



Course Report 2015

Subject	Media Studies
Level	National 5

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any Post Results Services.

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 assessment and marking instructions for the examination.

Section 1: Comments on the Assessment

Component 1: Question paper

A wide variety of texts was taught, clearly targeted to candidate preferences. The question paper allowed candidates to demonstrate sound media knowledge, and there was evidence of careful preparation and guidance. Some questions proved to be more demanding than others, as is usual in examination procedures.

The question paper is worth 50 marks.

Component 2: Assignment

There were some original and creative assignments, with real flair, and evidence of clear direction by centres. Where candidates understood the importance of their written responses not the 'finish' of the production, high marks were gained.

It was clear to see the very high number of candidates who had really enjoyed the making of a media product, and learned a great deal during the process. This was evident from both the written work, and the pride taken into the storyboards, films, posters etc.

The Assignment is worth 50 marks and has two sections. Section 1 Planning is worth 25 Marks and Section 2 Development is also worth 25 marks.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Component 1: Question paper

Many candidates showed a great deal of media knowledge and matched this content to the questions which were asked. Content, context and the role of media were clearly understood by many, and stimulating and appropriate content had been taught to facilitate learning and enjoyment for the candidates.

Most candidates completed the paper, and some wrote a substantial amount for every question.

Component 2: Assignment

Planning

Clear consideration of the demands of the task had been made by many. There was evidence of thorough and targeted research. Where candidates had written up their notes at the time of their research, higher marks were gained.

Development

The standard of product was extremely high, in particular from those who made films or storyboards. The availability of centre resources did not seem to be an issue, with candidates using a variety of accessible media to meet their needs. However, not all candidates gave sufficient evidence to achieve the 5 marks available for each code, and some answers were 'thin' or repetitive and did not demonstrate clear understanding of how media codes are used to create meanings or achieve a purpose.

Section 3: Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: Question paper

Question 1 (Narrative)

Most candidates demonstrated sound understanding of narrative concepts in relation to genre: often the action genre. Most concentrated on the theories of Tzvetan Todorov, Vladimir Propp and Joseph Campbell. Some discussed Roland Barthes and Claude Levi-Strauss. Thorough preparation could be seen, and the candidates understood that they had to support their assertions with detailed textual examples.

Question 2a and 2b (Representation)

Most candidates were able to discuss how language features are used to create representations. A common approach was to compare a stereotypical hero and villain, which worked well. Mise-en-scene, colour, camerawork, lighting, sound, editing, layout etc were discussed in detail to support their ideas.

Question 4b (Internal/External Controls)

Most candidates could clearly explain the way internal/external controls affected the content they had studied. Regulation, censorship and copyright were discussed effectively by many.

Component 2: Assignment

Planning

Most teachers/lecturers had negotiated stimulating briefs with their candidates and given realistic deadlines.

Many candidates made clear, causal points showing the relationship between the research findings and the resultant planning decisions made.

Development

Candidates being asked to create storyboards based on scenarios/scenes worked very well, as this allowed them to select from a range of codes in their development section. This meant that there was no limit to the choices they could make.

Most candidates selected their five codes sensibly, choosing what had been most creative about their product. Good understanding of the connotations of the chosen media techniques and codes was evident.

Section 4: Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: Question paper

Question 3(a) and 3(b)

Some candidates misunderstood 'ideas' and had difficulty expressing how these were conveyed in familiar media content. Candidates did better with this question on texts with interesting times/ places, such as *V for Vendetta*, *Jaws* and 1950s posters/sitcoms.

Question 5(a) and 5(b)

The role of media question was misinterpreted by some candidates as an 'Audience' question, and they discussed target audience instead of how media content is used to meet needs.

Component 2: Assignment

Planning (25 marks)

Some teachers/lecturers had negotiated briefs with their candidates that did not lead to successful products or written work. For example, candidates who were asked to create a simple print poster often struggled to have enough planning points or detailed points of evaluation due to a product that lacked detail.

Some candidates did not make clear causal points showing the relationship between the research findings, and the resultant planning decision made. This often seemed to be because they had written up the planning *after* they had made the product, and had forgotten the reasons behind their decisions.

Development (25 marks)

Some candidates had produced very detailed media products but had not supported their ideas with sufficient written information, sometimes hampered by the format they had been given to write in, for example small sections for each code which didn't allow them to expand on their ideas.

Section 5: Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Component 1: Question paper

It is advisable to give candidates a selection of texts to choose from in answering the questions — some questions are more suited to certain types of media content. The roles of media should be taught with different types of media content, ie those that entertain, educate and/or inform. It would also be useful to teach the candidates about more than one Narrative theorist — for example Barthes, Campbell, Propp, Todorov — to allow for fuller answers, although it is possible to achieve full marks on one theorist.

The Course Assessment Specification should be referred to to ensure that all possible areas for the sampling of assessment have been covered.

Component 2: Assignment

Candidates should not undertake the assignment too early in the Course. They will need to have an understanding of key aspects and production processes before they begin.

Careful consideration of a suitable task is extremely important. The preferences of the candidates and available technology need to be considered. Negotiating the brief is a key stage in the process. Briefs that stimulate creativity work best. Some candidates' media products, eg a simplistic poster, meant that there wasn't a range of planning decisions or codes to comment upon.

Candidates need to ensure that it is a *media* product that they are planning and developing —for example a poster, trailer, storyboard. A piece of music or a script does not allow for a demonstration of *media* codes such as camerawork, sound, editing, layout, mise-en-scene.

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 finish of the product. Adapting professionally produced media texts is inadvisable as it means the candidate can't justify many of the choices, because they have been made by others.

Giving too wide a choice of brief, for example 'an advertisement for a new gadget for any target audience' can lead to the candidate spending far too long researching and creating the item, rather than focusing on the media product. Keeping the media product straightforward, rather than overly ambitious, is preferable.

It is crucial that candidates write up their notes on planning as they work through the assignment (rather than tackling this at the end). If they do this, they will demonstrate full understanding of how research into audience, internal and external and institutional factors and key aspects has influenced their plans, rather than simply revert to describing the product they made.

For both planning and development, candidates should be given adequate space to write up their findings. Brief notes are not appropriate. Detailed explanations of their planning and

development are required. It is not advisable to change the questioning style set out in the Course Assessment Task document on the SQA secure site (page 10).

Clearly numbered answers to the questions works best. Some candidates attempted to use an essay format, which led to some confusion, with inadequate focus on certain questions.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2014	254
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Number of resulted entries in 2015	801
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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	23.0%	23.0%	184	67
B	21.0%	43.9%	168	57
C	21.7%	65.7%	174	47
D	10.5%	76.2%	84	42
No award	23.8%	-	191	-

Actions to improve the QP and clarify assessment standards this year had been successful. However the GB was still set below notional to reflect the overall balance of the QP and some difficulty of candidates gaining access to the full range of marks in the development section of the assignment.