

**MEDIA STUDIES**  
**Advanced Higher**

**Fourth edition – published December 2003**

**NOTE OF CHANGES TO ARRANGEMENTS  
FOURTH EDITION PUBLISHED DECEMBER 2003**

**COURSE TITLE:** Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

**COURSE NUMBER:** C058 13

**National Course Specification**

Course Details:

Details of the Instrument for External Assessment

Amendment to the structure of the Question Paper, which has an additional section on Media Analysis and Media Production combined. Amended procedures for prior approval of Dissertation topics. This was intimated in previous correspondence to be effective from session 2001/2002

**National Unit Specification**

No change

## National Course Specification

### MEDIA STUDIES (ADVANCED HIGHER)

**COURSE NUMBER** C058 13

#### COURSE STRUCTURE

The course comprises three mandatory units:

<i>D332 13</i>	<i>Media Analysis (AH)</i>	<i>1 credit (40 hours)</i>
<i>D37A 13</i>	<i>Media Investigation (AH)</i>	<i>1 credit (40 hours)</i>
<i>D334 13</i>	<i>Media Production (AH)</i>	<i>1 credit (40 hours)</i>

In common with all courses, this course includes 40 hours over and above the 120 hours for the component units. This is for induction, extending the range of learning and teaching approaches, support, consolidation, integration of learning and preparation for external assessment. This time is an important element of the course and advice on its use is included in the course details section.

#### RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Entry is at the discretion of the centre but candidates would normally be expected to have gained a course or unit award in Media Studies at Higher.

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#### Administrative Information

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## National Course Specification: general information (cont)

**COURSE**                    Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

### CORE SKILLS

This course gives automatic certification of the following:

<b>Complete core skills for the course</b>	Problem Solving	Higher
	Working with Others	Higher

**Additional core skills components for the course**    None

For information about the automatic certification of core skills for any individual unit in the course, please refer to the general information section at the beginning of the unit.

Additional information about core skills is published in the *Catalogue of Core Skills in National Qualifications* (SQA, publication code BA0906).

## **National Course Specification: course details**

**COURSE**                      Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

### **RATIONALE**

The media play a central role in the modern world and affect society at all levels: economic, political, social, cultural and individual. The aim of Media Studies is to develop critical understanding and appreciation of the media and their products, and to develop practical skills in media technology.

Advanced Higher Media Studies builds upon the analytical and production skills gained at Higher level. Candidates will further develop their analytical skills by applying and evaluating a range of methods to media texts.

Candidates will also investigate a media studies or public media issue, critically reviewing different viewpoints, theories and research in relation to the issue.

Production skills will be further developed by making two related media products.

Media Studies at Advanced Higher allows candidates to make the transition from a structured learning and teaching environment to more independent, investigative and reflective learning. Emphasis is placed on developing both study and technological skills and on promoting a critical approach to analysis. These generic skills are applicable to a range of subjects, contexts and activities and also prepare candidates for further study of the media whether in an academic or vocational context.

### **Aims**

The aims of this course are:

- to develop an understanding of the main critical tools used in the analysis of media texts
- to provide candidates with an understanding of the relationships between media texts and their social, audience and institutional contexts
- to foster critical understanding and aesthetic appreciation of media texts
- to develop skills in investigating and analysing media issues
- to develop an understanding of the multi-disciplinary nature of the subject
- to develop skills and autonomy in the use of technologies to create meaning
- to develop research, planning and organisational skills in response to a brief
- to foster understanding of the expectations of various target audiences and the modes of address appropriate to them
- to provide a knowledge of the detailed technical terms related to the chosen media
- to develop production skills appropriate to the chosen forms of the media
- to provide a knowledge of the constraints related to the chosen technologies
- to encourage the ability to work individually and as part of a team
- to encourage the ability to express constructive self-criticism
- to provide intellectual stimulus and challenge, develop academic rigour and foster enjoyment of the subject

## **National Course Specification: course details (cont)**

**COURSE**                      Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

### **COURSE CONTENT**

#### **Introduction**

The course has been designed to be as flexible as possible so that the texts and issues studied and the kind of production work undertaken can be selected by candidates in negotiation with their teachers/lecturers.

The seven key aspects of Media Studies – Categories, Language, Narrative, Representation, Audience, Institution, Technology – are integral to all three units. At Advanced Higher, the key aspects are used to:

- structure the analysis of texts and their contexts
- evaluate perspectives on a media studies or public media issue
- inform the planning, production and evaluation of candidate productions

#### **Unit 1: Media Analysis**

This unit aims to enable the candidate to adopt a structured approach to media analysis which involves applying methods and approaches across three overlapping areas: contexts, texts and audiences. A multi-disciplinary approach is adopted and candidates will apply and evaluate some of the main analytical methods of Media Studies as well as appreciating that a full analysis may require information from other subject areas.

#### **Unit 2: Media Investigation**

This unit will allow the candidate to carry out an independent investigation based on a media studies or public media issue. The candidate will plan and carry out an investigation which locates and analyses viewpoints and research on the issue. This will be used as the basis for a structured dissertation on the findings.

#### **Unit 3: Media Production**

When this unit is taken as a component of the Advanced Higher course, candidates will integrate and consolidate the knowledge, understanding and skills acquired in Unit 1, Media Analysis.

This unit is designed to enable candidates to contribute to all stages of two related media productions. Each production must be capable of distribution in a different form eg TV, film, radio, recording, print, web page, multimedia. Candidates should be given personal and practical experience of many of the issues which face media professionals. The effectiveness of the candidate's contribution is more important than the polish of the finished products. The productions may be by groups or individuals and candidates should be involved in a range of tasks.

The length of a production will be dependent on the brief, for example:

- newspaper or magazine: 8-10 pages of A4 including photographs and graphics
- video or audio programme: around 5-10 minutes
- advertisement: 30 seconds to 1 minute or half or full page spread
- 2-3 linked web pages

## **National Course Specification: course details (cont)**

### **COURSE**            Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

Candidates will require to know and understand the main stages and institutional contexts of each production. The production process in which the candidates engage should reflect these stages and should be informed by professional practice. At Advanced Higher, the three stages followed for any production should comprise: planning including analysis of the brief, making the product, and review and evaluation.

#### ***Planning***

Candidates work to a brief for each production which should specify:

- distribution method
- purpose
- target audience
- lengths
- institutional controls
- self-regulatory or legal controls
- deadlines

Contextual factors to consider should include those arising from simulated institutional settings as well as the constraints of the learning environment including group size, availability of hardware, weather, availability of locations, access to information.

Candidates and the teacher/lecturer should negotiate planning and production tasks and roles including those relating to resources, remits and production schedule.

#### ***Production***

Production tasks will be quite specialised at Advanced Higher and should match the particular skills and interests of the individual. Actions taken and decisions made in practical work will be recorded in the individual logbook.

#### ***Review and evaluation***

Candidates should be able to evaluate their productions. The evaluation should refer to the brief and to textual and contextual features but should include also detailed reference to the decision-making processes and constraints in planning, production and post-production. These constraints may be related to target audience, institutional factors and available technology. The evaluation should analyse the production processes and products using the key aspects of Media Studies. Candidates are required to make recommendations about each production. Recommendations may include suggestions for improvement to the processes or the products and/or the need for further practical work or research. The review and evaluation exercises will be the basis for an evaluation response in the production report.

The chosen media could include print, audio, video, film, animation and multimedia. Whatever media are chosen at Advanced Higher level, candidates should be able to use the appropriate language and terminology, showing a firm grasp of media concepts and ideas.

## National Course Specification: course details (cont)

### COURSE                      Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

#### Added benefit from taking the course

There is added benefit to be derived from taking the units as a course rather than as discrete units:

- units can be run concurrently and so can enrich one another
- there will be both balance and breadth in candidates' learning experiences
- practical and production activities can reinforce theoretical knowledge and understanding and vice versa
- knowledge and understanding gained from both analytical and production work will be integrated
- candidates develop abilities to sustain effort and concentration, come to conclusions, make decisions, complete a process and evaluate their work

#### ASSESSMENT

To gain the award of the course, the candidate must achieve all the component units of the course, as well as the external assessment. External assessment will provide the basis for grading attainment in the course award.

When units are taken as component parts of a course, candidates will have the opportunity to demonstrate achievement at levels beyond that required to attain each of the unit outcomes. This attainment may, where appropriate, be recorded and used to contribute towards course estimates, and to provide evidence for appeals.

Additional details are provided, where appropriate, with the exemplar assessment materials. Further information on the key principles of assessment are provided in the paper, *Assessment*, published by HSDU in May 1996.

#### DETAILS OF THE INSTRUMENTS FOR EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

The course assessment for Media Studies at Advanced Higher will consist of two components with weightings as follows:

- dissertation                      one-third                      internally generated, externally assessed
- examination paper              two-thirds                      externally assessed

#### *Dissertation*

The dissertation involves the exploration of a Media Studies or public media issue. Candidates will choose an issue by negotiation with the teacher/lecturer and will investigate it in depth, analysing viewpoints and referring to relevant media theories or research on the issue. The dissertation should be between 3000 and 4000 words in length, excluding quotations, footnotes and bibliography, and have an introduction, structured exposition, interim conclusions and references. Candidates will be penalised for investigations which are of excessive length.

## National Course Specification: course details (cont)

### COURSE Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

The proposed title of the dissertation and a brief description of the proposed dissertation topic should be submitted to SQA for approval by **1 October** of the year prior to the examination. The completed dissertation must be submitted to Scottish Qualifications Authority along with a copy of the candidate's investigation plan produced for the Media Investigation unit. The dissertation will be externally assessed but the plan will not. The completed dissertation should reach SQA by **30 April** of the year of the examination.

#### *Examination paper*

The examination paper will be of two hours duration. It will consist of two sections, each containing a range of questions. Candidates will attempt **either** one question from Section 1 **or** two questions from Section 2. Each section will carry an equal number of marks.

#### *Section 1, Media Analysis and Media Production (combined)*

Candidates will answer one extended response question from a choice. Candidates will combine their knowledge and understanding of both analysis and production in a single question. Questions will relate to context-centred, text-centred and audience-centred methods of media analysis and the planning, production and evaluation of media products. This section will have a weighting of two thirds of the total marks.

#### *Section 2, Media Analysis and Media Production*

This section will have two parts, Part A – Media Analysis and Part B – Media Production.

Candidates will answer two extended response questions from a choice, one from Part A and one from Part B. In Part A questions will relate to context-centred, text-centred and audience-centred methods of media analysis. In Part B, questions will relate to the planning, production and evaluation of media products. This section will have a weighting of two thirds of the total marks.

## GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

The characteristic performances at Grade C and Grade A are described below. These descriptions will assist assessors and moderators in determining national standards for candidates' folios and reports. They will also assist examiners in setting examination papers.

### **At Grade C**

Demonstrates competence in understanding, applying and evaluating methods of textual analysis.

Demonstrates competence in understanding and evaluating viewpoints, theories and research on a media studies/media issue.

Demonstrates competence in applying production and analytical skills to the planning, production and evaluation of media products.

### **At Grade A**

Demonstrates a high level of competence in understanding, applying and evaluating methods of textual analysis.

Demonstrates a high level of competence in understanding and evaluating viewpoints, theories and research on a media studies/media issue.

Demonstrates a high level of competence in applying production and analytical skills to the planning and production, evaluation of media products.

## National Course Specification: course details (cont)

### COURSE            Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

#### Relationship between external and internal assessment

The criteria for a C pass in the course closely reflects the level of competence required for success in its component units. However, the course assessment makes specific additional demands on candidates by requiring them to demonstrate the ability to integrate the competencies acquired in the component units within challenging contexts:

- the dissertation relates to all the Outcomes of Unit 2, *Media Investigation*
- the examination paper relates to all the Outcomes of Unit 1, *Media Analysis* and all the outcomes of Unit 3, *Media Production*

The dissertation demonstrates investigative and analytical skills. The examination paper presents candidates with a fresh challenge beyond the work in the units by requiring candidates to apply and integrate their analytical and production knowledge and skills within less familiar contexts.

## National Course Specification: course details (cont)

### COURSE                      Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

Note that the unit assessment for Unit 2, *Media Investigation* involves the planning, implementing and reviewing of research and analysis which leads to a dissertation. The dissertation is produced as part of the external course assessment.

## APPROACHES TO LEARNING AND TEACHING

### General advice

Although the units may be taught sequentially or concurrently, an integrated approach is recommended. The component units are closely related and there are opportunities to link the outcomes and build skills across the units. For example, in Unit 1, *Media Analysis*, study of a television fiction text can lead to practical work in individual television related exercises such as exploring the effects of different camera shots and edits which may in turn lead to a video production in Unit 3, *Media Production*. Alternatively, this process can be reversed and the insights gained from practical work can be used to inform the analysis of a television text.

There are also links between Unit 1, *Media Analysis* and Unit 2, *Media Investigation*. The essay produced for the *Media Analysis* unit must be structured with introduction, structured exposition, interim conclusions and references. This will give candidates practice for the externally assessed dissertation which is planned in Unit 2, *Media Investigation*, and which must have a similar structure.

### Methodology

Candidates should be learning through a problem-solving approach supported by discussion and either analytical, research or practical activity. Expository teaching may be necessary to introduce theoretical concepts, analytical methods, research methodologies and to demonstrate specific practical skills.

Where possible, individual and group work should be used. Groupings should be varied, for example discussion groups may vary from small group to whole class. Candidates should have the opportunity for sustained discussion with other candidates and the teacher/lecturer in order to comment on and to evaluate work in progress and, where appropriate, the product.

It will be important to provide opportunities for candidates to take responsibility for their own learning. Candidates should feel some ownership of the course by being invited to suggest or provide examples of media texts which they would be interested in analysing; by allowing them an opportunity to research a media studies/media issue which interests them; and by giving their preferences for the types and subject of media products which they would be interested in making. At Advanced Higher, this could lead teachers/lecturers into areas of which they themselves have little or no direct knowledge (eg Indian popular film). In such situations, the role of the teacher/lecturer will be to guide the research and assist in the location of relevant sources.

## National Course Specification: course details (cont)

### COURSE                      Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

Candidates should be encouraged to keep a research log to record thoughts, ideas and concept maps as they undertake research. They should be encouraged to use note cards or some other method of recording potential sources. For example, if studying a film, they should be helped in identifying and obtaining primary sources (eg a video or DVD, film script, research study) and secondary sources (eg books, indexes, film reviews, academic journal articles, broadcast documentaries). The teacher/lecturer should ensure that the candidate has access to a range of information sources: in film this might include using video catalogues, film encyclopaedias, film histories and the Internet. Once relevant articles have been identified, candidates might then learn how to obtain these from the British Library via their local library. Candidates should also be encouraged to follow current debates on the media in the weekly sections of UK and Scottish broadsheets, in broadcast programmes and in the journal of the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom.

An important role of the teacher/lecturer here will be to ensure that the candidate has sufficient information to complete the research satisfactorily and to suggest alternatives if research proves problematic. Obviously it is important that such preliminary research is undertaken at the start of the course in order to determine the feasibility of particular topics and to give time to collect materials.

In the *Media Production* unit, candidates must produce artefacts capable of distribution in two media forms. For example, if the first production uses audio technology, the second production might use video or desktop publishing or Web page technology.

It is important to point out to candidates that the productions must be related. For example, the two productions might have common visual and/or sound motifs and slogans.

#### **Preparation for Assessment**

Formative assessment should operate as an integral part of the learning and teaching in the analysis and production units. It will include assessment of the candidate's work by the candidate, by the teacher/lecturer and, where appropriate, by other members of a candidate group. This can be achieved in the main through discussion, individual tutorials and observation of the candidate's work supported by checklists.

For each unit, candidates should keep in a folio materials generated by analytical, investigation or production activities. These materials may be produced in the manner most suited to the individual communication needs of candidates. They may be handwritten, word processed, scribed, written in Braille or taped.

Time should be allocated for giving extra support to candidates who are very challenged by one or more of the performance criteria. All candidates should have the opportunity for improving on any area of weakness through strategies such as extra practice in individual skills and revising or redrafting of work.

## **National Course Specification: course details (cont)**

### **COURSE**            Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

The additional 40 hours available for this course may be used for:

- writing up of the dissertation
- preparation for external examination
- consolidation of learning
- developing requisite production skills
- visits to media organisations, cinemas etc
- visits from media professionals, politicians, trade unionists
- extending the range of media studied

#### **Unit specific advice**

Further details of suggested approaches are given in the individual unit support notes and Subject Guide.

#### **SPECIAL NEEDS**

This course specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. Special needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative outcomes for units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment Arrangements* (SQA, 2001).

## National Unit Specification: general information

<b>UNIT</b>	Media Analysis (Advanced Higher)
<b>NUMBER</b>	D332 13
<b>COURSE</b>	Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

### SUMMARY

This unit is designed to enable candidates to understand, apply and evaluate a range of methods for analysing media texts.

### OUTCOME 1

Describe, apply and evaluate methods of media analysis.

### RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Entry is at the discretion of the centre but candidates would normally be expected to have gained a course or unit award in Media Studies at Higher.

### CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Advanced Higher.

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### Administrative Information

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## **National Unit Specification: general information (cont)**

**UNIT**                      Media Analysis (Advanced Higher)

### **CORE SKILLS**

This unit gives automatic certification of the following:

<b>Complete core skills for the unit</b>	None	
<b>Additional core skills components for the unit</b>	Critical Thinking	Higher

Additional information about core skills is published in the *Catalogue of Core Skills in National Qualifications* (SQA, publication code BA0906).

## **National Unit Specification: statement of standards**

### **UNIT**                      Media Analysis (Advanced Higher)

Acceptable performance in this unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

#### **NOTE ON RANGE FOR THE UNIT**

**Methods of media analysis:** three methods: one context-centred, one text-centred and one audience-centred.

#### **OUTCOME 1**

Describe, apply and evaluate methods of media analysis.

##### **Performance criteria**

- (a) Descriptions of the methods of analysis are accurate.
- (b) Applications of the methods of analysis are appropriate.
- (c) Evaluation of the methods of analysis are justified in terms of their strengths and weaknesses.

##### **Evidence requirements**

Evidence for this unit must be in the form of an extended response covering the range of around 3000 words which analyses a single text or related texts. The response must include introduction, structured exposition, conclusions and references.

## **National Unit Specification: support notes**

### **UNIT                      Media Analysis (Advanced Higher)**

This part of the unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the time allocated to this unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

#### **GUIDANCE ON CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT**

In this unit, candidates should be given an overview of some of the methods of media analysis in order to compare and evaluate them. Candidates should also be made aware that media analysis can require information derived from other disciplines.

##### ***Methods of media analysis***

A full understanding of media texts requires three overlapping areas to be considered:

- contexts (eg social, historical, geographical, economic, legal/regulatory, institutional, media, production, distribution, aesthetic, technological)
- texts (eg use of codes and conventions of media language, genre, narrative, representation)
- audiences (eg target audience(s), inscribed reader(s), actual readers).

Each of these areas first requires the analyst to select the method of analysis relevant to the area and the text(s). They must then gather information and apply analytical methods in each area and finally integrate the findings.

Much media analysis will employ approaches selected from within Media Studies, for example:

- political economy
- semiology
- structuralism
- narrative
- genre
- ideology, discourse and hegemony
- gender studies
- audience studies (eg differential decoding, fandom, reception studies, cognitivist approaches)
- postmodernism

Candidates should be presented with an overview of methods of media analysis and might apply these to a range of texts in different media. They should be encouraged to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the various methods in three areas: contexts, texts, audiences.

## National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

### UNIT Media Analysis (Advanced Higher)

However candidates should also be made aware that a full analysis may require information from other subject areas, for example:

- economics
- history
- geography
- law
- sociology
- politics
- art history
- literary studies
- linguistics
- psychology
- marketing and public relations

Related texts which might be studied are examples of American film noir of the 1940s and 1950s. In that case one or more films could be analysed as follows:

- context-centred (one or more of: an economic phenomenon related to B movie production; as resistance to the ‘high-key’ style of the 1930s; as a result of technological developments in film stock and lenses)
- text-centred (one or more of: use of mise-en-scene; relationship to European expressionism, hard-boiled fiction, photorealism, American painting; typical narrative structures, characters and themes; Freudian themes; film noir as a genre)
- audience-centred (one or more of: reflecting the ‘structure of feeling’ of men and women in post-war USA; different reactions of men and women to the ‘femme fatale’; comparison of the reactions of post-war and modern audiences).

Candidates should appreciate that their previous experience of using the key aspects of Media Studies – categories, language, narrative, representation, audience, institution and technology – would enable them to analyse a film noir text. But at Advanced Higher level they should be able to both describe and apply the method of analysis. For example they should be able to describe the basic concepts of semiology and structuralism and apply these to the analysis of a film noir eg by analysing denotation and connotation of elements of the mise-en-scene; by analysing binary oppositions in characters, settings, values; by analysing narrative structures and codes. Further, candidates should be able to evaluate semiological and structuralist methods by identifying their strengths and weaknesses. The strength of these methods is that they give a systematic way of analysing the text and its preferred meanings. Their weaknesses are that they tell us little about the production, aesthetic or socio-historical contexts or how actual readers respond to the text.

A full analysis requires other methods drawn from Media Studies as well as information from other subject areas. For example candidates should appreciate that, in the case of film noir, their analysis would benefit by reading and researching areas outside Media Studies eg art history, history, crime fiction, Freudian psychology.

This unit demands that media analysis must focus on context, text and audience. By the end of the unit candidates should appreciate that media texts and their readings are complex phenomena shaped by a range of contextual factors. Only by using a multi-disciplinary approach can the analyst hope to reach a

full understanding of these processes. Such an approach tries to capture the complexity of media texts and avoid the biases and blindspots produced by using a single analytical method.

## **National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)**

**UNIT**                      Media Analysis (Advanced Higher)

### **GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT**

The methods of learning and teaching should be candidate-centred and inductive. Candidates will need to have access to books and journals which explain major concepts in an accessible way. Ideally, they will have access to encyclopaedias, newspaper archives, specialist journals, broadcast programmes and the Internet.

### **GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT**

Candidates may require considerable teacher/lecturer guidance when choosing the text(s) and methods of analysis for assessment. While encouraging independent learning and allowing the candidate to take responsibility for their own work, it is expected that the teacher/lecturer will monitor the work of each candidate closely and guide the candidate towards appropriate sources of information.

### **SPECIAL NEEDS**

This unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. Special needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative outcomes for units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment Arrangements* (SQA, 2001).

## National Unit Specification: general information

<b>UNIT</b>	Media Investigation (Advanced Higher)
<b>NUMBER</b>	D37A 13
<b>COURSE</b>	Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

### SUMMARY

This unit will allow the candidate to investigate a media studies/media issue. The candidate will develop the skills of planning, researching and analysing necessary for the completion of such an investigation.

### OUTCOMES

- 1 Design an investigation on a media studies/media issue.
- 2 Investigate a media studies/media issue.

### RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Entry is at the discretion of the centre but candidates would normally be expected to have gained a course or unit award in Media Studies at Higher.

### CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Advanced Higher.

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### Administrative Information

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## **National Unit Specification: general information (cont)**

**UNIT**                      Media Investigation (Advanced Higher)

### **CORE SKILLS**

There is no automatic certification of core skills or core skills components in this unit.

Additional information about core skills is published in the *Catalogue of Core Skills in National Qualifications* (SQA, publication code BA0906).

## **National Unit Specification: statement of standards**

### **UNIT**                      Media Investigation (Advanced Higher)

Acceptable performance in this unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

#### **OUTCOME 1**

Design an investigation on a media studies/media issue.

##### **Performance criteria**

- (a) The issue is identified and related to appropriate contexts.
- (b) Aspects of the issue are selected for investigation.
- (c) Appropriate methods of investigation are selected.

#### **OUTCOME 2**

Investigate a media studies/media issue.

##### **Performance criteria**

- (a) Source materials are evaluated in terms of their relevance to the investigation.
- (b) Relevant information is extracted from selected materials and is appropriate to the investigation.
- (c) Interim conclusions are justified.

##### **Evidence requirements**

The candidate will complete a plan which is clearly structured with an introduction, exposition, interim conclusions and references, and covers all the performance criteria.

## **National Unit Specification: support notes**

### **UNIT                      Media Investigation (Advanced Higher)**

This part of the unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the time allocated to this unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

#### **GUIDANCE ON CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT**

This unit involves the exploration of issues which are significant either within Media Studies or in the public sphere. Candidates will investigate one such issue in depth and should refer to relevant theories and research.

Issues can usefully be divided into four overlapping categories:

- content-centred (eg bias, violence, infotainment, quality, choice, diversity of opinion)
- individual/society-centred (eg effects on beliefs or behaviour, privacy and the public interest, stereotyping of race and gender, cultural imperialism)
- institution-centred (eg ownership and control, public service broadcasting, access, media corporations, technological developments)
- media studies-centred: (critical assessment of, for example, auteur theory, passive and active conceptions of audience, quantitative and qualitative methods of textual analysis)

Candidates should be introduced to an outline of some of the main methods of media research (eg content analysis, semiological and structuralist analysis, linguistic analysis, audience research, institutional research).

Many public media issues are related ultimately to questions about the kind of media institutions which best serve the interests of contemporary democratic societies, and candidates should realise that there are conflicting views on this question – eg authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility, free market, Marxist, feminist. Such discourses frame arguments about particular media issues in the public sphere.

When gathering and selecting materials for the investigation, candidates will have to evaluate them. This will be particularly important for materials gathered from Internet sources. Questions which might be asked of the materials are:

- what is their source? (eg government, industry, marketing, public relations, media researcher, journalist, politician, single interest group, fan)
- are they typical or atypical?
- are they accurate?
- are the author(s) knowledgeable?
- are they biased because of a particular interest or approach?

## **National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)**

### **UNIT                      Media Investigation (Advanced Higher)**

Candidates will need to analyse the materials and identify and evaluate arguments related to the issue. Questions which might be asked of the arguments are:

- are they backed up by evidence or merely the opinions of the author(s)?
- are they the product of particular approaches or viewpoints?
- what are the blindspots of these approaches or viewpoints?
- what arguments might arise from different approaches or viewpoints?

#### **GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT**

The teacher/lecturer should lead the candidate through the process of investigating an issue. In this process the candidates should be introduced to the range and locations of primary and secondary sources which they might need to access in their own investigation.

Candidates may require considerable teacher/lecturer guidance when choosing the area of investigation. While encouraging independent learning and allowing the candidate to take responsibility for their own work, it is expected that the teacher/lecturer will monitor the work of each candidate closely and provide appropriate guidance.

Candidates should be encouraged to use relevant information from other subjects which they may be studying.

#### **GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT**

This unit requires the candidate to complete an investigation. The investigation will lead to a plan which is clearly structured with an introduction, exposition, interim conclusions and references. The unit assessment focuses on the processes involved in planning, undertaking and reviewing of work which may lead to the dissertation.

An example of a suitable issue could be: gender stereotyping in teenage magazines. Aspects of the issue could be: the gender representations; the effects of the product, industry and audience on selection and portrayal; some of the ideological implications of the representations. The investigation could make use of sources such as:

- research on teenage magazines and their readers
- content analysis of selected magazines
- semiological analyses of front covers, advertisements, etc
- data on size and nature of the market
- data on education and employment trends amongst girls/boys and women/men

The interim conclusions could draw links between:

- representation, audience targeting and advertising
- content and semiological analyses and ideology
- representation and gender differences in achievement in education and employment

## **National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)**

**UNIT**                      Media Investigation (Advanced Higher)

### **SPECIAL NEEDS**

This unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. Special needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative outcomes for units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessments Arrangements* (SQA, 2001).

## National Unit Specification: general information

**UNIT** Media Production (Advanced Higher)

**NUMBER** D334 13

**COURSE** Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

### SUMMARY

This unit is designed to enable candidates to contribute to all stages of two related media productions capable of distribution in different forms. Candidates will individually report and evaluate the productions.

### OUTCOMES

- 1 Contribute to planning two related productions from a brief.
- 2 Contribute to implementing two related productions from a brief.
- 3 Review and evaluate two related productions.

### RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Entry is at the discretion of the centre but candidates would normally be expected to have gained a course or unit award in Media Studies at Higher.

### CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Advanced Higher.

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### Administrative Information

**Superclass:** KA

**Publication date:** July 2002

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## **National Unit Specification: general information (cont)**

**UNIT**                      Media Production (Advanced Higher)

### **CORE SKILLS**

This unit gives automatic certification of the following:

<b>Complete core skills for the unit</b>	Working with Others	Higher
<b>Additional core skills components for the unit</b>	Planning and Organising	Higher
	Reviewing and Evaluating	Higher

Additional information about core skills is published in the *Catalogue of Core Skills in National Qualifications* (SQA, publication code BA0906).

## National Unit Specification: statement of standards

### UNIT Media Production (Advanced Higher)

Acceptable performance in this unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

#### NOTE ON THE RANGE OF THE UNIT

**Productions:** One production must be capable of distribution in one form; the other production must be capable of distribution in another form.

**Specified aspects of brief:** purpose of first production (second production should promote first production); target audiences; lengths; deadlines; institutional controls; self-regulatory and legal controls.

**Research and planning:** identification of sources; topic research; audience and product research; identification of constraints; plan of format, content, style; resource requirements; production schedule; production roles and task allocation.

**Productions:** each production must be in a different technology.

**Production skills:** a minimum two production roles at least one of which has to be technological.

**Key aspects:** categories; language; narrative; audience; representation; institution; technology.

#### OUTCOME 1

Contribute to planning two related productions from a brief.

##### Performance criteria

- (a) Contribution is effective in terms of analysing the brief, expressing useful ideas and identifying roles and tasks.
- (b) Research and planning are organised and effective in terms of the brief, identified roles and production schedules.
- (c) Use of analytical and technical terms is appropriate to the chosen media and the tasks.
- (d) Contribution to planning demonstrates understanding of the relationship between media theory and practice.

#### OUTCOME 2

Contribute to implementing two related productions from a brief.

##### Performance criteria

- (a) Contribution is effective in terms of organisation, co-operation and communication of ideas and information.
- (b) Production skills are effective in terms of the brief, allocated roles and production schedules.
- (c) Contribution to implementation demonstrates understanding of the relationship between media theory and practice.

## **National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)**

### **UNIT**                      Media Production (Advanced Higher)

#### **OUTCOME 3**

Review and evaluate two related productions.

##### **Performance criteria**

- (a) Strengths and weaknesses of each stage of both productions are explained by reference to the productions and the extent to which they implement the brief.
- (b) Use of analytical and technical terms is accurate in terms of describing activities and decisions.
- (c) Strengths and weaknesses of the candidate's own production skills are described.
- (d) Recommendations for improved or alternative strategies are appropriate.
- (e) The production processes and products are analysed in terms of the key aspects of media studies.

##### **Evidence requirements**

Evidence may be in handwritten, word processed, scribed, diagrammatic and/or oral form. Oral evidence should be on audio or video tape.

Evidence should demonstrate the individual contribution to planning, making and evaluating of two related productions.

The assessment evidence must include:

- a copy of the brief
- Outcome 1, PC (a) and PC (b), Outcome 2, PC (a) and PC (b): performance evidence recorded by means of an observation checklist completed by the teacher/lecturer
- Outcome 1, PC (a), PC (b), PC (c) and PC (d), Outcome 2, PC (a), PC (b) and PC (c): individual logbook which records decisions made on individual or group research, planning and implementation. The candidate should use appropriate technical terms and should demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between media theory and practice
- Outcome 2: two productions
- Outcome 3, PC (a), PC (b), PC (c), PC (d) and PC (e): the candidate should describe the strengths and weaknesses of both productions in relation to the brief, use technical terms to describe the activities and decisions made and describe the strengths and weaknesses of their own production skills. They should suggest improved or alternative individual and/or co-operative strategies and analyse the productions in terms of the key aspects of Media Studies

Any group plans and product should be retained in a group folio. All other evidence should be retained in individual folios. Plans may include charts and diagrams.

## **National Unit Specification: support notes**

### **UNIT                      Media Production (Advanced Higher)**

This part of the unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the time allocated to this unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

#### **GUIDANCE ON CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT**

The main focus of this unit is on the contribution to two related media productions. The candidate(s) will plan, produce and evaluate two products involving the ability to carry out individual tasks. The extra demand at Advanced Higher is that candidates must complete productions in different media forms. The two products must be related. In other words, the second production might incorporate (where appropriate) text, images and sounds associated with the first production.

For example candidates might use desktop publishing technology to create a newspaper or magazine. The second product could advertise the first and could be produced using audio, video or Web page technologies.

Alternatively, both products could be advertisements for the same product or service. These would be related as they would be conceived as part of the same cross-media advertising campaign.

For further information on content, please refer to the content section in the course specification. Detailed exemplars on content for each of the media are contained in tables 7-10 (Print, Audio, Video, Web Page Design) for Media Production at Higher level.

#### **GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT**

The key aspects of Media Studies – Categories, Language, Narrative, Representation, Audience, Institution, Technology – should be used by the candidate to structure the planning, implementation and evaluation phases of the productions.

Candidates should be introduced to the main phases involved in completing their media productions. The first two phases require the planning and implementing of two related media productions. The final phase requires them to complete an individual report which evaluates the productions in relation to the brief, and suggests possible improvements or alternative strategies. The report should show a firm grasp of production terminology and Media Studies concepts.

The teacher/lecturer should assist candidates to develop their planning, production and evaluation skills by offering hints, reminders, feedback and ‘tricks of the trade’ and by continuing to support candidates in terms of promoting understanding of the production process and encouraging effective teamwork. As the candidates gain experience the teacher/lecturer should give more responsibility for the production process to the candidates.

In the case of group production, the size of the group is at the discretion of the teacher/lecturer. However it is recommended that the group size should be between two and six depending on the nature of the production. This should allow each member to play a full part in the planning and production of the media product.

## **National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)**

### **UNIT                      Media Production (Advanced Higher)**

In the case of a single candidate taking Advanced Higher, there should be the opportunity provided for this candidate to work with the teacher/lecturer as a client and, on occasion, collaborator.

The candidate should outline the planning and production processes and the major decisions made at each stage. The products should be analysed in terms of the brief as well as category, use of media language, narrative and representation. Constraints such as target audience, institutional factors and available technology should be discussed. The candidate should identify and discuss the major issues arising from the productions.

### **GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT**

At Advanced Higher, candidates are required to carry out wide-ranging research and detailed planning. The recommended instrument of assessment is a project which involves the planning, making and evaluation of two related media products

An example of a brief is:

#### **‘Digital Revolutions’**

You are required to produce a programme for Channel 4 which examines the changes new technology has brought to western society in general, and Scottish society in particular, over the past decade. It should also look forward to the next decade and suggest how society might be changed as a result of further technological development. The programme should run to exactly 10 minutes and be aimed at an audience aged 18-45, and scheduled for weekday peak time on Channel 4. The group (or individuals) must also produce at least one advertisement which publicises this programme, addresses the same audience, and incorporates (where appropriate) images, sounds and slogans from the programme.

Care should be taken to minimise budget requirements and to conform to the institutional controls which apply to Channel 4 and to advertising. Treatments and production schedule should be prepared by the group and submitted for approval to your teacher/lecturer before production commences.

### **SPECIAL NEEDS**

This unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. Special needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative outcomes for units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment Arrangements* (SQA, 2001).