



Course Report 2016

Subject	Media
Level	National 5

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

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers, lecturers and assessors in their preparation of candidates for future assessment. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

Section 1: Comments on the Assessment

Component 1: question paper

The 2016 question paper performed as expected and the grade boundary was set as intended.

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

The question paper is worth 50 marks.

Component 2: Assignment

The assignment performed as expected and the grade boundary was set as intended.

There were some original, entertaining and creative assignments, particularly in film, where candidates showed considerable technical expertise. Where candidates understood the importance of their written responses and not the 'finish' of the media content, high marks were gained.

It was clear to see the very high number of candidates who had engaged with the process and taken pride in their work. Many candidates elected to create storyboards, and their creative intentions were clear.

The assignment is worth 50 marks and has two sections, Planning and Development, each worth 25 marks.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: question paper

Many candidates showed a great deal of media knowledge and matched this content to the questions that were asked. Stimulating and appropriate content had been taught to facilitate learning and enjoyment for the candidates.

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

Question 1 (Genre conventions): Most candidates demonstrated sound understanding of generic conventions, mostly choosing action and horror films to support their answers.

Question 4a and b (Narrative and Audience): Most candidates demonstrated sound knowledge of a variety of narrative theorists including Tzvetan Todorov, Vladimir Propp, David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson, Joseph Campbell, Roland Barthes and Claude Levi-Strauss. They were able to discuss different audience reactions to narrative structures and codes present in media content.

Component 2: Assignment

Planning

Most teachers/lecturers had negotiated interesting, personalised briefs with their candidates and given clear direction.

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

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

Development

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

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

The standard of product was extremely high, particularly in films and storyboards. Digital techniques were used widely but many candidates achieved high marks even if their products were not highly finished, because their creative intentions were clear.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: Question paper

Question 2: Candidate performance in this question was inconsistent. Some candidates did not fully understand the concepts of technical and cultural codes and wrote answers on representation. Detailed reference to codes such as *mise-en-scene*, camerawork, lighting, sound, editing, layout etc was missing.

Questions 5(a) and 5(b): A significant number of candidates had not prepared relevant media content and wrote about inappropriate texts for the question, which asked for public service texts. The Course Assessment Specification for National 5 Media outlines the variety of media content that is required in the course.

Component 2: Assignment

Planning (25 marks)

Some candidates had been supplied with the wrong task, sending the Creating Media Content unit for the Planning section.

Not all centres used the five-question structure for the planning section.

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

Some candidates started well, providing detailed answers, but these reduced in quality as they worked through the five questions.

Development (25 marks)

Some centres sent Higher Media responses to Section 2, which restricted access to the full range of marks because the two courses have different requirements.

Not all centres used the five-question structure for the development section, as stated in the Course Assessment Task.

Some candidates started well, providing detailed answers, but these reduced in quality as they worked through the five questions. Some candidates had produced very detailed media products but had not supported their ideas with sufficient written information, sometimes hampered by the format they had been given to write in, for example small sections for each code which didn't allow them to expand on their ideas.

Section 3: Advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component 1: Question paper

As in previous years, it is paramount that candidates are provided with a selection of texts to choose from when answering the questions — some questions are more suited to certain types of media content. The roles of media should be taught with different types of media content, ie those that entertain, educate and/or inform.

Reference to the Course Assessment Specification should be made to ensure full course coverage — any of these concepts can be sampled in the question paper.

Component 2: Assignment

Candidates should ensure that it is a *media* product that they are planning and developing — for example a poster, trailer, storyboard. Some candidates are still writing about their

research into the design of a new item such as an article of clothing instead of the advertisement they plan to make.

Keeping the media product straightforward, rather than overly ambitious, is preferable.

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

Candidates should be made aware of how marks are allocated so that they understand the nature and amount of content they need to provide in response to the questions. The SQA Understanding Standards materials published is a good place to look for examples.

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

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

Grade Boundary and Statistical information:

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2015	801
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Number of resulted entries in 2016	889
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Statistical information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark -				
A	27.2%	27.2%	242	70
B	19.9%	47.1%	177	60
C	19.8%	66.9%	176	50
D	9.4%	76.4%	84	45
No award	23.6%	-	210	-

General commentary on grade boundaries

- ◆ While SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions which will allow a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional C boundary) and a well prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional A boundary), it is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level.
- ◆ Each year, SQA therefore holds a grade boundary meeting for each subject at each level where it brings together all the information available (statistical and judgemental). The Principal Assessor and SQA Qualifications Manager meet with the relevant SQA Business Manager and Statistician to discuss the evidence and make decisions. The meetings are chaired by members of the management team at SQA.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the exam is more challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the exam is less challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ Where standards are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.
- ◆ An exam paper at a particular level in a subject in one year tends to have a marginally different set of grade boundaries from exam papers in that subject at that level in other years. This is because the particular questions, and the mix of questions, are different. This is also the case for exams set in centres. If SQA has already altered a boundary in a particular year in, say, Higher Chemistry, this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter boundaries in their prelim exam in Higher Chemistry. The two are not that closely related, as they do not contain identical questions.
- ◆ SQA's main aim is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and all levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.