National
Qualifications

Media

Assignment

General assessment information

This pack contains general assessment information for centres preparing candidates for the assignment Component of Higher Media Course assessment.

It must be read in conjunction with the specific assessment task(s) for this Component of Course assessment which may only be downloaded from SQA's designated secure website by authorised personnel.

Contents

Introduction

This is the general assessment information for the Higher Media assignment.

This assignment is worth 50 marks out of a total of 100 marks. This is 50% of the overall marks for the Course assessment. The Course will be graded A–D.

Marks for all Course Components are added up to give a total Course assessment mark which is then used as the basis for grading decisions.

This is one of two Components of Course assessment. The other Component is a question paper.

This assignment has two Sections.

Section 1, titled 'Planning', will have 25 marks.
Section 2, titled 'Development', will have 25 marks.

This document describes the general requirements for the assessment of the assignment Component for this Course. It gives general information and instructions for assessors.

It must be read in conjunction with the assessment task for this Component of Course assessment.

Equality and inclusion

This Course assessment has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to assessment. Assessments have been designed to promote equal opportunities while maintaining the integrity of the qualification.

For guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs, please follow the link to the Assessment Arrangements web page: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html

Guidance on inclusive approaches to delivery and assessment in this Course is provided in the *Course Support Notes*.

What this assessment covers

This assessment contributes 50% of the total marks for the Course.

The assessment will assess the skills, knowledge and understanding specified for the assignment in the *Course Assessment Specification*. These are:

♦ consideration of possibilities and problem-solving in planning and production processes
♦ application of knowledge and understanding of the relevant key aspects of media literacy
♦ reflection on production experience, roles and challenges

Assessment

Purpose

The purpose of this assessment is to generate evidence for this Component of the added value of this Course by means of an assignment.

Assessment overview

In the assignment for Higher Media, candidates plan and develop finished media content in response to a negotiated brief. The assessment tasks will be set and externally marked by SQA and conducted in centres under the conditions specified by SQA. Separate information will be given on arrangements for submission of evidence.

The brief to which the assignment is carried out is set in centres, and candidates can have the same, similar or completely unique briefs. Any or all aspects of the brief are open to negotiation between the candidate and assessor according to personal preference and available resources. The candidate may have a brief to plan and develop an extract or entire piece of finished media content individually, or to plan and develop one part of finished media content which can be combined with the work of other candidates to make an extract or complete piece. Further guidance on setting the brief is given throughout this overview.

The finished content and responses to associated planning and development tasks are submitted to SQA for marking. The finished content must either be in print form or saved on a CD, DVD or other portable memory device, and readable by standard media players.

Where candidates have a brief to plan and develop their own piece of media content, they are expected to work independently to complete the assignment. However, if during the development of the content more than one person is required for technical reasons, candidates can organise assistance from others, with permission from the assessor. For example where a candidate is making a moving image text and requires one person to present a piece to camera, and another to film, they are unlikely to be able to effectively carry out both of these roles alone. Candidates should give clear instructions to anyone helping them and must take all decisions about the content and technical aspects of the work themselves.

Where this situation is likely to arise, a system whereby groups of candidates crew for each other could be organised. Careful production scheduling and resource management would be necessary, and assessors can provide assistance as necessary in this regard.

Where candidates are working as part of a larger production group, they must plan and develop a substantial part of the content that can be completed and

clearly identified as their own work. For example, a candidate might take sole responsibility for making a section, scene, segment or some other distinct element of the content being produced. Alternatively, a candidate might undertake one or more roles or tasks (eg set design or camera work) that combine with the work of others in the production.

During the process, it is recommended that candidates keep a production log or diary to record their ideas, research, plans and so on. This is not mandatory and is not assessed in the assignment; the recommendation is made to support candidates and encourage them to keep a clear record of their work which will help them to complete the assignment. If they wish, assessors can provide candidates with pro forma production logs or recommend a format for recording information.

The assignment has been developed to ensure that all candidates are assessed in the same way, regardless of the technical capabilities of the equipment at their disposal, or the medium, form or genre they will be working in.

Consequently, the instructions for the assignment direct all candidates to adopt a common approach regardless of their brief or resources.

Section 1: Planning

In Section 1: Planning, evidence that the candidate has actively planned content by carrying out appropriate research and making decisions based on this is assessed. Candidates complete three tasks:

1   Negotiate the brief
2   Compile a research and planning portfolio
3   Justify planning decisions

Tasks 1 and 2 direct candidates to negotiate the brief and advise them on the research and planning they should complete. This research and planning is assessed through Task 3.

All marks for Section 1 will be awarded on the basis of candidates' responses to Task 3. In this task, candidates summarise and justify their plans with reference to the brief, creative intentions and research. Responses for Task 3 are submitted to SQA for marking.

Assessment judgements are based on the justifications given for specific planning decisions. Up to a total of 25, marks are available for justifications relating to each of the following areas:

a   the brief
b   audience research
c   content research
d   institutional context research
e   creative intentions

Section 2: Development

In Section 2: Development, evidence that the candidate can work within institutional controls to achieve creative intentions is assessed. Candidates complete two tasks:

1   Make the planned media content
2   Evaluate the development process

In Task 1, candidates make their planned media content using media codes and techniques.

In Task 2, candidates evaluate the development process. Up to a total of 25, marks are available for evaluation of:

 a how effectively the candidate worked within institutional contexts to develop content
 b how effectively the candidate used media codes and techniques to achieve creative intentions

All marks for Section 2 will be awarded on the basis of candidates' developed content and their evaluations. Both are submitted to SQA.

The finished content and evaluations are considered together. Assessment judgements are based on the extent to which candidates demonstrate the ability to work within institutional controls and achieve creative intentions. This may be evident through their developed content, through their explanations, or through a mixture of the two.

The role of the assessor is to give reasonable assistance prior to and during the activity, as outlined in the 'Assessment conditions' section below.

In particular, the assessor has a prominent role in providing resources and setting the brief.

Resources

Candidates may require some assistance in gaining access to resources, space, people, organising assistance from others, creating a production schedule, and so on. Assessors can provide resources or assist as necessary in this regard.

Setting the brief

The requirements for setting the brief are open enough to provide for personalisation and choice by the candidate. Candidates can use a brief provided by the centre, or discuss ideas with the assessor and agree on the brief together. Each candidate should have their own, individual brief, but that could relate to a whole class or group project, and might be the same or similar to another candidate's brief.

The brief must include the following information:

An instruction or stimulus
The *instruction* might be to make an advert, content for a magazine or website, a trailer, a factual programme, or something else, for a particular purpose. Alternatively, a *stimulus* might be used. This could be an experience, a theme, an extract from a book, a news story, or anything else that can suggest an idea for media content.

A target audience
Candidates should know the profile of their target audience in terms of age, gender and any other relevant characteristics.

The level of finish expected
Storyboards, mock-ups, scripts, sketches or other pre-production materials are not acceptable as a level of finish at Higher. The level of finish must be a completed media text or a completed part of one media text.

Taking into account the resources available, the brief must specify clearly the level of finish expected in Section 2 of the assignment. Although a complete product may be the most desirable for the candidate, this is not necessary if the resources are not available for this. In particular, this may be the case in relation to moving image content, or a brief which uses a narrative extract as a stimulus.

The level of finish expected might be a complete piece of media content, or a section, scene, segment or some other distinct part or extract. Candidates need to be absolutely clear about the level of finish expected, as this is taken into account when assessment judgements are made.

When setting the brief, the following should be considered:

♦ The brief should ask the candidate to plan and develop content which is for a particular purpose and audience, and which uses a range of appropriate media codes. No medium, form or genre is necessarily more appropriate than another, but care must be taken to ensure that the brief given to or negotiated by the candidate is not overly ambitious, and allows them to achieve the assessment criteria to the best of their ability and with the available resources.
♦ There is no prescribed length or amount of content to be made, but an appropriate brief might specify a single print advert, a 30-second trailer, one or two pages of a newspaper, magazine or website, or a scene or segment from a moving image or multi-media text, for example. The requirement to plan and use a range of media codes to achieve a purpose, target an audience or convey meanings is more important than the length of the piece, as is setting a brief which involves stimulating research into audience, institution and content.
♦ Where the media content to be planned and developed is part of a group or class project, care must be taken to ensure that each candidate has a brief which is appropriate to the demands of both parts of the assignment.

- A candidate's ability to respond to the potential contained within a brief may be constrained by more than his/her creativity. The resources available from centre to centre will vary considerably, and may have an impact on what can and cannot be produced. The brief must be compatible with the available resources.
- Candidates' interests, abilities and characteristics should be taken into account. As much of the brief as possible should be negotiated by the candidate. Some will need more support and direction than others in negotiating the brief.

Assessment should take place when candidates are ready to be assessed, but at a point early enough to allow them to complete the assignment by the submission date. In order to complete the assignment, candidates will need to have skills in analysing and creating media content. It is therefore recommended that the assignment is undertaken once most of the work for the *Analysing Media Content* and *Creating Media Content* Units is complete.

Before they begin the assignment, candidates should know and be able to apply the key aspects of media (categories, language, narrative, representation, audience and institution) and understand the relationships between these in terms of the content and contexts of media production. They will not be expected to demonstrate knowledge of all the key aspects in the assignment, but a successful approach to the tasks given will necessitate clear understanding of them. Knowledge of the context of society and the role of media gained in the *Analysing Media Content* Unit will also be useful.

Candidates should also have an understanding of the production process, and the constraints which may impact on this, along with production skills relevant to the medium in which they will be working. This will help them to make active decisions about what they wish to include in their media content and why, and how to go about making the final content.

Assessment conditions

Assessors must exercise their professional responsibility in ensuring that evidence submitted by a candidate is the candidate's own work.

This assignment will be carried out over a period of time. Candidates should start at an appropriate point in the Course. This will normally be when they have completed most of the work on the Units in the Course.

This assignment has two Sections:

♦ Planning, which should be completed over a period of time
♦ Development, which should be completed over a period of time

Any written evidence which meets the requirements of this Component of Course assessment is likely to be between 1,500 and 3,000 words across the two Sections. This word count range is a guide only. Candidates should be able to complete the work within this range, but no penalty is applied for exceeding the limit.

There are no restrictions on the resources to which candidates may have access.

Candidates must undertake the assessment independently. However, reasonable assistance may be provided prior to the formal assessment process taking place. The term 'reasonable assistance' is used to try to balance the need for support with the need to avoid giving too much assistance. If any candidates require more than what is deemed to be 'reasonable assistance', they may not be ready for assessment or it may be that they have been entered for the wrong level of qualification.

Reasonable assistance, for example advice on how to develop a plan, may be given on a generic basis to a class or group of candidates. It may also be given to candidates on an individual basis. When reasonable assistance is given on a one-to-one basis in the context of something the candidate has already produced or demonstrated, there is a danger that it becomes support for assessment and assessors need to be aware that this may be going beyond reasonable assistance.

Candidates may seek clarification regarding the wording of a brief or specification or instructions for the assessment if they find them unclear. In this case, the clarification should normally be given to the whole class.

Assessor input and advice on the candidate's plan is acceptable in order to allow the candidate to progress to the development stages of the assessment.

Where a candidate has a brief to plan and develop their own piece of media content, the candidate is expected to work independently to complete the assignment. However, if during the making of the content more than one person is required for technical reasons, candidates can organise assistance from others, with permission from the assessor. Further guidance on this is given in the Assessment overview.

This is not the same as collaborative group work, where candidates may share responsibilities and tasks. Group work approaches as part of the preparation for assessment can be helpful to simulate real-life situations and promote team-working skills. Where a candidate is working independently to plan and develop a piece of media content, group work is not appropriate once formal work on the assignment has started.

However, where a candidate has a brief to plan and create a piece of media content within the context of a class or group project, group work is acceptable, providing that all evidence submitted by a candidate can be authenticated as the candidate's own work.

The assignment will be conducted under some supervision and control. This means that although candidates may complete part of the work outwith the learning and teaching setting, assessors should put in place processes for monitoring progress and ensuring that the work is the candidate's own and that plagiarism has not taken place. Mechanisms to authenticate candidate evidence include, for example:

♦ regular checkpoint/progress meetings with candidates
♦ short spot-check personal interviews
♦ checklists which record activity/progress
♦ photographs, film or audio evidence

Evidence to be gathered

The following candidate evidence is required for this assignment:

♦ responses to Task 3 of Section 1: Planning
♦ the media content developed in Task 1 of Section 2: Development
♦ responses to Task 2 of Section 2: Development

It is not necessary to submit any other material. However, if candidates wish to make reference to such things as mock-ups, storyboards, diagrams or any other relevant material as part of their planning justifications, these can be included. These will be considered when responses are marked, but they are not given individual marks. Marks are given for the points made in planning justifications.

The finished content must either be in print form or saved on a CD, DVD or other portable memory device and be readable by standard media players.

Where a candidate has planned and developed media content as part of a group or class project, the same piece of media content may be submitted by more than one candidate, providing that the responses clearly reference the candidate's own work. Additionally, where more than one candidate's work is included in a single publication or on a single disc, it must be clearly indicated what work belongs to each candidate.

General Marking Instructions

In line with SQA's normal practice, the following general marking instructions are addressed to the Marker. They will also be helpful for those preparing candidates for Course assessment.

Evidence will be submitted to SQA for external marking.

All marking will be quality assured by SQA

General Marking Principles for the assignment

This information is provided to help you understand the general principles you must apply when marking candidate responses to this assignment. These principles must be read in conjunction with the Detailed Marking Instructions, which identify the key features required in candidate responses.

(a) Marks for each candidate response must always be assigned in line with these General Marking Principles and the Detailed Marking Instructions for this assessment.

(b) Marking should always be positive. This means that, for each candidate response, marks are accumulated for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding: they are not deducted from a maximum on the basis of errors or omissions.

(c) For credit to be given, points must relate to the given task.

Detailed Marking Instructions for the assignment

Section 1: Planning

In Section 1: Planning, the candidate is assessed on evidence that they have actively planned content by carrying out appropriate research and making decisions based on this. Candidates complete three tasks:

1 Negotiate the brief
2 Compile a research and planning portfolio
3 Summarise and justify planning decisions

Tasks 1 and 2 direct candidates to negotiate the brief and advise them on the research and planning they should complete. This research and planning is assessed through Task 3.

All marks for Section 1 will be awarded on the basis of candidates' responses to Task 3. In this, candidates summarise their planned media content and justify the specific decisions made with reference to the following:

    a   the brief
    b   audience research
    c   content research
    d   institutional context research
    e   creative intentions

Where candidates are asked to *justify in detail*…

Candidates must make a number of developed points that provide a rationale or give supporting reasons for decisions made, as appropriate to the task. Points may relate cause and effect, or make relationships between things clear. Points made do not need to be in any particular order. Candidates may provide a number of developed points or a smaller number of points in depth, or a combination of these.

Up to the total number of marks allocated:

- 1 mark should be given for each relevant, developed point.
- Each subsequent mark can be given for further development of a relevant point.

Task		Max mark	The following Marking Instructions apply to <u>each</u> part of Task 3 in Section 1.
3	a	5	Candidates are expected to justify specific planning decisions.
3	b	5	The candidate must make developed points of justification which provide a rationale or reasons for planning decisions, or which show a causal relationship between the planning and the area specified by the task. Developed points can include detailed description of research findings, facts and information relevant to the task, and detailed description of specific planning decisions.
3	c	5	
3	d	5	Candidates may access full marks for each part of the task by providing up to five different points of justification, or a smaller number of points in greater depth.
3	e	5	For example, a candidate might justify several different planning decisions made as a result of several research findings, or give one detailed research finding and justify several planning decision made as a result of this, or some other combination. For each part of Task 3, award up to 5 marks as follows: ♦ 1 mark should be given for each relevant, developed point of justification. ♦ Each subsequent mark can be given for further development of a relevant point. Where the candidate only gives planning decisions or details about the brief, research findings or creative intentions as appropriate to a–e, a maximum of 2 marks should be awarded.

Section 2: Development

In Section 2: Development, evidence that the candidate can work within institutional controls to achieve creative intentions is assessed. This Section comprises two tasks:

In Task 1, candidates make the planned media content.

In Task 2, candidates evaluate:

  a   how effectively they developed their finished media content given the opportunities and constraints of their institutional context
  b   how effectively they achieved their creative intentions

All marks for Section 2 will be awarded on the basis of candidates' developed content and their evaluations.

The finished content and evaluations should be considered together. Assessment judgements are based on the extent to which candidates demonstrate the ability to work within institutional controls and achieve creative intentions. This will be evident through the combination of developed content and evaluations.

In their evaluations, candidates must make a number of developed points that make a judgment about or determine the value of their work in relation to relevant elements of their institutional contexts or creative intentions. Points made do not need to be in any particular order. Candidates may provide a number of developed points or a smaller number of points in depth, or a combination of these. The points may include descriptions of institutional factors and/or creative intentions and/or the finished content.

It is acknowledged that some candidates may be able to produce content of a very high finish, but some may not, despite their creative intentions. Artistic or technical skills are not assessed because the Course does not have a specific focus on these, and because of possible resource implications within the centre which may make a high technical finish difficult.

For each of task a and b, the Marker should select the band descriptor which most closely describes the standard of the response. Once the best fit has been selected:

♦   Where the combination of finished content and evaluation just meets the standard described, the lowest mark from the range should be awarded.
♦   Where the combination of finished content and evaluation almost matches the band above, the highest available mark from the range should be awarded.
♦   Where the band descriptor has 3 available marks, and the evidence does not quite match the criteria for the lowest or highest mark, award the middle mark.
♦   Where the combination of finished content and evaluation response fully meets all the standards described in the top band descriptor, the highest mark should be awarded for that element.

Task	Marks	Expected response	Max mark	Additional guidance
2a	**10-9**	Four or more developed points of evaluation are given. Specific and detailed examples from the finished content or process are given in support of evaluative points. Several developed points about the nature and implications of institutional contexts are given. Points detailing the relationship between the product/process and the institutional context are made. The institutional contexts referenced are relevant to the finished content.	**10**	Evaluative comments may relate to the finished content or the process, and might include reference to professional practice/content. If comments are in relation to the finished content, points may be in terms of key aspects of content, technical finish, particular examples, or anything else relevant. If the comments are in relation to the process, points may be in terms of production tasks, roles and responsibilities, or anything else relevant. Points made about opportunities and constraints of the institutional context may include references to: ♦ legal and voluntary controls ♦ professional practice, roles and responsibilities ♦ health and safety ♦ technology and equipment ♦ school/college factors such as time, resources and budget ♦ any other appropriate factor
	8-7	At least three developed points of evaluation are given. Specific and detailed examples from the finished content or process are given in support of evaluative points. Each point of evaluation is supported by reference to institutional contexts. The institutional contexts referenced are relevant to the finished content.		

Task	Marks	Expected response	Max mark	Additional guidance
	6-5	At least three evaluative comments are given. Specific examples from the finished content or process are given in support of evaluative comments. There is at least one reference to institutional contexts. The institutional contexts referenced are relevant to the finished content.		
	4-3	At least two evaluative comments are given. Specific examples from the finished content or process are given in support of evaluative comments. The institutional contexts referenced are relevant to the finished content.		
	2-1	One or two evaluative statements are made.		
	0	There is no information relevant to the task.		

Task	Marks	Expected response	Max mark	Additional guidance
2b	**15-13**	Five or more developed points of evaluation are given. Specific and detailed examples from the finished content are given in support of evaluative points. The combination of evaluation and finished content conveys a highly insightful, technical or theoretical understanding of how to use and combine a range of codes and/or techniques to achieve creative intentions.	**15**	Candidates may provide a number of developed points or a smaller number of points in depth, or a combination of these. Evaluative comments might be in terms of the use of media codes and techniques to convey meaning, ideas, target an audience, or achieve a purpose. They might also be in relation to professional practice/content, or anything else appropriate. Candidates should give developed examples from their finished content to support evaluative comments. A developed example is more than the description of one code and its connotations.
	12-10	At least four developed points of evaluation are given. Specific and detailed examples from the finished content are given in support of evaluative points. The combination of evaluation and finished content conveys a consistently insightful, technical or theoretical understanding of how to use and combine a range of codes and/or techniques to achieve creative intentions.		

	9-7	At least three developed points of evaluation are given. Specific examples from the finished content are given in support of evaluative points. The combination of evaluation and finished content conveys a consistent understanding of how to use a range of codes and/or techniques to achieve creative intentions.		It can be reference to a part of content where several codes were combined to make meaning, such as in camera work, the selection of print or photographic codes, choices in the creation of a house style, or other relevant elements. Alternatively, it might be something that applies throughout the content, such as codes or techniques used to create particular tone, a narrative structure or a representation.
	6-4	At least two evaluative comments are given. Specific examples from the finished content are given in support of evaluative comments. AND/OR The combination of written response and finished content conveys understanding of how to use a range of codes and/or techniques to achieve creative intentions.		
	3-1	There are one or two evaluative statements made about specific parts of the finished content. AND/OR The combination of written response and finished content conveys some understanding of how to use a range of codes and/or techniques to achieve creative intentions.		
	0	There is no information relevant to the task.		

Administrative information

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History of changes

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
1.1	Amendments to the 'Assessment overview', 'Assessment conditions' and 'Evidence to be gathered' sections. 'Detailed Marking Instructions for the assignment' section — minor amendments throughout for Sections 1 and 2.	Qualifications Manager	September 2015
1.2	Wording reordered in 'Detailed Marking Instructions' section. Additional advice provided in expected response column for mark ranges 6–4 and 3–1.	Qualifications Manager	September 2016

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