



Internal Assessment Report 2010: Media Studies (3)

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on verification in National Qualifications in this subject.

National Courses

Titles/levels of National Courses verified

NC Media (SCQF level 6)

General comments

This is a new Course which was introduced at the beginning of the new session 2009–10. SQA had a launch event attended by representatives from schools and colleges which introduced centres and subject assessors to the standard requirements of the new National Certificate.

Centres already had a clear and accurate understanding of National Standards in this subject area and at this level, and the launch merely reinforced this.

Consequently, centres which were verified for this new NC showed a clear and accurate understanding of the standards expected.

Assessors have shown that they are familiar with all of the above. This has been helped by assessment support packs (ASPs) for all core Units in the NC developed by SQA.

External verification has shown that centres and assessors have developed excellent teaching materials and assessment instruments which reflect the demands of the Unit specifications.

Centres have developed master folders containing all documentation relating to the above, which include Unit specifications, instruments of assessment, marking schemes, Evidence Requirements, IV procedures, checklists and teaching materials. These are an excellent aid for standardisation as well as internal and external verification. These have been done for each Unit.

All centres and assessors have a clear understanding of the Evidence Requirements for the Course and Course Units. The detail given above regarding master folders underlines these requirements and emphasises these to assessors.

The detail given in the Evidence Requirements of the new Unit specifications will assist assessors, and the ASPs enhance this support.

The new National Certificate Units lend themselves to integration; centres have recognised this and assessment instruments have reflected this. This obviously demands that all Outcomes and Performance Criteria are covered, but centres have introduced cross reference matrices of integrated Units which indicate that candidates have achieved these.

The NC Media is a very practical Course. Assessment instruments have recognised this and instructions to candidates are full and detailed. Being a practical Course, good checklists are essential, and assessors have taken this into consideration in assessing candidates.

Areas of good practice

This was a new Course which was verified in May 2009. Centres and members of staff should be highly commended for producing assessments, teaching materials, checklists, and resources required by the Course and Units to be ready for the new session.

The opportunities for integration of assessment were the intention of the new Course. The centres offering this in session 2009–10 have grasped this initiative, and this has been a feature of their assessment of the Units.

Centres offering this Course have recognised the practical nature of it and have constructed their assessments and recording procedures to take this into account.

Areas for improvement

While there is always room for improvement in the delivery of Courses, because this was a new Course and centres were particularly focused, external verification of the centres delivering this Course did not show any specific areas for improvement.

National Qualifications (NQ) Awards

Titles/levels of NQ Awards verified

Media Studies Intermediate 2, Higher (central verification)

General comments

Centres verified had a clear and accurate understanding of the requirements of the national standards. This was evidenced by the internal assessments of candidates, as well as the comments made on candidate scripts, and a recognition of standards regarding pass/fail at the levels verified.

In only one case was there an exception, where the assessor made the wrong judgement. This was rectified by the external verifier and the detailed report sent to the centre.

With one or two exceptions, assessors indicated that they were familiar with Course Arrangements documents, Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials. Instruments of assessment were appropriate and fulfilled the requirements of the Unit specifications, allowing candidates to demonstrate understanding in relation to their chosen texts. Familiarity with Course Arrangement documents was evidenced by centres fulfilling procedural and assessment requirements specified in these documents. Centres have been helped by NABs and exemplars developed by SQA.

In most cases, assessors and centres have a clear understanding of the Evidence Requirements of the Units verified. Judgements of assessments were in line with national standards. In one or two cases, assessors were giving marks out of 40, which is only used in external exams or prelim exams; internal assessment is judged on a pass/fail basis. It should also be noted here that the Arrangements document specifies that the seven key aspects be assessed over the fiction and non-fiction texts, and not all key aspects for each of these.

The centres verified are using appropriate assessments and giving assessment instructions to candidates which are clear and unambiguous.

In many cases, assessors are giving full, detailed and positive feedback to candidates regarding assessment answers. This is of great help to candidates, and this feedback also helps candidates prepare for examinations. In the cases where little feedback was given, centres should try to rectify this, as this would have been highlighted in the reports of central verification sent to centres.

Areas of good practice

Most candidates verified showed a good understanding of Media Studies, and this reflected good teaching of the key aspects.

Full, detailed and positive feedback was given to candidates in most of the internal assessments verified. As indicated above, this is essential to help candidates progress their subject knowledge, and in their preparation for exams. The better candidates also integrated the key aspects in their answers.

Assessment questions given to candidates were appropriate and allowed candidates to demonstrate understanding in relation to their chosen text.

Areas for improvement

Some areas for improvement were noted by external verifiers at central verification.

Marks out of 40 should not be given for internal assessment. These should be marked as pass/fail.

Assessment questions should specify the three key aspects to be considered by candidates in answering an assessment question, and be clear in the wording of assessments as to what is expected of candidates in the assessment.

Candidates need to refer to the text to back up statements, and not merely quote media theory. Media theory is a tool which helps candidates understand texts, and while it aids analysis of texts, it is not a substitute for text reference.

Integrating key aspects in any analysis or explanation of texts is essential in both internal assessments and examinations.