

16 December 2003

To: SQA Co-ordinator  
Secondary Schools and FE Colleges

Action by Recipient	
	Response required
✓	<b>Note and pass on</b>
	None – update/information only

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Dear Colleague

**National Qualifications  
Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2, Higher and Advanced Higher Media Studies Update**

The contents of this letter should be passed on to the members of staff responsible for Media Studies National Qualifications.

We wish to bring the following matters to your attention.

**1. Revised Arrangements Document for Advanced Higher Media Studies**

You should be aware that revised arrangements for the external examination were issued to centres with a covering letter in August 2001. The web version of the document has now been updated and we apologise for the delay in carrying this out. The revised arrangements can now be located at **[www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)**.

Appendix 1 attached details the amendments which has replaced the section 'Details of the Instruments for External Assessment' (formerly pages 7 to 8).

**2. Intermediate 2 and Higher External Assessment**

Please note that, in accordance with the current Arrangements for the external Course assessment for Intermediate 2 and Higher, the Media Analysis section in the examination papers requires candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the key aspects: Narrative, Representation, Audience, and Institution appropriate to the question being asked. Candidates should be reminded that a good answer will usually integrate a number of these. Candidates should also be advised, however, that it may be appropriate to refer to and use their knowledge of Categories and/or Language in their answers. The rubric of the examination papers will reinforce this.

The Media Production section will require candidates to draw upon their knowledge of **all** six key aspects.

### 3. Understanding standards

The SQA website subject pages for Media Studies contains the published Principal Assessor Reports. NAB materials, guidelines for Understanding Standards at Higher and further guidance on Intermediate 1 and 2 are now available to download from the secure sections of SQA's website. Please see your centre's SQA Co-ordinator for log-in details.

Following requests for further guidance and support for National Qualifications in Media Studies, SQA will be hosting a Quality Network on Saturday 24 January 2004, at the Business Learning and Conference Centre in Dunfermline.

The aim of the event is to assist centres delivering these Media Studies qualifications at Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher, to further develop their understanding of the standards required for the external assessment. The event will comprise a series of interactive workshops delivered by members of the Media Studies examining team.

We will shortly be sending out further details including an Agenda and booking form. This event is free of charge but delegates will be responsible for their own travel expenses and any subsistence expenses incurred out with the event.

### 4. National Qualifications Review of Media Studies

Since the publication of the Investigation Report, (August 2003), revisions to the Units and Course Arrangements have been undertaken and completed for Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher. No revisions will be undertaken regarding the Advanced Higher at this time pending the review of Low Uptake qualifications.

However, since the publication of the Investigation Report, further consultation has taken place with stakeholders on the quality assurance of the Unseen Analysis. It has now been agreed that at Intermediate 1, 2 and Higher in the revised Courses, the Unseen Analysis will be:

- ◆ internally selected by centres following SQA's criteria
- ◆ **externally marked by SQA**

The revised Units and Course Arrangements have now been validated subject to some conditions being met and it is envisaged that the validation process will be completed by the end of this month. The next stage in the Review will be to produce revised NABs, and assessment guidance and exemplar materials by spring 2004. Launch events are also being planned for spring 2004.

Yours faithfully,



Karin Wilson  
Qualifications Officer

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**DETAILS OF THE INSTRUMENTS FOR EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT  
(revised June 2001)**

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

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

***Dissertation***

The dissertation involves the exploration of a Media Studies or public media issue. Candidates will choose an issue by negotiation with the teacher/lecturer and will investigate it in depth, analysing viewpoints and referring to relevant media theories or research on the issue. The dissertation should be between 3,000 and 4,000 words in length, excluding quotations, footnotes and bibliography, and have an introduction, structured exposition, interim conclusions and references. Candidates will be penalised for investigations which are of excessive length.

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

***Examination paper***

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

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

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

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

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