

MEDIA STUDIES
Advanced Higher

First edition — published March 2006

National Course Specification

Course Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

COURSE CODE C210 13

COURSE STRUCTURE

This Course has three mandatory Units:

<i>DV31 13</i>	<i>Media Analysis (Advanced Higher)</i>	<i>1 credit (40 hours)</i>
<i>DV32 13</i>	<i>Media Investigation (Advanced Higher)</i>	<i>1 credit (40 hours)</i>
<i>DF16 13</i>	<i>Media Production (Advanced Higher)</i>	<i>1 credit (40 hours)</i>

All Courses include 40 hours over and above the 120 hours for the Units. This may be used for induction, extending the range of learning and teaching approaches, support, consolidation, integration of learning and preparation for Course assessment. This Course is suited to those who have an interest in, and wish to pursue an analytical approach to the media. It is suitable both for those who wish to pursue further study and a career in the communications industries as well as those whose interest is more general.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ Higher Media Studies or its Analysis units

(Candidates require understanding of the Key Aspects of Media Studies that would be acquired at Higher).

Administrative Information

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National Course Specification: (cont)

COURSE Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

PROGRESSION

This Course or its Units may provide progression to:

- ◆ HNC/D Communication with Media/Journalism/Advertising and Public Relations
- ◆ degrees in Communication Studies, Media Studies, Film Studies, Journalism, Advertising and Public Relations
- ◆ employment

CORE SKILLS

Achievement of this Course gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill	Problem Solving at SCQF level 6
Core Skills component	None

CREDIT VALUE

The Advanced Higher Media Studies Course is allocated 32 SCQF Credit Points at SCQF level 7*.

**SCQF points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification is allocated a number of SCQF Credit Points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

RATIONALE

The media of mass communication play a significant role in the modern world and, being a major means of disseminating messages nationally and globally, affect society at all levels: economic, political, social, cultural and individual. Knowledge of the media is an important and highly valued aspect of work in an information society and an essential element of active citizenship.

There is clearly a growing demand for Media Studies qualifications. Increasingly candidates in both schools and colleges recognise the relevance of the subject matter, as they are bombarded on a daily basis with the innumerable messages of the media of mass communication. In Scotland media is one of the fastest growing industries.

The National Course in Advanced Higher Media Studies builds on the Higher and Intermediate Courses and Units. The achievement of an Advanced Higher Course award in Media Studies is recognised as a general entry qualification to both Further and Higher Education. More specifically, it is referred to as a preferred entry to a number of qualifications in the HNC/D with a Media and Communication Studies focus; and in Higher Education it is valued as an entry qualification to Arts faculties in the growing number of universities offering degree courses in Communication Studies, Film Studies and Media Studies.

One of the aims of a Course in Media Studies is to enable the candidate to look at and listen to media products, not simply as a consumer of those products, but as a critic able to question the content and purpose of the messages rather than take them at face value. The development of these independent critical thinking skills means that a Media Studies candidate is equipped to make reasoned, well balanced judgements about what is being communicated through the media, in both fiction and non-fiction texts and able to make decisions based on fuller understanding. This critical approach is the key to making sense of the ever-expanding and complex web of communication, enabling the candidate to move from a role of passive or unquestioning recipient of media messages, to one of active, thoughtful questioner, and indeed maker, of those messages.

The technology of mass communication is changing rapidly, and the speed of this change, especially in the electronic media, brings with it an immediacy which means that the public can witness events around the world as they happen. International events unfold before us as if we were present as eye witnesses; sports programmes and archaeological digs are played out on our screens before the results are known or before the pottery fragments are identified. This sense of immediacy is taken further in 'reality' shows when viewers are invited to influence a particular outcome by phoning in their preferred option. Candidates of Media Studies will learn that this apparent immediacy is in actual fact a construct; messages are being manipulated and a point of view communicated, even where the events seem at their most 'raw' and direct.

Candidates of Media Studies will learn to appreciate the different characteristics of the various media. For example, by the time news is printed in newspapers it is arguably out of date as news agencies have already flashed information around the world instantaneously by broadcast and webcast means. Accordingly newspapers, being more time-based, fulfil a slightly different function from broadcast. They become a reference point for detailed information and encourage reflection.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

TV programmes and cinema films, although sharing many features, such as sound, and coloured moving images, differ in the environments in which they are consumed; these different environments considerably affect the stories they tell. Likewise radio and TV, although having characteristics in common, differ in the kind of messages they can communicate. Because of the more ubiquitous and portable nature of radio it can be accessed in a much wider range of environments that in turn influence our reactions to what we hear. Instead of providing a single focus it can function as an aural backdrop to our everyday lives.

The Advanced Higher Media Studies Course is particularly relevant to those who would like, perhaps after study in Further or Higher Education, to take up jobs in the communication industries. Involving as it does technical skills, teamwork and the ability to think for oneself, Media Studies is valuable in most walks of life.

By taking the Course as a whole, rather than as separate Units, and thus combining study of analysis and production, candidates are enabled to become clear and confident communicators.

The media that are studied are those of mass, rather than interpersonal, communication. The media texts may be newspapers or magazines, television or radio programmes, cinema films, advertisements, music videos and websites.

The methods of media analysis form the basis of the Advanced Higher Course and should be applied to the:

- ◆ analysis of text(s)
- ◆ investigation of media studies/theories
- ◆ creation of media productions

In the *Media Analysis* Unit candidates will learn how to take apart the various elements that make up media texts in order to analyse in detail the ideology of the messages communicated by the media industries to their audiences — and thus to question that ideology. They should already have a clear understanding of the Key Aspects of Media Studies. They will consider three areas of media analysis: contexts, texts and audiences. They will select and apply the method(s) of analysis most relevant to the text(s) they are analysing.

The *Media Investigation* Unit requires candidates to integrate analysis and production knowledge in a project that allows candidates to explore their own interests. 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. It reinforces the knowledge in candidates that analytical and production skills are inseparable and encourages independent research, making the transition from structured learning and teaching to independent study.

The *Media Production* Unit develops systematic and detailed planning and production skills using media technology. Working on a production with a client will enable candidates to appreciate some of the constraints and freedoms of media professionals, to consider the effects of their own products on consumers, and to understand the limitations and opportunities of media technology. (See advice given in the support notes for the Media Production unit Advanced Higher). They will learn that they are not being trained to use media technology for its own sake, but will come to realise that knowledge and understanding of the production process enables them to analyse media products more effectively — and vice versa. This is part of the added-value benefit of taking the Course, as opposed to individual Units. Candidates will 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.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

The candidate will build skills across the Units. The methods of analysis studied in the *Media Analysis* Unit should be applied in the Units *Media Investigation* and *Media Production*. The structure used for the essay in *Media Analysis* should also be used in the dissertation planned in the *Media Investigation* Unit. Candidates may deconstruct codes in *Media Analysis* and *Media Investigation* that they construct in *Media Production*.

The Media Studies Advanced Higher Course builds upon the knowledge and skills acquired at Higher.

These transferable skills of thinking critically and creatively; of solving problems; of planning, researching individually and working together, 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.

Differences between Media Studies and other courses

This Course differs from others in which candidates learn to analyse texts — such as English or Art — in that media texts are always regarded as the products of industrial teamwork; they cannot be divorced from the market place and analysed for their own sake; they are not regarded as the work of an individual writer or artist, but as the product of a team working under legal, budgetary, technological and other such constraints. Media Studies also differs from Courses in media technology because the products made in Media Studies are not polished works finished for their own sake, but products made so that candidates can experience the production process and apply this understanding to professionally produced texts studied in the *Media Analysis* Unit.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

AIMS

The aims of this Course are to enable candidates to develop:

Media Analysis

- ◆ an understanding of the main critical tools and methods used in the analysis of media texts
- ◆ an understanding of the relationships between media texts, contexts and audience and their societal, audience and institutional contexts
- ◆ critical understanding and aesthetic appreciation of media texts

Media Investigation

- ◆ skills in investigating and analysing media issues/theories
- ◆ an understanding of the multi-disciplinary nature of the subject

Media Production

- ◆ skills and autonomy in the use of technologies to create meaning
- ◆ research, planning and organisational skills in response to a brief
- ◆ understanding of the expectations of various audiences and the modes of address appropriate to them
- ◆ a knowledge of the detailed technical terms related to the chosen media
- ◆ production skills appropriate to the chosen forms of the media
- ◆ a knowledge of the constraints related to the chosen technologies
- ◆ the ability to work individually and as part of a team
- ◆ the ability to express constructive self-criticism

Integration

- ◆ an understanding that practice informs theory and vice versa
- ◆ knowledge and understanding of the fact that analysis and production are linked and build skills across the Units

The Course also aims 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

The Course has been designed to be as flexible as possible so that the texts studied as well as the kind of production work undertaken may be selected by individual centres and candidates. In both analytical and production work, candidates will study texts that challenge them, and make products that involve them in self-motivated research. Selected media could include print, radio, television, film, popular music or the internet. Selection should reflect candidate interest and available resources.

Candidates should have knowledge of the Key Aspects of Media Studies — Categories, Language, Narrative, Representation, Audience, Institutions and Technology.

Although the three mandatory Units may be taught separately, sequentially or concurrently, an integrated approach is recommended, since the Units are closely related and there are opportunities to build skills across them.

There are three Units and details of the content of each follows:

Media Analysis (Advanced Higher)

This Unit requires candidates to develop their knowledge of the Key Aspects by applying methods and approaches across three overlapping areas: contexts, texts and audiences. A multi-disciplinary approach is adopted and candidates will select and apply some of the main analytical methods of Media Studies.

Before undertaking this Unit candidates should have prior knowledge of the Key Aspects of Media Studies, which are the main tools in the analysis of media texts:

- ◆ categories
- ◆ language
- ◆ narrative
- ◆ representation
- ◆ audience
- ◆ institution
- ◆ technology

They should have developed skills of deconstructing a range of media texts and of analysing in detail their relationship to social, institutional and audience contexts.

In this Unit, candidates should build on their knowledge of the Key Aspects. They will learn how the Key Aspects have emerged from one of three bases: context; text; audience. These three areas overlap, in other words some methods of analysis are hybrid eg semiotics and audience based theories combine to produce the encode-decode model and the idea of dominant and negotiated readings. Candidates should be given an overview of some of the methods of media analysis in order to compare them. They should also be made aware that media analysis can require information derived from other disciplines.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

Methods of media analysis

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

- ◆ context-based approach of media analysis (eg social, historical, geographical, economic, legal/regulatory, institutional, media, production, distribution, aesthetic, technological)
- ◆ text-based approach of media analysis (eg use of codes and conventions of media language, genre, narrative, representation)
- ◆ audience-based approach of media analysis (eg target audience(s), inscribed reader(s), actual reader(s))

Each of these areas first requires analysts 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.

- ◆ Candidates should appreciate that their previous experience of using the Key Aspects would enable them to analyse a text(s). However, at Advanced Higher level they should also be able to describe and apply methods 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(s).

Candidates should be presented with an overview of methods of media analysis and might apply these to a range of texts in different media.

As part of the Advanced Higher in Media Studies, candidates will learn to apply knowledge to assist in analysis, 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

However candidates could also be made aware that a full analysis may benefit from information drawn from other subject areas.

Media Investigation (Advanced Higher)

This Unit requires the candidate to carry out an independent investigation based on a relevant 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, which is a component of the Course assessment.

The investigation requires candidates to integrate analysis and production knowledge in a project that allows them to explore their own interests. It reinforces the knowledge in candidates that analytical and production skills are inseparable and encourages independent research making the transition from structured learning and teaching to independent study.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

The investigation need not be restricted to one specific text or to a body of related texts (eg the films of a particular director) but could explore the treatment of a specific issue (eg violence or the treatment of gender or ethnicity) across a number of texts and/or media.

Candidates could also consider an investigation based on technological issues and their impact on the media (eg the move from analogue to digital broadcasting and its effect on public service broadcasters/the public).

The candidates will plan and research a Media Studies investigation then analyse and evaluate the aims of that investigation. They should also analyse and evaluate the relevant theories and research methods applied, before preparing a dissertation for submission as part of the Course Assessment.

Issues for investigation can usefully be divided into four overlapping categories:

- ◆ content-centred (eg bias, violence, infotainment, quality, choice, diversity of opinion)
- ◆ society/individual -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: (eg critical assessment of, for example, auteur theory, passive and active perceptions of audience, quantitative and qualitative methods of textual analysis)

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

Many media issues are related ultimately to questions about the kind of media institutions which best serve the interests of contemporary democratic societies. 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. Other media issues may be focused on the impact of technology on a specific medium. Such discourses frame arguments on the impact of these changes on specific media industries eg internet video streaming, HD Digital Video Disc Cameras, internet blogs and Wikis.

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?
- ◆ is/are the author(s) knowledgeable?
- ◆ are they biased because of a particular interest or approach?

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Media Studies (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?

Media Production (Advanced Higher)

This Unit requires candidates to produce two related media productions for a client.

Candidates will be involved in two productions in this Unit. At Advanced Higher candidates will negotiate with a client to produce a media product eg a health promotion video for the local health centre or a magazine for the school enterprise group. The second production will be related to the first eg a public service print advert or a web site. 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

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
- ◆ review and evaluation

Planning

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

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

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

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 teachers/lecturers 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 may be recorded in an individual logbook, to assist candidates.

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 also include 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.

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.

ASSESSMENT

To achieve the Course award the candidate must pass the Units as well as the Course assessment. The candidate's grade is based on the Course assessment.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

The key assessment objectives of the Media Studies Course at Advanced Higher are that candidates will demonstrate the ability to:

- ◆ apply methods of analysis
- ◆ carry out independent investigation
- ◆ provide media productions that meet a client's brief
- ◆ apply skills of planning, research, analysis and evaluation

Summary of Unit Assessment

In Media Studies, the three Units are *Media Analysis*, *Media Investigation* and *Media Production*.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

Media Analysis: The assessment will generate an extended response applying at least two methods of media analysis to a text(s). The assessment will last no more than one hour and will be produced under controlled conditions. The assessment is closed-book.

Media Investigation: The candidate and teacher/lecturer will keep checklists confirming the plan, aims and methods of research which have been covered and the interim conclusions reached. The appropriateness and validity of the research methods used will be assessed through a series of restricted response questions. The assessment will last no more than one hour and will be produced under controlled conditions. The assessment is closed-book.

Media Production: The Unit assessment consists of an evaluation report. The evaluation should be detailed and refer to decision-making processes, products and constraints in planning, production and post-production. It should analyse the production processes and products. The evaluation will be completed within one hour under controlled conditions and be open book. Candidates can have access to their production notes/materials. Throughout the Unit individual candidate performance should be recorded using an assessor observation checklist.

Summary of Course Assessment

The Course assessment for Media Studies at Advanced Higher will consist of two components:

- ◆ Dissertation internally generated, externally assessed
- ◆ Question Paper externally assessed

Dissertation

The dissertation will have 30 marks available.

The dissertation involves the exploration of a Media issue. The *Media Investigation* Unit findings will be used as the basis for a structured dissertation. Candidates will choose an issue through 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 2500 and 3000 words in length, excluding quotations, footnotes and bibliography, and have an introduction, structured exposition, developed conclusions and annotated references. Candidates will be penalised for dissertations which are of excessive length.

Question paper

The question paper will last two hours. It will consist of two sections and will have 70 marks available.

Section 1— Media Analysis

Candidates will answer one extended response question from a choice of two. Questions will relate to context-based, text-based and audience-based methods of media analysis.

Section 2 — Media Production

Candidates will answer one extended response question from a choice of two. Questions will relate to the planning, production and evaluation of media products.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

Full details of the structure, Outcomes, Performance Criteria, evidence and conditions for Unit assessment can be found in the Unit specifications for Media Studies (Advanced Higher).

Further details about Unit assessment can be found in the National Assessment Bank (NAB) materials and the Unit specifications.

Further details about assessment for this Course are given in the Course Assessment Specification and the Specimen Question Paper.

Link between Unit and Course assessment

The Unit assessments will assess candidates' analytical, research, production and evaluative skills.

The Course assessment samples across all three Units and will require candidates to demonstrate their ability to retain and integrate their analytical, research, production and evaluative skills in less familiar and/or more complex contexts.

The Added Value of the Course

The Unit and Course assessments are designed to complement each other. The Unit assessments provide evidence of a specific level of achievement in separate sections of the Course. The Course assessment provides evidence of added value. This is a range of skills beyond those required for Unit success.

In Media Studies (Advanced Higher) the added value consists of the development, retention and integration of the analytical, research, production and evaluative skills gained in achieving the Unit Outcomes.

The Units may be taken on a stand-alone basis but there is added value in taking the Course as a whole in that candidates will:

- ◆ demonstrate an understanding that theoretical principal and production skills are clearly integrated
- ◆ apply methods of media analysis to analytical, investigative and production skills

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

The candidate's grade will be based on the total score obtained from both parts of the Course assessment. The descriptions below indicate the nature of achievement required for an award at Grade C and A in the Course.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

For an award at Grade C, candidates should be able to:

- ◆ demonstrate competence in understanding and applying methods of textual analysis
- ◆ demonstrate competence in understanding and evaluating viewpoints, theories and research on a media studies/media issue
- ◆ demonstrate competence in applying production and analytical skills to the planning, production and evaluation of media products

For an award at Grade A, candidates should be able to:

- ◆ demonstrate a high level of competence in understanding and applying methods of textual analysis
- ◆ demonstrate a high level of competence in understanding and evaluating viewpoints, theories and research on a media studies/media issue
- ◆ demonstrate a high level of competence in applying production and analytical skills to planning and production, evaluation and media products

ESTIMATES AND APPEALS

Estimates

In preparing estimates, evidence of performance should be considered across the content of the Course and must take account of performance in the whole Course. Further advice on the preparation of estimates is given in the Course Assessment Specification.

Appeals

In this Course, there are two components of Course assessment:

- ◆ the Question Paper, which is externally assessed
- ◆ the Dissertation, which is internally generated and externally assessed

The principal source of evidence to support an appeal will usually be generated from an integrated assessment (eg a prelim) which reflects the range, style, level of demand, balance, depth and mark allocation of the Question Paper. Evidence must show a sufficient breadth of coverage of content and must relate to the Course Grade Descriptions. Centres should refer to the Course Assessment Specification and Specimen Question Paper for guidance in constructing a prelim or other integrated assessment.

Although a prelim is not mandatory it can give an indication of how the candidate will perform in questions which require integration, retention and application of knowledge and understanding in less familiar contexts within a time restraint.

The Dissertation component is generated internally over a period of time and thereby allows candidates the opportunity to develop, reflect upon and revise their work. Consequently, this will probably be the candidate's 'best work'. **It is therefore unlikely that Appeals evidence will be available for submission for this component.** Only where evidence has been produced in response to a task equal to the scope, nature and demand of the Dissertation, should evidence be submitted for this component.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

In some cases, a prelim might not provide evidence of performance over the whole Course, but rather over two Units of the Course. In this case, supplementary evidence from a National Assessment Bank (NAB) or other assessment item for a Unit, together with evidence from the prelim, might provide evidence towards an appeal for a grade C. However, while Unit assessment can provide evidence of attainment within familiar contexts and demonstrate limited retention, they do not usually provide evidence of a candidate's ability to cope with questions based on integrated topics or to deal with questions of a more complex nature based on unfamiliar contexts. Further evidence is desirable for an appeal for a grade above grade C.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

All National Courses are subject to external marking and/or moderation. External markers, visiting examiners and moderators are trained by SQA to apply national standards.

The Units of all Courses are subject to internal moderation and may also be chosen for external moderation. This is to ensure that national standards are being applied across all subjects.

Courses may be assessed by a variety of methods. Where marking is undertaken by a trained marker in their own time, markers meetings are held to ensure that a consistent standard is applied. The work of all markers is subject to scrutiny by the Principal Assessor

To assist centres, Principal Assessor and Senior Moderator reports are published on SQA's website www.sqa.org.uk

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS COURSE

General advice

Although the Units may be taught sequentially or concurrently, an integrated approach is recommended. The Units are closely related and there are opportunities to link the Outcomes and build skills across the Units. For example, in the Unit *Media Analysis*, study of a television 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 the Unit *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.

The essay produced for the *Media Analysis* Unit must be structured with introduction, structured exposition, interim conclusions and must refer to the text(s). This will give candidates practice for the externally assessed dissertation which is planned in the Unit *Media Investigation*, and which must have a similar structure.

The *Media Investigation* may deconstruct technical codes that the candidate will use to construct a media product in *Media Production*.

Methodology

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

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

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 being given an opportunity to research a media studies/media issue which interests them; and by being encouraged to give their preferences for the types and subject of media products 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. In such situations, the role of the teacher/lecturer will be to guide the research and assist in the location of relevant sources.

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. Candidates should also be encouraged to follow current debates on the Media eg in the weekly sections of UK and Scottish broadsheets, in broadcast programmes, in the journal of the *Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom* and on websites.

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. 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 material 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 all Units. It will include assessment of the candidate's work by the candidate, by the assessor and, where appropriate, by other members of a candidate group. This can be achieved largely through discussion, individual tutorials and observation of the candidate's work supported by checklists.

For each Unit, candidates should keep a folio of 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.

National Course Specification: Course details (cont)

COURSE Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

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.

CANDIDATES WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

This Course specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. The additional support 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 Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs (SQA, September 2004)*.

MEDIA STUDIES IN A BROADER CONTEXT

A number of national initiatives and programmes have been designed to promote themes that are important to contemporary society such as citizenship, the environment and enterprise. These issues contribute to individual subjects and Courses by making connections beyond the subject boundaries and enrich the learning experience. Similarly, the specialist knowledge and skills developed through study of a particular subject contributes to the understanding of these issues.

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Media Analysis (Advanced Higher)

CODE DV31 13

COURSE Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

SUMMARY

This Unit is designed to enable candidates to understand and apply a range of methods for analysing media texts. The media studied are the media of mass communication and could include print, radio, television, film and popular music. The Unit is suited to those who have an interest in, and/or wish to pursue an analytical approach to the media. It is suitable both for those who wish to pursue further study and a career in the communications industries as well as those whose interest is more general.

This is a mandatory Unit of the Advanced Higher Media Studies Course, but may also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

OUTCOME

Select, describe, and apply methods of media analysis

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ Higher Media Studies or its analysis units
(Candidates must have knowledge of the Key Aspects of Media Studies.)

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Advanced Higher (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7*)

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

CORE SKILLS

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill	None
Core Skill component	Critical Thinking at SCQF level 6

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.

OUTCOME

Select, describe and apply methods of media analysis.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Select two methods of analysis appropriate to a media text(s).
- (b) Describe two of the selected methods of analysis.
- (c) Apply the selected methods of analysis to a media text(s).

Evidence Requirements

Evidence is required to demonstrate that candidates have met the requirements of the Outcome and all of the Performance Criteria. Evidence of the candidate's ability to apply methods of analysis will be required. The methods chosen must be selected from two different areas: context-based, text-based or audience-based.

The evidence may be in written or oral form. The assessment will last no more than one hour and will be conducted under controlled conditions.

The assessment is an analysis of a single text or related texts which have been previously studied. The response must include introduction, structured exposition, conclusions, and must refer to the text(s). The assessment is closed-book.

At least two from a choice of the following must be covered. The two must come from different areas of analysis.

The areas of analysis are:

- ◆ context-based approach of methods of analysis (eg social, historical, geographical, economic, legal/regulatory, institutional, media, production, distribution, aesthetic, technological)
- ◆ text-based approach of methods of analysis (eg use of codes and conventions of media language, genre, narrative, representation)
- ◆ audience-based approach of methods of analysis (eg target audience(s), inscribed reader(s), actual readers)

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

GUIDANCE ON THE 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 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:

- ◆ context-based approach of media analysis (eg social, historical, geographical, economic, legal/regulatory, institutional, media, production, distribution, aesthetic, technological)
- ◆ text-based approach of media analysis (eg use of codes and conventions of media language, genre, narrative, representation)
- ◆ audience-based approach of media analysis (eg target audience(s), inscribed reader(s), actual readers)

Each of these areas first requires analysts 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.

Candidates should apply appropriate methods of analysis to a text or related texts.

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-based (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-based (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-based (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)

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Media Analysis (Advanced Higher)

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. However, 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. A highly competent candidate could 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 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. Such an approach tries to capture the complexity of media texts and avoid the biases and blindspots produced by using a single analytical method.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

The methods of learning and teaching should be challenging and reflect both the candidate's interests and preferred learning styles. Where possible, the candidate and teacher/lecturer may negotiate the texts studied and the tasks undertaken. A purely theoretical approach should not be used; technical and analytical terms involved should not be taught as separate from the activity itself but should be introduced as an integral part of that activity.

At this level candidates will need access to books and magazines which explain major concepts in an accessible way. They will need access to newspaper archives, magazines, broadcast programmes and the Internet for research into media issues.

Candidates should be aware that information contained in textbooks and teaching packs is likely to date very quickly and should be checked against information provided by more ephemeral sources such as newspapers and industry magazines. Examples and illustrations given in this Unit will also become outdated and should be cross-checked. For this reason, teachers/lecturers should try to enable access to constantly updated information.

Understanding of analytical methods should derive from direct experience of both analysis and related practical activities. An integrated approach should be used in the study of texts so that Performance Criteria in the Unit are clearly linked.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Media Analysis (Advanced Higher)

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

The recommended instrument of assessment for this Unit is a response which lasts no more than one hour, is carried out under controlled conditions, and covers, holistically, the Performance Criteria for the Unit.

Candidates will require 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.

CANDIDATES WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

This Unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. The additional support 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 Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs (SQA, September 2004)*.

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Media Investigation (Advanced Higher)

CODE DV32 13

COURSE Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

SUMMARY

This Unit will allow the candidate to investigate a media studies issue. The candidate will develop the skills of planning, researching and analysing necessary for the completion of such an investigation. It is suitable both for those who wish to pursue further study and a career in the communications industries as well as those whose interest is more general.

This is a mandatory Unit of the Advanced Higher Media Studies Course, but may also be taken as a free-standing Unit. Refer to the Course Arrangements document for further information.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Plan and research an investigation into a media studies issue.
- 2 Critically analyse the learning gained through the process of investigation.
- 3 Evaluate the methods used.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ Higher Media Studies

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Advanced Higher (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7*)

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

CORE SKILLS

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill	Problem Solving at SCQF level 6
Core Skill component	None

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

Plan and research an investigation into a media studies issue

Performance Criteria

- (a) The plan identifies an appropriate relevant hypothesis, structured aims and appropriate methods of enquiry.
- (b) The information gathered is relevant to the methods of analysis selected.
- (c) Gather information about the methods of construction.

OUTCOME 2

Critically analyse the learning gained through the process of investigation

Performance Criteria

- (a) The information presented is accurately analysed.
- (b) The interim conclusions drawn are valid, relevant and supported by evidence in terms of the aims of investigation.
- (c) The process of investigation is reviewed.

OUTCOME 3

Evaluate the methods used

Performance Criteria

- (a) The description of the methods of research used is clear and accurate
- (b) The appropriateness, validity and reliability of the methodology used are accurately assessed.

EVIDENCE REQUIRMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Evidence is required to demonstrate that candidates have met the requirements of all Outcomes and all of the Performance Criteria.

Instruments of assessment for this unit consist of a checklist and a set of restricted response questions which cover all outcomes and performance criteria

The candidate will complete a checklist which the teacher/lecturer confirms by observation and discussion in which the hypothesis, aims and methods of research clearly cover the Performance Criteria.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Media Investigation (Advanced Higher)

The plan should be structured on a hypothesis, with a detailed introduction describing the rationale for the issue being investigated and a breakdown of the aspects to be covered. The aims and methods of research should be described and justified. References and sources should be proposed.

The candidate must demonstrate understanding of the conclusions they have reached through the investigating process by using a checklist.

The teacher/lecturer confirms the review and checklist by observation and discussion.

Information gathered during the process of investigation should be analysed. Conclusions drawn should be justified with evidence gained through the investigative process.

The description, appropriateness and validity of the research methods used will be assessed through a series of restricted response questions relating to research methods specified.

The standard to be applied is exemplified in the National Assessment Bank items available for this Unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this Unit, they should be of a comparable standard.

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

GUIDANCE ON THE 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 perceptions 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).

The plan for the investigation should be clearly structured with an introduction, an exposition and proposed references/sources.

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 use sources such as:

- ◆ research on teenage magazines and their readers
- ◆ content analysis of selected magazines
- ◆ data on size and nature of market
- ◆ data on education and employment trends amongst girls/boys and women/men
- ◆ analysis of methods of construction

The conclusions could be drawn between:

- ◆ representation, audience and advertising
- ◆ content and semiological analysis and ideology
- ◆ representation and gender differences in achievement in education and employment

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Media Investigation (Advanced Higher)

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

The methods of learning and teaching should be challenging and reflect both the candidates' interests and preferred learning styles. Where possible, the teacher/lecturer may negotiate the texts studied and the tasks undertaken. A purely theoretical approach should not be used; technical and analytical terms involved should not be taught as separate from the activity itself but should be introduced as an integral part of that activity.

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

At this level, candidates will require 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.

Understanding of analytical methods should derive from direct experience of both analysis and related practical activities. An integrated approach should be used in the study of texts so that Outcomes in the Unit are clearly linked.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

The recommended instruments of assessment for this Unit are: a checklist and series of restricted response questions.

This Unit requires the candidate to complete an investigation. The plan of the investigation will be clearly structured with an introduction, exposition and references. The Unit assessment focuses on the processes involved in planning, undertaking and reviewing the work which may lead to the dissertation which will be required if the candidate is undertaking this Unit as part of the Advanced Higher Course.

Candidates should record evidence of achievement of Performance Criteria on a checklist which the teacher/lecturer confirms by observation and discussion.

The restricted response questions should cover the research methods used eg content analysis, surveys and questionnaires, official government or industry statistics, methods of analysing media representation. At least one question should cover technology/technical codes in order to demonstrate achievement of Outcome 1 PC (c) *Gather information about methods of construction*.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Media Investigation (Advanced Higher)

Additionally candidates could critically analyse an example of media research from the following list:

- ◆ print text/quality newspaper/magazine/academic journal
- ◆ radio/TV/ or video source
- ◆ results of a survey/questionnaire
- ◆ interview schedule
- ◆ detailed government or industry statistics as they relate to media issues
- ◆ detailed graphs and diagrams relating to media studies or media issues.

CANDIDATES WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

This Unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. The additional support 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 Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs (SQA, September 2004)*.

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Media Production (Advanced Higher)

CODE DF16 13

COURSE Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

SUMMARY

This Unit is designed to enable individual candidates to contribute to all stages of two related media productions created for a client. Candidates will research, create, review and evaluate the productions.

The centre can select the media from a broad range including print, audio, video, multimedia.

The Unit is suited to those who have an interest in, and/or wish to pursue further study and a career in the communications industries as well as those whose interest is more general.

This is a mandatory Unit of the Advanced Higher Media Studies Course, but may also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

OUTCOMES

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

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ Higher Media Studies or the Unit DF16 12 *Media Production* (Higher)

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Higher (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7*).

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

CORE SKILLS

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill	Problem Solving at SCQF level 6
Core Skills component	None

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.

OUTCOME 1

Contribute to planning two related media productions from a brief

Performance Criteria

- (a) Contribute effectively to devising the brief, expressing useful ideas and allocating roles and tasks through negotiation.
- (b) Carry out relevant research effectively.
- (c) Contribute effectively to devising the production schedule.
- (d) Use technical and analytical terms accurately.
- (e) Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between media theory and practice.

OUTCOME 2

Contribute to implementing the two related media productions from a brief

Performance Criteria

- (a) Contribute effectively to the organisation of the productions, including negotiating working methods and rules for managing the production.
- (b) Communicate ideas and information effectively.
- (c) Contribute effectively in terms of technical and non-technical skills in accordance with the brief, allocated role and production schedule.
- (d) Use technical and analytical terms accurately, demonstrating understanding of the relationship between media theory and practice.

OUTCOME 3

Review and evaluate the two related media productions

Performance Criteria

- (a) Analyse the strengths and weaknesses of each production in relation to the brief.
- (b) Analyse the strengths and weaknesses of own performance.
- (c) Recommend and justify appropriate improved or alternative strategies.
- (d) Use technical and analytical terms accurately, demonstrating understanding of the relationship between media theory and practice.
- (e) Use evaluation criteria appropriate to the medium of each of the two media products.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Media Production (Advanced Higher)

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE UNIT

Evidence is required to demonstrate that candidates have met the requirements of the Outcomes and all of the Performance Criteria.

An observation checklist which records the performance of the individual candidate is required for Outcomes 1 and 2. The observation checklist should ensure that for Outcome 1, PC (a) the candidate negotiates roles and responsibilities with others – taking account of own strengths and weaknesses and those of colleagues.

For Outcome 3, candidates must produce an individual evaluation report. This may be written or oral and should be completed within one hour under controlled conditions and be open book. Candidates can have access to their production notes/materials. Oral evidence should be recorded on audio or videotape.

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

An example of an observation checklist is provided in the National Assessment Bank item for this Unit.

At Advanced Higher, the production should involve:

- ◆ negotiating with a client
- ◆ a topic which requires primary and secondary research
- ◆ the products not exceeding the length/size detailed in brief
- ◆ adherence to deadline as detailed in brief
- ◆ adherence to relevant internal and external controls

The checklist and the evaluation should relate closely to the brief which should:

- ◆ be challenging, requiring extensive research involving both primary and secondary sources
- ◆ specify the medium, purpose, target audience, form, genre, length, deadline, internal and external institutional controls
- ◆ be medium specific and reflect professional practice, emphasising deadlines, budgetary and time constraints. For example, a maximum of one minute for a broadcast commercial

Research and planning should involve:

- ◆ negotiating with the client
- ◆ identification of sources
- ◆ topic research
- ◆ audience and product research
- ◆ identification of constraints
- ◆ plan of format
- ◆ content
- ◆ style
- ◆ resources requirements

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Media Production (Advanced Higher)

- ◆ production stages and schedule
- ◆ task allocation

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

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

The focus of this Unit is on the planning, creation and evaluation of two related media productions. Advanced Higher demands more of the candidate than Higher, in 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.

Detailed exemplars on each of the media are contained in the content tables (Print, Audio, Video, Web Page Design) which are provided in the Appendix to this unit.

The brief should be written by the candidate(s) after consultation with the client. For example, a suitable client might be the local health centre and the topic could be the dangers of sunbathing. Regardless, the brief must require research - for example, statistics on skin cancer, interviews with medical experts, questionnaires or vox pops with target audience. One production could be a 10 minute information video on the dangers of sunbathing for older teenagers including a music video, links, interviews and statistical graphics with voice over. The second could be a print public service advert warning of the dangers of the sun to young children.

Some centres might locate a client within the centre — for example an enterprise group or guidance counsellor. In some cases it might be necessary for the teacher/lecturer to take on the role of client but the topic must require in depth research.

The brief should specify the medium, purpose, target audience, form, genre, length, deadline, internal and external institutional controls.

Research and planning should involve:

- ◆ negotiation with client
- ◆ identification of sources
- ◆ topic research
- ◆ audience and product research
- ◆ identification of constraints
- ◆ plan of format; content; style
- ◆ resources requirements
- ◆ production stages, working methods schedule
- ◆ negotiation of production roles and tasks

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Media Production (Advanced Higher)

The guidelines should be medium specific and reflect professional practice, emphasising deadlines, budgetary and time constraints. For example, a maximum of one minute for a broadcast commercial.

Internal and external controls must be adhered to — for example: it should avoid causing offence to the target audience and must observe the laws of copyright, libel, discrimination.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

Candidates should first be introduced to the main stages involved in production in the chosen medium. The technical terms involved should not be taught as separate from production activities but should be used as an integral part of these activities and should be employed consistently and confidently. Candidates should expand their knowledge of technical terms by investigating the application of techniques not available to them – for example in creating a video they might investigate the use of chromakey even if they do not have the technology to apply it to their own production. This knowledge could then be used in their evaluation to improve their product and in analysing professional products and in the creation of a hypothetical production in the exam. In this way candidates build skills across Units.

If candidates are doing this Unit as part of the Advanced Higher Media Studies Course, they should be encouraged to apply the methods of analysis examined in the *Media Analysis* Unit - for example they might apply audience theories in their research of the target audience for their productions. Clear links should be made between theory and practice at all times.

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

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 gradually give more responsibility for the production process to the candidates. This is an opportunity for assessors to complete observation checklists (see below). At Advanced Higher it should be possible for the teacher/lecturer to move to the roles of observer, technical consultant and production manager, ensuring that the candidate attends to the internal and external institutional constraints.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

The recommended instruments of assessment for this Unit are: an observation checklist and an evaluation report.

Throughout the Unit, individual candidate performance should be recorded by the assessor by means of an observation checklist. This should record the effectiveness of the individual in the planning and implementation of the media production.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Media Production (Advanced Higher)

Candidates should also be encouraged to take notes during the production process (this could be in the format of a logbook). These details could then be used to form the basis of the evaluation response. At Advanced Higher the evaluation should be detailed and refer to decision-making processes and constraints in planning, production and post-production. It should analyse the production processes and products by describing how the institutional and audience contexts affected the processes and products. Candidates are required to make recommendations for improvements to the product or process and/or the need for further practical work or research and/or alternative strategies that could have been followed. They should also show that they are aware of their own strengths and weaknesses and make suggestions as to how they could improve their individual contribution in future.

Some of the following may be helpful. Candidates could:

- ◆ Review the research and end product in terms of analytical theories.
- ◆ Review the final product in terms of categories eg were choices made appropriate to target audience, constraints. Was the brief met?
- ◆ Review the product in terms of language ie use technical terms accurately. Were choices made appropriate and successfully executed both individually and as a group? Discuss both technological and non-technological strengths and weaknesses.
- ◆ Review the product in terms of narrative and representation.
- ◆ Review the production process in individual and co-operative activities during both planning and implementation.
- ◆ Review what has been learned in terms of institutional contexts (deadlines, resources, copyright, taste etc) and audience contexts.
- ◆ Review the response of the client and any response from the target audience.
- ◆ Recommend and justify improved or alternative strategies.

The evaluation must be completed within one hour under controlled conditions.

CANDIDATES WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

This Unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. The additional support 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 Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs (SQA, September 2004)*.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Media Production (Advanced Higher)

Print

Stages

Planning and research, layout design, production of copy and images, selection of copy and images, editing and sub-editing, production, distribution, debriefing, evaluation.

Planning and Research

- ◆ Category: purpose, medium, form, genre, subject matter, style, target audience.
- ◆ Narrative: story, narration and structure; narrative codes; dramatic effect.
- ◆ Representations: (where relevant) news values and balance; representation of individuals/social groups and social and political issues; relation to target audience and internal and external contexts.
- ◆ Identification of resources and constraints:
 - Institutional: economic (budget, sales, advertising), editorial policy, house style, layout, deadline, self-censorship, health and safety
 - Technical: available hardware and software
 - External: legal and self-regulatory controls, censorship, ethical and representation issues
- ◆ Identification of roles and remits: non-technological (production editor, advertisement manager, reporter, writer, researcher, proof-reader, legal adviser), technological (copy editor, photographer, sub-editor, picture editor, layout editor). Certain roles may combine technological and non-technological roles, eg a reporter might enter her/his copy and email it.
- ◆ Product research, readership research, research on potential advertisers.
- ◆ Identification of sources: primary, secondary and alternative sources; reporter, stringer, press agencies, press release, public relations, pressure groups, lobby correspondents, experts, leaks, other media, use of reference materials (cuttings, encyclopedias, archives, internet).
- ◆ Remits and production schedule.

Technical Terms

- ◆ Hardware: microcomputer system, printer, digital camera, SLR camera, scanner, photocopier, offset-litho.
- ◆ Software: desktop publishing, word processing, drawing, painting, image manipulation, type manipulation software, scanning, spreadsheet.
- ◆ Page formatting: size (A4, tabloid, broadsheet), orientation, margins, columns, gutter, grid, dummy.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Media Production (Advanced Higher)

- ◆ Text elements: masthead, headline, subhead, copy, caption, sidebar, pull quote, byline, photo credit, header, footer, index, jump line.
- ◆ Character formatting: font (serif, sans serif, script, decorative), size, style (roman, italic, bold, underline), tracking (normal, loose, tight), colour.
- ◆ Paragraph formatting: indentation, leading, alignment, line length.
- ◆ Graphic elements: photograph, mug shot, logo, promo, diagram, box, rule, colour, white space, cropping, digital manipulation.

Use of Codes

Technical codes and text and graphic content.

Connotations of words and images, anchorage and polysemy, print product conventions, breaking conventions.

Evaluation Criteria

Brief, spelling and grammar, legibility, visual impact, unity, variety, originality, audience interest, use of words and pictures (where relevant), news values and balance, narrative (where relevant), dramatic effect, legality, ethical issues, representation issues.

Audio

Stages

Planning and research, scripting, rehearsing, recording, mixing, editing, broadcasting, debriefing, evaluation.

Planning and Research

- ◆ Category: purpose, medium, form, genre, target audience, subject matter, tone.
- ◆ Narrative: story, narration and structure; narrative codes; dramatic effect.
- ◆ Representations: (where relevant) news values and balance; representation of individuals/social groups and social and political issues; relation to target audience and internal and external contexts.
- ◆ Identification of resources and constraints:- internal: economic (budget, sales, advertising), editorial policy, house style, deadline, health and safety
 - technical: studio/location, live, pre-recorded, tape editing, sound effects, mixing
 - external: legal and self-regulatory controls, self-censorship, censorship, ethical, copyright, representation issues

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Media Production (Advanced Higher)

- ◆ Identification of roles and remits: non-technological (producer, reporter, programme editor, scriptwriter, interviewer, interviewee, performer, presenter, legal adviser), technological (location recorder, sound engineer, editor). Certain roles may combine technological and non-technological roles, eg location interviewing.
- ◆ Research of competition, audience research, seeking advertisers.
- ◆ Identification of sources (where relevant): reporter, interview, vox pop, news sources, other media, use of reference materials (encyclopedias, archives, internet), past recordings of sound effects, music, interviews.
- ◆ Remits and production schedule.

Technical Terms

- ◆ Hardware: microcomputer system, printer, cassette recorder, reel-to-reel recorder, omni directional, bi-directional and uni-directional microphones, mixer, splice editor.
- ◆ Software: digital sound editing software, word processor, spreadsheet.
- ◆ Words: appropriateness to genre, register, mode of address.
- ◆ Voice: tone, accent, speed, volume, delivery.
- ◆ Music: station/programme jingles, links, mood music, actuality.
- ◆ Sounds: ambient noise, sound effects, silence.
- ◆ Script: voice piece, vox pop, interview, dialogue, sound effects, transitions (intros, outros, links).
- ◆ Recording: studio, location, live, pre-recorded.
- ◆ Edits: paper edits, dub edits, splice edits, electronic edits.

Use of Codes

Connotations of sound codes, use of sound codes.

Denotation and connotation of words and sounds, anchorage of words, sounds and music, polysemy, audio product conventions, breaking conventions.

Genre conventions and style.

Radio language.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Media Production (Advanced Higher)

Evaluation Criteria

Brief, quality of recording, mixing and editing, audience interest, use of language, voice, music, sound effects and transitions, unity, variety, originality, narrative, (where relevant), news values and balance, dramatic effect, (where relevant), issues of legality, ethics, representation.

Video

Stages

Planning and research, treatment, script and/or storyboard, location recce and resources check, shooting script, shooting schedule, call sheets, floor plans, rehearsing, shooting, editing, screening, debriefing, evaluation.

Planning and Research

- ◆ Category: purpose, medium, form, genre, target audience, subject matter, tone.
- ◆ Narrative: story, narration and structure; narrative codes; dramatic effect.
- ◆ Representations: (where relevant) news values and balance; representation of individuals/social groups and social and political issues; relation to target audience and internal and external contexts.
- ◆ Identification of resources and constraints:
 - internal: economic (budget, sales, advertising), editorial policy, deadline, health and safety
 - technical: available hardware and software
 - external: legal and self-regulatory controls, self-censorship, censorship, ethical, copyright, representation issues
- ◆ Identification of roles: non-technological (producer, performer, production assistant, scriptwriter, storyboard artist, continuity person, location/floor manager, make-up); technological (director, camera operator, sound recordist, editor).
- ◆ Research of competition, audience research.
- ◆ Identification of sources: reporter, stringer, press agency, press release, other media, use of encyclopaedias, archives, internet.
- ◆ Remits and production schedule.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Media Production (Advanced Higher)

Technical Term

- ◆ Hardware: microcomputer system, printer, video cameras, tripod, lighting, omni-directional and uni-directional microphones, vision mixer, video editing suite.
- ◆ Software: digital video editing software, word processor, spreadsheet.
- ◆ Mise-en-scene: setting, props, costume, make-up, performance.
- ◆ Lighting: high-key, low-key.
- ◆ Framing: shot distance (ELS, LS, MLS, MS, MCU, CU, ECU), establishing shot.
- ◆ Focus: shallow, deep, pull focus.
- ◆ Angle: straight, high, low, canted.
- ◆ Editing: cut, dissolve, fade in, fade out, wipe, parallel editing, shot/reverse shot, shot length.
- ◆ Camera movement: pan, tilt, track, crane, handheld.
- ◆ Sound: diegetic and non-diegetic speech, music, sound effects.
- ◆ Titles: font (serif, sans serif, script, decorative), size, style (roman, italic, bold, underline), colour.

Use of Codes

Connotations of technical codes, use of technical codes, words and sounds, denotation and connotation of text, images, words, sounds and music, anchorage and polysemy, moving image genre conventions, breaking conventions.

Evaluation Criteria

Brief, quality of camerawork, sound, editing, graphics, mise-en-scène, variety, originality, audience interest, narrative, (where relevant) news values and balance (where relevant), dramatic effect, issues of legality, ethics, representation.

WEB Page Design

Stages

Agree on design principles and user-friendliness issues.

Plan navigation map, home page, core page, linked pages.

Create text and graphic files in appropriate file formats.

Design page using HTML page mark-up language, templates, WYSIWYG package or standard application package, (eg, word processor, DTP).

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Media Production (Advanced Higher)

Checking of content, format and links, validation, testing with images off and with different browsers/platforms.

Debriefing, evaluation.

Planning and Research

- ◆ Category: purpose, medium, form, subject matter, style, target audience.
- ◆ Narrative: story, narration and structure; narrative codes; dramatic effect.
- ◆ Representations: (where relevant) news values and balance; representation of individuals/social groups and social and political issues; relation to target audience and internal and external contexts.
- ◆ Identification of resources and constraints:
 - internal: economic (budget, advertising), editorial policy, house style, layout design, deadline
 - technical: available hardware and software, hardware and software of clients
 - external: legal, ethical, copyright, representation issues
- ◆ Identification of roles: non-technological (managing editor, writer, production director, artist); technological (copy editor, photographer, art director, HTML editor). Certain roles may combine technological and non-technological roles, eg an artist might design images using a graphics package.
- ◆ Research of competition, audience research, search for advertisers.
- ◆ Identification of sources: primary and secondary news sources, other media, use of encyclopaedias, archives, Internet.
- ◆ Establishment of remits and production schedule.

Technical Terms

- ◆ Hardware: microcomputer system, printer, digital camera, scanner.
- ◆ Software: HTML editor, WYSIWYG web page editor, web browser, word processing, drawing, painting, image manipulation, type manipulation software.
- ◆ Navigation: navigation map, home page, core page, linked pages, visual metaphor.
- ◆ Page formatting: layout, dummy, grid, tables, frames.
- ◆ Text elements: nameplate, contents, contact, headline, subhead, copy, caption, lead-in, pull quote, byline, photo credit, teaser, jump line, page numbers, type as image files, text links.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Media Production (Advanced Higher)

- ◆ Character formatting: font (serif, sans serif, script, decorative), size, style (roman, italic, bold), colour.
- ◆ Paragraph formatting: indentation, leading, alignment, line spacing, line length.
- ◆ Graphic elements: images, animations, logo, icons, graphic links, colour, background tiles, cropping, resolution, thumbnails, file format.

Use of Codes

Use of technical codes, text and graphic content, connotations of text, images, colour, anchorage, visual metaphors.

Evaluation Criteria

Criteria for assessing web page products: original brief, spelling and grammar, legibility, visual impact, unity, variety, audience interest, content, navigability, consistency and linkage, visual metaphor, originality, loading time, testing, issues of legality, ethics, representation.