medium. Markers commented on the fact that candidates who explain other categories constructed well developed answers. It seems clear that questions on the medium of the unseen text give candidates little scope to develop a satisfactory explanation.

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

### **General**

Markers commented that in the Section 1 Media Analysis Section, weaker answers were caused by one key aspect being fully explained and the second being much less developed. The imbalance, therefore, was the main factor in a weaker answer. More practice in developing full responses to both key aspects relevant to the question is needed.

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

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 at: [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk) > Qualifications > NQ > Subjects > Media Studies > Intermediate 2, under the Guidance documents tab.

## Section 2: Media Production

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.

It may help candidates to state at the start of the Reflective essay which two Key Aspects are to be the focus of the essay, to ensure that they are addressing the specifics of this question. The essay should make clear how the named key aspect and one other and the named stage of the production process are to be used in the answer. This would avoid a fairly common problem of irrelevance in the reflective essay.

In Question 2, the Advertising Brief question, there is no need to justify Target Audience in Advertising Brief Question or to deal with production issues.

In Question 3, the scenario question, candidates should be reminded of the need to explain specific production issues relating to the scenario itself rather than listing generic production factors. The candidate is required to raise specific production issues that would arise out of the specific scenario, but they do not need to solve them in the essay.

## Statistical information: update on Courses

### Intermediate 2

Number of resulted entries in 2011	755
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Number of resulted entries in 2012	758
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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	11.3%	11.3%	86	69
B	22.8%	34.2%	173	57
C	26.6%	60.8%	202	45
D	11.2%	72.0%	85	39
No award	28.0%	100.0%	212	-

## 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.