National 5 Media

Course code:	C848 75
Course assessment code:	X848 75
SCQF:	level 5 (24 SCQF credit points)
Valid from:	session 2017–18

The course specification provides detailed information about the course and course assessment to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year. It describes the structure of the course and the course assessment in terms of the skills, knowledge and understanding that are assessed.

This document is for teachers and lecturers and contains all the mandatory information you need to deliver the course.

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Contents

Course overview

The course consists of 24 SCQF credit points which includes time for preparation for course assessment. The notional length of time for a candidate to complete the course is 160 hours.

The course assessment has two components.

Component	Marks	Duration
Component 1: question paper	60	2 hours
Component 2: assignment	60	See course assessment section

Recommended entry	Progression
Entry to this course is at the discretion of the centre. Candidates should have achieved the fourth curriculum level or the National 4 Media course or equivalent qualifications and/or experience prior to starting this course.	♦ Higher Media ♦ other qualifications in media or related areas ♦ further study, employment or training

Conditions of award

The grade awarded is based on the total marks achieved across all course assessment components.

Course rationale

National Courses reflect Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles. They offer flexibility, provide more time for learning, more focus on skills and applying learning, and scope for personalisation and choice.

Every course provides opportunities for candidates to develop breadth, challenge and application. The focus and balance of assessment is tailored to each subject area.

The National 5 Media course provides candidates with opportunities to develop the attributes and capabilities of the four capacities as well as skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

Candidates think critically about the media and its role in everyday life and develop an appreciation of media content in a cultural context and in the context of the media industry. Through analysing and creating media content, candidates develop skills that enable them to engage more fully in society and in learning.

Purpose and aims

The National 5 Media course offers candidates opportunities to develop and extend a wide range of skills including communication, independent learning, critical literacy, personal and interpersonal working, and creative thinking. In particular, this course aims to enable candidates to develop:

♦ the ability to analyse and create media content as appropriate to purpose, audience and context
♦ knowledge and understanding of the key aspects of media literacy as appropriate to content
♦ knowledge and understanding of the role of media within society
♦ the ability to plan and research when creating media content as appropriate to purpose, audience and context
♦ the ability to evaluate their own practice

Who is this course for?

This course is for learners who are interested in film, television, advertising, the press and/or other media and creating their own media content. It combines theory with practice. This allows the learner to be analytical and creative and provides opportunities for personalisation and choice.

This course also provides opportunities for learners to build on prior learning experienced in the broad general education or in media qualifications at a lower SCQF level.

Course content

The course provides candidates with the opportunity to develop knowledge of the role of media and the key aspects of media literacy: categories, language, representation, narrative, audience, institution and society. The course is highly individualised, allowing the teacher or lecturer to select media content that suits their candidates' interests.

The course enables candidates to experience the opportunities and challenges within the media industry by creating their own media content. To allow for personalisation and choice, candidates are not required to make a particular form or genre of media content. They can create individual media content, or a section of a larger, group project.

Skills, knowledge and understanding

Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course
The following provides a broad overview of the subject skills, knowledge and understanding developed in the course:

♦ analysing and creating media content as appropriate to purpose, audience and context
♦ knowledge and understanding of the key aspects of media literacy as appropriate to content
♦ knowledge and understanding of the role of media within society
♦ knowledge and understanding of how to plan and research when creating media content as appropriate to purpose, audience and context
♦ evaluation skills

Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment
The following provides details of skills, knowledge and understanding sampled in the course assessment.

Analysing media content
Candidates must acquire the skills, knowledge and understanding to be able to:

♦ explain in detail how and why media content is constructed in particular ways
♦ explain in detail the potential use or effect of media content

This will require knowledge and understanding of the following media analysis concepts.

Media content
Content-based key aspects of media literacy:

♦ categories — genre, purpose, tone
♦ language — medium/form-specific technical codes, cultural codes, anchorage

- narrative — medium/form-specific structures, codes, conventions
- representation — selection and portrayal, stereotypes, non-stereotypes, cultural assumptions

Media contexts

Context-based key aspects of media literacy:

- audience — target audience, preferred reading, different audience reactions, consumption
- institution — internal factors, external factors
- society — time, place (eg facts, information, ideas, history, circumstances, events, politics, technology or any other factors relevant to the society in which particular examples of media content were made and/or set)

Role of media in society

The ways in which media functions within society:

- meeting needs — entertainment, education, information
- achieving particular purposes — profit, promotion, public service
- influencing attitudes and behaviour — intentionally, unintentionally

Analysis skills

Candidates must be able to apply their knowledge of concepts by:

- describing the ways in which they are evident in, or can be applied to, particular examples of media content
- explaining in detail cause and effect or relationships between particular elements of content, contexts and roles
- decoding what has been presented in media content
- demonstrating understanding of how meaning has been created
- demonstrating understanding of how and why factors may shape the construction of, and reactions to, media content

Creating media content

Candidates must acquire the skills, knowledge and understanding to be able to create media content relevant to particular purposes, audiences and contexts. They might make such content as a short film or trailer, a print or moving-image advert, a poster, or a magazine cover.

The following areas must be covered in the course.

Planning and research:

♦ identifying areas of content, audience and institutional research appropriate to a brief
♦ carrying out appropriate research and drawing conclusions from findings
♦ using research findings to plan media content appropriate to purpose, audience and context

Production processes:

♦ applying knowledge of pre-production, production and post-production processes appropriate to medium/form
♦ applying knowledge of roles and responsibilities appropriate to medium/form
♦ applying production skills appropriate to medium/form
♦ applying knowledge of media codes and conventions to create finished content appropriate to purpose, audience and context

Evaluation:
Evaluating strengths and weaknesses of finished content in relation to aspects such as:

♦ purpose
♦ audience
♦ context
♦ production processes
♦ personal performance
♦ potential strategies for improvement

Application of key aspects of media literacy:

♦ applying relevant content- and context-based key aspects of media literacy to planning and research, production processes and evaluation

Skills, knowledge and understanding included in the course are appropriate to the SCQF level of the course. The SCQF level descriptors give further information on characteristics and expected performance at each SCQF level (www.scqf.org.uk).

Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

This course helps candidates to develop broad, generic skills. These skills are based on [SQA's Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work](#) and draw from the following main skills areas:

1   Literacy

1.1   Reading
1.3   Listening and talking

4   Employability, enterprise and citizenship

4.3   Working with others
4.4   Enterprise
4.6   Citizenship

5   Thinking skills

5.4   Analysing and evaluating
5.5   Creating

These skills must be built into the course where there are appropriate opportunities and the level should be appropriate to the level of the course.

Further information on building in skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work is given in the course support notes.

Course assessment

Course assessment is based on the information provided in this document.

The course assessment meets the key purposes and aims of the course by addressing:

♦ challenge — requiring greater depth or extension of knowledge and/or skills
♦ application — requiring application of knowledge and/or skills in practical or theoretical contexts as appropriate

This enables candidates to:

♦ extend and deepen knowledge and understanding of analysis
♦ apply knowledge and understanding in a challenging context
♦ apply skills in problem-solving and planning to create media content

Course assessment structure: question paper

Question paper   60 marks

The purpose of the question paper is to assess the candidate's ability to apply knowledge and understanding by analysing media content.

The question paper gives candidates an opportunity to demonstrate the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

♦ analysis of media content in context
♦ analysis of the role of media within society
♦ applying knowledge and understanding of the key aspects of media literacy to the analysis of a print text

The question paper has 60 marks (50% of the total mark).

The question paper has two sections.

In section one, Analysis of Media Content in Context, candidates answer questions on previously-studied media content. Marks are awarded for the candidate's analysis of media content in context, the role of media, and applying knowledge and understanding of the relevant key aspects of media literacy.

This section has 50 marks.

In section two, Analysis of a Media Text, candidates choose one of three media print texts provided in the question paper. These are a film poster, an advertisement and a magazine front cover. The same question is applied to each of the three texts, and asks candidates to

explain in detail how relevant aspects of media literacy have been used with particular purpose(s) and for particular audience(s).

The candidate should refer to at least two of the following key aspects:

♦ language
♦ representation
♦ categories
♦ narrative
♦ audience
♦ institutions
♦ society

Marks are awarded for the candidate's application of the relevant key aspects of media literacy in their analysis of the print text.

This section has 10 marks.

Setting, conducting and marking the question paper
The question paper is set and marked by SQA, and conducted in centres under conditions specified for external examinations by SQA. Candidates complete this question paper in 2 hours.

Specimen question papers for National 5 courses are published on SQA's website. These illustrate the standard, structure and requirements of the question papers candidates sit. The specimen papers also include marking instructions.

Course assessment structure: assignment

Assignment   60 marks
In the assignment, candidates plan and develop media content in response to a negotiated brief.

The assignment gives candidates an opportunity to demonstrate the following skills, knowledge and understanding of production techniques:

♦ consideration of possibilities and problem-solving in planning and production processes
♦ application of knowledge and understanding of the relevant key aspects of media literacy
♦ evaluation of the strengths and/or weaknesses of the finished content

The assignment has two sections and 60 marks (50% of the total mark). Marks are awarded for the candidate's ability to:

♦ research and generate ideas appropriate to a brief
♦ develop and justify media content choices

- create media content
- evaluate the strengths and/or weaknesses of the finished content

The finished content and explanations are considered together.

Section 1: planning (25 marks)

In response to a negotiated brief, candidates research and plan media content, and consider the impact of actual or likely constraints.

Section 2: development (35 marks)

Candidates make the planned media content and explain and evaluate their use of media codes to create impact or convey connotations.

Assignment overview

Section 1: planning

Candidates answer the following questions, which should be completed **before** they make their content:

1   Describe what you discovered during your research into **audience**, and explain how this influenced your plans. (5 marks)

2   Describe what you discovered during your research into **internal institutional factors**, and explain how this influenced your plans. (5 marks)

3   Describe what you discovered during your research into **external institutional factors**, and explain how this influenced your plans. (5 marks)

4   Referring to **one key aspect** of media from categories, language, narrative and representation, describe what you discovered during your research into content, and explain how this influenced your plans. (5 marks)

5   Referring to **a second key aspect** of media from categories, language, narrative and representation, describe what you discovered during your research into content, and explain how this influenced your plans. (5 marks)

Section 2: development

Candidates select five examples from the finished content that they think demonstrate an ability (or attempt) to create impact or convey connotations. They answer the following two questions for each example which should be completed **after** they make their content:

1   **Describe** the techniques or codes you used in this example, and then explain in detail the impact or connotations you intended. (5 marks)

2   **Evaluate** the strengths and/or weaknesses of this example. You should refer to aspects such as your target audience, purpose, production processes, personal performance, potential strategies for improvement or anything else you consider relevant. (2 marks)

Setting the brief

The candidate may negotiate a brief to plan and develop a piece of media content in its entirety, or to plan and develop one part of media content which can be combined with the work of other candidates to make a finished piece.

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 their teacher or lecturer 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.

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 other media content 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 age group and gender of the target audience, as well as anything else that is relevant about them.

The level of finish expected

Taking into account the resources available, the brief must specify clearly the level of finish expected in section 2 (development) of the assignment. Although finished content may be the most desirable for the candidate to submit, at National 5 level, storyboards, detailed plans and/or sketches are acceptable. Candidates need to be absolutely clear about the level of finish expected.

Resources

Candidates may require some assistance to access resources, locations and personnel to make their media content. Teachers or lecturers can provide resources or assist as necessary. 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 work in. Consequently, the instructions for the assignment direct all candidates to adopt a common approach regardless of their brief or resources. 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.

Setting, conducting and marking the assignment

The assignment is:

- set by centres within SQA guidelines
- conducted under some supervision and control

Evidence will be submitted to SQA for external marking.

Assessment conditions

Time

This assessment is carried out over a period of time. Candidates should start at an appropriate point in the course, ie once they have studied the medium, form and genre of the proposed media content, and obtained the appropriate production skills.

This assessment has two sections:

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

Supervision, control and authentication

Where a candidate has 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 making of the content more than one person is required for technical reasons, candidates can organise assistance from others, with permission from the teacher or lecturer. An example of this is where a candidate is making a moving-image text and requires one person to present a piece to camera, and another to film. The candidate is unlikely to be able to effectively carry out both of these roles alone, and would therefore require some assistance. Candidates should give clear instructions to anyone helping them and must take all decisions about the content and technical aspects of the work themselves.

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, working in a group to create the media product is acceptable, providing that all evidence submitted by a candidate can be authenticated as their own work. Candidates should explicitly reference their production role(s) in their written submission. Group work is not acceptable in the formal write-up, and teacher or lecturer advice and guidance should only be given to the whole class, not on an individual basis.

Teachers or lecturers must exercise their professional responsibility in ensuring that evidence submitted by a candidate is the candidate's own work. The assignment is conducted under some supervision and control. This means that although candidates may complete part of the work outwith the learning and teaching setting, teachers or lecturers 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 evidence include:

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

Resources

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

The teacher or lecturer has an important role in providing resources and setting the brief. 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.

Reasonable assistance

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 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 teachers or lecturers need to be aware that this may be going beyond reasonable assistance. It is not acceptable for the teacher or lecturer to provide comments on the candidate's written submission.

Evidence to be gathered

The following evidence is required for this assessment:

♦ responses to the planning stage questions
♦ responses to the development stage questions
♦ the finished media content

The finished content must be either 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 finished 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 to the planning and development stage questions clearly identify which parts of the content the candidate was responsible for.

Please note the requirements for the Higher Media assignment are different. Refer to the Higher Media course specification for details.

Volume

Written evidence which meets the requirements of the assignment should be between 850 and 1,800 words.

Word count is given to indicate the volume of evidence required. No penalty will be applied.

Assignment marking instructions

Part one: general marking principles for the National 5 Media assignment

This information is provided to help illustrate the general principles applied when candidate responses to the assignment are marked. These principles are used in conjunction with the specific marking instructions for each section. The marking schemes are written to assist in determining the minimal acceptable response rather than listing every possible correct and incorrect response.

a   Marks for each candidate response are always assigned in line with these general marking principles and the specific marking instructions for the relevant section.

b   Marking is always positive, ie marks are awarded for what is correct and not deducted for errors or omissions.

c   For credit to be given, points must relate to the question asked.

d   Where candidates are asked to **describe**, they must make a number of relevant, factual points, or state characteristics and features, as appropriate to the question asked. Points made do not need to be in any particular order. Candidates may provide a number of straightforward points or a smaller number of developed points, or a combination of these.

e   Where candidates are asked to **explain**, they must make points that relate cause and effect and/or make relationships between things clear. Where a number of points are made, these do not need to be in any particular order. Candidates may provide a number of straightforward points or a smaller number of developed points, or a combination of these.

f   Where candidates are asked to **evaluate**, they must make points that relate to strengths and/or weaknesses. Points made do not need to be in any particular order. Candidates may provide a number of straightforward points or a smaller number of developed points, or a combination of these.

Part two: marking instructions for each section

Section 1: planning

In section 1: planning, candidates answer five questions. The candidate's research and planning decisions are assessed.

Each question is worth 5 marks.

1   Describe what you discovered during your research into audience, and explain how this influenced your plans.

2   Describe what you discovered during your research into internal institutional factors, and explain how this influenced your plans.

3   Describe what you discovered during your research into external institutional factors, and explain how this influenced your plans.

4   Referring to one key aspect of media from categories, language, narrative and representation, describe what you discovered during your research into content, and explain how this influenced your plans.

5   Referring to a second key aspect of media from categories, language, narrative and representation, describe what you discovered during your research into content, and explain how this influenced your plans.

Question	Max mark	The following marking instructions apply to each question in section 1
1	**5**	Candidates are expected to describe at least one research finding by including relevant, factual points or stating characteristics and features, as appropriate to the focus of the research.
2	**5**	In the explanation of the influence of research on planning, the candidate must make points showing a causal relationship between the research findings and planning, and describe a resultant planning decision made.
3	**5**	There is no specific balance of research finding to planning decision required. Sometimes a detailed research finding will result in a simple planning decision, or vice-versa.
4	**5**	For each area of research, award up to 5 marks as follows: ♦ Award 1 mark for a description of a research finding.
5	**5**	♦ Award a second mark for an explanation of how a specific planning decision was influenced by the research finding. ♦ Subsequent marks can be awarded for developed or additional research findings or influence on planning. ♦ A maximum of 2 marks in total can be awarded where only standalone research or planning points are given.

Section 2: development

In section 2: development, the candidate's use of media techniques or codes to create impact or convey connotations is assessed.

Candidates select and identify five examples from their finished content that they think demonstrate an ability (or attempt) to create impact or convey connotations. They describe the techniques or codes used to make each example, and explain in detail the intended impact or connotations of these. 5 marks are available for each example.

Candidates then evaluate the strengths and/or weaknesses of each example, referring to aspects such as their target audience, purpose, production processes, personal performance, potential strategies for improvement or anything else they consider relevant. 2 marks are available for each example.

The finished content and explanations should be considered together. Marks are awarded based on the extent to which candidates demonstrate knowledge, understanding and application of media techniques or codes to create impact or convey connotations.

For **each** of their examples, candidates should state what it is and exactly where it can be found in the content. If the example applies to the whole content, they should state this. If they have produced a print text, they should clearly number each example. If they have produced a non-print text, they must give the time code, position or some other clear indication. If they do not do this, they may not be awarded the marks for the example.

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.

Specific marking instruction for question 1 (development)

1 **Describe** the techniques or codes you used in this example, and then explain in detail the impact or connotations you intended. (5 marks)

For **each** of the five examples selected and identified by the candidate, allocate a mark out of 5 by applying the criteria below. The marker should award the mark in the band descriptor which most closely describes the evidence presented. If the descriptor has two marks available:

♦ Where the combination of finished content and explanation almost matches the band descriptor above, the higher of the two available marks should be awarded.
♦ Where the combination of finished content and work just meets the standard described, the lower of the two available marks should be awarded.

The following marking descriptors apply to each example selected in section 2. Award a maximum of 5 marks for each example.

Question 1 marks	Band descriptor
5	The candidate has insightfully applied knowledge and understanding of how to manipulate media techniques or codes to create impact or convey connotations.
3–4	The candidate has validly applied knowledge and understanding of how to manipulate media techniques or codes to create impact or convey connotations.
1–2	There is a description of the techniques or codes used but the intended impact or connotation is basic and/or unclear.
0	There is no evidence that the candidate understands how to manipulate media techniques or codes to create impact or convey connotations.

Specific marking instruction for question 2 (development)

2 **Evaluate** the strengths and/or weaknesses of this example. You should refer to aspects such as your target audience, purpose, production processes, personal performance, potential strategies for improvement or anything else you consider relevant. (2 marks)

Question 2 example	Max mark	The following marking instructions apply to <u>each</u> question in section 2
1	**2**	Candidates are expected to evaluate the strengths and/or weaknesses of their chosen example.
2	**2**	For each example, award up to 2 marks as follows:
3	**2**	♦ Award 1 mark for an evaluative point relevant to their chosen example.
4	**2**	♦ A subsequent mark can be given for a second evaluative point relevant to their chosen example OR
5	**2**	♦ for the development of a relevant point.

Grading

A candidate's overall grade is determined by their performance across the course assessment. The course assessment is graded A–D on the basis of the total mark for all course assessment components.

Grade description for C

For the award of grade C, candidates will typically have demonstrated successful performance in relation to the skills, knowledge and understanding for the course.

Grade description for A

For the award of grade A, candidates will typically have demonstrated a consistently high level of performance in relation to the skills, knowledge and understanding for the course.

Equality and inclusion

This course is designed to be as fair and as accessible as possible with no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment.

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/assessmentarrangements.

Further information

The following reference documents provide useful information and background.

♦ [National 5 Media subject page](#)
♦ [Assessment arrangements web page](#)
♦ [Building the Curriculum 3–5](#)
♦ [Design Principles for National Courses](#)
♦ [Guide to Assessment](#)
♦ [SCQF Framework and SCQF level descriptors](#)
♦ [SCQF Handbook](#)
♦ [SQA Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work](#)
♦ [Coursework Authenticity: A Guide for Teachers and Lecturers](#)
♦ [Educational Research Reports](#)
♦ [SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools](#)
♦ [SQA e-assessment web page](#)

Appendix: course support notes

Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance to teachers and lecturers on approaches to delivering the course. They should be read in conjunction with this course specification and the specimen question paper and/or coursework.

Developing skills, knowledge and understanding

This section provides further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding that could be included in the course. Teachers and lecturers should refer to this course specification for the skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment. Course planners have considerable flexibility to select coherent contexts which will stimulate and challenge their candidates, offering both breadth and depth.

The skills, knowledge and understanding stated in the course specification will be developed throughout the course.

Approaches to learning and teaching

Effective learning and teaching draws on a wide variety of approaches to enrich the experience of candidates. In particular, practical approaches to learning and teaching which provide opportunities for personalisation and choice help to motivate and challenge candidates.

Learning about Scotland and Scottish culture enriches candidates' learning experience and helps them to develop the skills for learning, life and work they need to prepare them for taking their place in a diverse, inclusive and participative Scotland and beyond. Where there are opportunities to contextualise approaches to learning and teaching to Scottish contexts, teachers and lecturers should consider this.

Analysing media texts

An engaging and supportive learning environment should be provided to encourage active candidate involvement where a range of media texts are studied. Teaching a variety of media content not only makes the course stimulating and engaging, but it means that candidates have a selection of media texts to refer to in the question paper. Candidates should be encouraged to apply the skills of analysing media content to texts that they experience as part of their own lives.

At National 5, candidates may benefit from studying media content which can be easily categorised in terms of genre and purpose, as these are structuring elements which often lead to standard uses of media codes, conventions and content. Such content may be more suitable than more complex texts for helping candidates to apply and integrate the analysis concepts which form the basis of the course. Analysing a mixture of extracts, complete texts and groups of texts which are linked in some way (eg by genre, theme, topic or institution)

enhances candidates' understanding of media content in context, and the role of media. SQA does not specify the media to be studied.

The course focuses on how and why media content is constructed in particular ways, and on the potential use or effect of media content. Teaching and learning should be informed by the key aspects of media (categories, language, narrative, representation, audience, institution and society). Candidates should acquire the skills to analyse how the aspects are evident in or can be applied to media content, and how they inform or impact on each other.

Candidates should be taught to identify and describe the purpose of texts, and be able to explain how they reached this conclusion by commenting on the **language** used. Some candidates incorrectly interpret language as simply dialogue, but should be taught that in media it has a particular meaning, depending on the form and genre.

For example, in moving image texts they could discuss the use of the following language techniques to create particular effects, depending on whether the purpose is to educate, entertain or inform:

♦ lighting, eg high key, low key, chiaroscuro
♦ angles, eg low, high, canted, bird's eye
♦ framing, eg long shots, medium shots, close-ups, focus
♦ camera movement, eg tracking, panning, tilting
♦ editing, eg jump cuts, fades, dissolves, eye line matches, graphic matches
♦ sound, eg diegetic, non-diegetic, contrapuntal, parallel, foley, music, dialogue
♦ mise-en-scène, eg props, body language, costume, facial expression, sets, hair and make-up
♦ special effects, eg CGI, green screen, matte painting, bullet time

For **narrative**, candidates should be taught how to deconstruct a text into recognisable structures. Narrative theorists such as Roland Barthes, Vladimir Propp, Tzvetan Todorov, Claude Levi-Strauss, Julie Green, and Joseph Campbell may be discussed, but it is not necessary for candidates to identify specific theorists, rather it is the theories that are important.

Candidates should be taught to identify different target **audiences** for media content, and be able to explain how they reached their conclusions. This may be related to age, gender, political bias, nationality, class and/or other factors. They will learn that audiences are active consumers of texts, and may have different reactions to those hoped for by producers.

In learning about **categories**, candidates study the purpose and tone of media content, and relate this to genre. For example, they might look at the genre of fitness magazines and analyse how technical and cultural codes have been used to create a tone of urgency and excitement, with the clear purpose of showing the magazine as a 'must-have', which (if purchased) can have life-changing effects.

Candidates should be taught that the **institutions** that create media texts are bound by many internal factors including ownership, budget, time, equipment, and resources, and external factors which might include legal and voluntary controls, general laws, health and

safety, copyright, and so on. It is important that they know the specific details for the texts that they are studying, rather than internal and external factors in general.

In learning about **society**, an approach might be to look at texts from two distinct eras to examine how **representations** of gender and/or race have changed over time. For example, they might look at women's role in society in the 1970s and link this to how women are represented in 1970s superhero films. They could then go on to consider women's role in contemporary society and how they are represented in superhero films now, looking for parallels and differences. In learning about the importance of where a text has been made or set, they might look at representations of poverty or wealth in different geographical areas. For example, they might examine **representations** of poverty in India in *Slumdog Millionaire*, and compare it with representations of poverty in Scotland in the Bill Douglas trilogy.

Role of media in society

Candidates should be able to describe the role of media and explain the effect of these on the content, or reactions to it.

- Meeting needs — entertainment, education, information.

  This could cover:
  — reasons people may have for consuming particular media content
  — how producers use their knowledge of these needs to construct content in particular ways
  — how reactions to content may depend on the extent to which needs are met

- Achieving particular purposes — profit, promotion, public service.

  This could cover:
  — profit motives
  — promotion — of products, ideas, individuals or organisations, as appropriate to the content
  — public service — content which benefits/advises/helps individuals or groups, or acts on their behalf

- Influencing attitudes and behaviour — intentionally, unintentionally.

  This could cover:
  — the intended influence of media content on individuals, groups or organisations
  — the unintended, possible or consequential effect of media content

Some content may meet several needs and achieve more than one purpose, for example some documentaries inform, persuade and entertain their audience while also making profit.

Example approach

An example of a possible learning and teaching approach to the study of some of the key aspects is given below:

Candidates watch the sitcom *The Big Bang Theory* and identify stereotypes of gender, occupational types and cultural background. In groups, they take note of what is used to construct the stereotypes by making reference to sets, dress, dialogue and storylines and so on; in doing so, candidates are also considering meaning and purpose. Candidates then analyse the ways in which some of the characters are non-stereotypical — especially the

main female character of Penny. They construct a table listing each of the characters and their stereotypical/non-stereotypical attributes. Concepts and terminology such as representation, selection, portrayal and cultural assumptions should be used at appropriate points. The effect of the text being made and set in America, in contemporary times, should be discussed in relation to society.

Analysis of representation leads naturally into a consideration of media contexts through audience and scheduling information which can be provided by teachers and lecturers or researched online through an exploration of industry, reference and fan sites. Once the target audience has been identified and explained, candidates can draw clear links between the representations and contexts of production.

The key concept of narrative and its links to contexts can also be analysed and understood using this approach. Candidates can describe the storylines in the episode under analysis, and in doing so, learn about the concepts of open and closed narratives, multiple narrative strands, narrative hooks, enigmas, oppositions and structures such as equilibrium–disequilibrium–new equilibrium. By watching a number of episodes over a few weeks they can also learn about the differences between episodic and series narratives. The links between narrative and audience/institutional contexts of scheduling, advertising, keeping existing viewers, and attracting new ones can be explored.

Classroom tasks could include:

♦ answering restricted response questions

♦ writing an extended essay

♦ compiling a paper or electronic log of research and analysis

♦ producing a poster identifying the key aspects, using the terminology as it applies to the text and illustrating the links between content and contexts

♦ producing a piece to camera

♦ giving an individual or group presentation using multimedia content

♦ creating a print advert, magazine cover or film poster, to demonstrate understanding of key aspects

Some suggestions for texts

It is recommended that the texts are chosen in discussion with candidates, based on their preferences, interests, age, sensitivities and maturity. Not all texts are suitable for all candidates.

Documentaries work very well for information, education, influencing attitudes and behaviours, and public service. Possible choices include:

James Marsh's *Man on Wire*; Steve James' *Hoop Dreams*; Leon Gast's *When We Were Kings*; Jehane Noujaim and Mona Eldaief's *Solar Mamas*; Asif Kapadia's *Amy*; Morgan Spurlock's *Super Size Me*; Michael Moore's *Bowling for Columbine*; Gabriela Cowperthwaite's *Blackfish*; Wim Wenders' *Buena Vista Social Club*; Ava DuVernay's *13th*; and Bart Layton's *The Imposter.*

Commercial cinema works very well for entertainment and profit. At National 5, films with clear narrative structures, and sharply defined representations work very well. Possible choices include:

Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*; Kathryn Bigelow's *The Hurt Locker*; John Hughes' *The Breakfast Club*; Matt Reeves' *Cloverfield*; Mike Leigh's *Secrets and Lies*; Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo and Juliet*; Jason Reitman's *Juno*; Danny Boyle's *Slumdog Millionaire*; James McTeigue's *V for Vendetta*; Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Faris' *Little Miss Sunshine*; Andrea Arnold's *Wuthering Heights*; David Leland's *Wish You Were Here*; Martin Scorsese's *Hugo*; Giuseppe Tornatore's *Cinema Paradiso*; Terence Davies' *Distant Voices, Still Lives*; Bill Forsyth's *Local Hero*; Clint Eastwood's *Unforgiven*; Martin Scorsese's *The King of Comedy*; Christopher Nolan's *Batman Begins*; Martin Campbell's *Casino Royale*; Steven Spielberg's *Raiders of the Lost Ark*; Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*; Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather*; Ava DuVernay's *Selma*; the Bill Douglas trilogy (*My Childhood*, *My Ain Folk*, and *My Way Home)*; Gurinder Chadha's *Bend it Like Beckham*; Gavin Hood's *Eye in the Sky*; Sarah Gavron's *Suffragette*; and Ken Loach's *I, Daniel Blake.*

A variety of **television** genres can be used for entertainment, education and information. Possible choices include:

Nina and the Neurons; The Big Bang Theory; The IT Crowd; The Walking Dead; The Office; This is England; Still Game; River City; The Blue Planet; Cowboy Builders; Top Gear; Panorama; Stranger Things; Louis Theroux's Weird Weekends; Come Dine with Me; The Only Way Is Essex; Newsnight; The Graham Norton Show; Sherlock; Dr Who; Love Thy Neighbour; Hollyoaks; Mad Men, and there are many others.

Print texts can be used for all the roles of media as they have a variety of purposes. Possible choices include: tabloid/broadsheet newspapers; commercial advertisements for products or retailers; political posters; film posters; consumer magazines; special interest magazines; professional trade magazines; television listing magazines, and so on.

Creating media texts

An engaging and supportive learning environment should be provided to encourage active candidate involvement. There are many opportunities for personalisation and choice in media and many opportunities for candidates to develop their creativity in response to negotiated briefs. Candidates benefit from being given a range of creative tasks which enable them to develop planning and production skills prior to assessment, as well as an understanding of the constraints or opportunities that time, technology, copyright, school rules, health and safety, and any other institutional factors may present for production processes. Candidates should also have an understanding of the production process, and the constraints which may impact on this, along with production skills and roles relevant to the medium in which they will be working. This helps 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.

While they are being taught how to create media texts, candidates should also be learning about and applying the key aspects of media (categories, language, narrative, representation, audience, institution and society) and understanding 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.

In producing media content that, due to the nature of the task, involves a group production, candidates could individually respond to the brief, in terms of planning, with a specific role in mind. Candidates should be taught research skills relevant to their individual production role. For example, a film editor could consider an institutional factor like certification and apply that research to editing choices made in the production, such as minimising gore in response to BBFC guidelines.

Examples of possible learning and teaching approaches are given below.

Example 1

Candidates are given a brief to plan and produce an online or print general interest magazine aimed at both males and females of their own age group. A brief such as this complements analysis of print texts and uses key aspects. It also requires understanding and implementation of production technology, processes and challenges, and provides opportunities for personalisation and choice.

At the planning stage, candidates could generate and plan content ideas through research which relates to form, audience, purpose, institutions and subject matter. This can be done through surveys, discussion, content analysis and online research, and provides understanding of relevant content and context issues, as well as the roles and responsibilities of media producers.

At the production stage, the researching, writing and typing up of content ensures that technological and non-technological skills are used to at least a basic level. These tasks, along with others such as taking and manipulating photographs, organising and editing files, and using DTP software, allow candidates to work appropriately with the constraints or opportunities afforded by their creativity, ability, and the technology available. Candidates should be encouraged to consider the appropriate key aspects of media literacy in the production process.

After the production candidates should evaluate the strengths and/or weaknesses of the content.

Example 2

Candidates could be given a brief for a 30-second TV advertisement. Each individual in the group could take a specific production role, and research and produce plans as dictated by that role. For example, the editor could investigate the editing, titles, and pace of different adverts. The camera operator could analyse lighting, camera angles and framing. This would encourage an awareness of the different roles of personnel within this type of production as well as promoting team working.

The group would produce the content, with each individual fulfilling their role in a way that has been informed by the research activity.

After the production candidates should evaluate the strengths and/or weaknesses of the content.

Preparing for course assessment

Information given in the course specification is mandatory.

For the course assessment, candidates undertake two components: a question paper that assesses candidates' ability to apply knowledge and understanding by analysing media content in detail, and an assignment that assesses candidates' ability to apply skills and knowledge acquired throughout the course in a production task.

Component 1 — question paper

Candidates answer questions on familiar and unfamiliar media content. The answers in section 1 of the question paper can be on moving image, print texts, or both. There are no specified texts in the National 5 Media course. It is not necessary to study whole texts — extracts can be used to exemplify key aspects.

In section 1, marks are awarded for candidates' analysis of previously-studied media content in context, and in section 2, marks are awarded for a detailed analysis of an unfamiliar film poster, advertisement or magazine cover.

Candidates can prepare for the question paper by analysing a range of media content and gathering evidence to exemplify their understanding of the key aspects of media through:

♦ describing the ways in which key aspects are evident in, or can be applied to, particular examples of media content

♦ explaining cause and effect or relationships between particular elements of content, contexts and roles

♦ decoding what has been presented in media content, both familiar and unfamiliar

♦ demonstrating understanding of how meaning has been created

♦ demonstrating understanding of how internal and external factors may shape the construction of, and reactions to, media content

Section 1: analysis of media content in context

Candidates should be taught a variety of media content which, combined, cover all aspects of the mandatory content of the course as detailed in the course specification.

Content-based key aspects

Categories: medium, purpose, form, tone, genre
Language: technical codes, cultural codes, anchorage
Narrative: structures, codes, conventions
Representation: selection and portrayal, stereotyping, cultural assumptions

Context-based key aspects

Audience: target audience, preferred reading, different audience responses, consumption
Institution: internal controls and constraints, external controls and constraints
Society: time, place

Roles of media

Meeting needs: entertain, educate, inform
Influencing attitudes and behaviours: intentional, unintentional
Meeting particular purposes: profit, self-interest, public service

Candidates can discuss one text in each question, or multiple texts. A useful exercise would be giving candidates a list of all the media texts they have encountered in the course and match them to key aspects and their concepts. Candidates can then work out how to 'group' these texts according to their purpose, and then analyse why they have done so. This will lead to discussion of all key aspects.

Section 2: analysis of a media text

Candidates should be presented with a range of print adverts, magazine covers and/or film posters to study the form-specific techniques. They should be of a variety of genres such as:

Film posters

♦ film noir
♦ western
♦ comedy
♦ 'chick-flick'
♦ action
♦ drama
♦ science fiction
♦ horror
♦ adventure
♦ animation

Magazines

♦ special interest, eg sport, hobbies, collecting, photography, technology
♦ gossip
♦ fashion, beauty and celebrity
♦ music
♦ children's
♦ scientific
♦ politics
♦ health and lifestyle
♦ travel
♦ teenage

Advertisements

- fashion
- technology
- cars
- beauty and cosmetics
- perfume
- music
- events
- food and drink
- special interest

It is not necessary for candidates to know the detail of every type of magazine, poster and advertisement as the techniques of colour, font, layout, etc are common to all types. It isn't necessary to study all three print forms and associated genres.

Candidates should be taught to analyse texts using all the key aspects. They should also be taught the form-specific language necessary to analyse print texts in detail. This would be form-specific as posters, advertisements and film posters have their own terminology. Terms may include:

- layout
- billing block
- central image
- fonts
- taglines
- rule of thirds
- testimonials
- visual flow/reading order
- logos
- colour
- puff
- pugs
- masthead
- splashes
- unique selling proposition
- pull quotes

Component 2 — assignment

The purpose of the assignment is to assess candidates' ability to apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired throughout the course in a production of media content. 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 are working in. Marks are awarded for candidates' ability to research and generate ideas appropriate to the brief, develop and justify media content choices and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their content.

Candidates should be introduced to the requirements of the assignment once they are familiar with the concepts and contexts of analysing and producing media content. A set amount of class time could be devoted to the assignment, or a programme of deadlines and tutorials devised to supervise progress. Candidates perform well when they are given stimulating briefs with realistic deadlines.

Candidates should be given the opportunity to negotiate or set aspects of the brief. Candidates' interests, abilities and characteristics should be taken into account. As much of the brief as possible should be negotiated by candidates. Some need more support and direction than others in negotiating the brief. A brief should stimulate research into audience, institution and content.

Candidates can prepare for the assignment by being given opportunities to:

♦ conduct research to generate ideas for creating media content
♦ plan the production processes necessary for the creation of media content
♦ apply a range of media skills in the creation of media content
♦ describe a range of codes and explain their impact
♦ evaluate the media content

This assignment gives candidates an opportunity to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding of production techniques in an assignment which:

♦ requires consideration of possibilities and problem-solving in planning and production processes
♦ requires application of knowledge and understanding of the relevant key aspects of media literacy
♦ requires candidates to evaluate the impact of actual or likely constraints on media content
♦ requires candidates to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their content

Section 1: planning

In response to a negotiated brief, candidates will research and plan media content, and consider the impact of actual or likely constraints. Candidates should conduct their written work on the planning stage before they make the media product.

Evidence that candidates have actively planned content by carrying out appropriate research and making decisions based on this is assessed. Evidence to be assessed will cover the research and planning related to:

1 audience
2 internal institutions
3 external institutions
4 one key aspect of content
5 a second key aspect of content

Section 2: development

Candidates will make the planned media content and explain and evaluate their use of media codes to create impact or convey connotations. Candidates should conduct their written work on the development stage after they have made their media product.

Example approach

The broad brief could be to plan, design and create a moving image advertisement for a charitable cause of their choice. Candidates may then choose from a diverse range of topics according to their personal interest. The target audience and purpose could also be negotiated. Care should be taken from the outset to ensure that the negotiated brief is appropriate to the resources available within the centre. Internal factors might include: time, equipment, resources, rules and regulations relevant to the centre. External factors might include: legal and voluntary controls, general laws, health and safety, copyright.

When setting the brief, the following should be considered:

♦ The brief should ask candidates 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 candidates is not overly ambitious, and allows them to achieve the assessment criteria to the best of their ability. An appropriate brief might specify a single-print advert, a 30-second trailer, a two-minute film, one or two pages of a newspaper, magazine or website, or an edited/storyboarded sequence of up to 12 shots, 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.

♦ A candidate's ability to respond to the brief may be constrained by more than their 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. If a candidate has chosen to submit a storyboard instead of finished content, they make, plan and develop the storyboard as if they are professional producers of media content. Thus, the planning section will consider the internal and external controls of the media industry, rather than their centre.

Note: the requirements for the Higher Media assignment are different; refer to Higher Media course documents for detail. If a candidate has to change level, the work will need to be revised before submission.

Useful links

- [AMES](#)
- [BFI](#)
- [BBFC](#)
- [ASA](#)
- [IMDB](#)
- [Creative Scotland](#)
- [Creative Skillset](#)
- [Into Film](#)
- [Film Bang](#)
- [BAFTA](#)
- [Shooting People](#)

Developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

Course planners should identify opportunities throughout the course for candidates to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

Candidates should be aware of the skills they are developing and teachers and lecturers can provide advice on opportunities to practise and improve them.

SQA does not formally assess skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

There may also be opportunities to develop additional skills depending on approaches being used to deliver the course in each centre. This is for individual teachers and lecturers to manage.

Candidates are expected to develop broad generic skills as an integral part of their learning experience. The course specification lists the skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work that candidates should develop through this course.

Administrative information

History of changes to course specification

Version	Description of change	Date
2.0	Course support notes added as appendix.	August 2017
2.1	Amendment to 'Assessment conditions: supervision, control and authentication' section — paragraph on group work deleted.	September 2018