



## Course Report 2014

Subject	Media Studies
Level	National 5

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

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

## **Section 1: Comments on the Assessment**

### **Component 1: Question paper**

The question paper allowed candidates to demonstrate sound media knowledge, and there was some evidence of careful preparation and guidance. Some questions proved to be more demanding than others, as is usual in examination procedures. This was reflected in the Grade Boundaries set.

### **Component 2: Assignment**

Markers reported that there were some excellent assignments, with creative flair and clear direction in evidence. Where candidates had understood the importance of their written responses (not the 'finish' of the production), high marks were gained.

## **Section 2: Comments on candidate performance**

### **Component 1: Question paper**

Some candidates showed a great deal of media knowledge and matched this content to the questions. Content, context and the role of media were clearly understood by some, and stimulating and appropriate content had been taught to facilitate learning and enjoyment for the candidates. The role of media was demanding for some, but as a new type of question is likely to improve.

### **Component 2: Assignment**

#### **Planning (25 marks)**

Candidates who had written up their notes at the time of their research gained higher marks. Those who appeared to have written them after they had made their product tended to simply describe the product, rather than what led them to making the decisions they made.

#### **Development (25 marks)**

The standard of product was extremely high, in particular those who made films, storyboards or individualised posters. However, not all gave sufficient evidence to achieve the 5 marks available for each code, and some answers were 'thin' and did not demonstrate clear understanding of how media codes are used to create meanings or achieve a purpose.

## **Section 3: Areas in which candidates performed well**

### **Component 1: Question paper**

- ◆ Question 1(a): Most candidates could describe two representations in content they had studied. Many used one stereotype and one non stereotype for this question.
- ◆ Question 1(a): Most candidates could support their answer with detailed information from the texts they had studied. Most concentrated on the use of makeup and costume to create these representations.
- ◆ Question 2(a): Most candidates could clearly describe an example of tone in content they had studied.
- ◆ Question 2(b): Most candidates could support their answer with detailed information from the texts they had studied. In particular, technical codes (including lighting and sound) were explained clearly.
- ◆ Question 3(a): Many candidates could clearly describe the narrative of the texts they had studied, with most describing Todorovian narratives.

### **Component 2: Assignment**

#### **Planning**

- ◆ Most centres had negotiated stimulating briefs with their candidates and given realistic deadlines.
- ◆ Many candidates made clear causal points showing the relationship between the research findings and planning, and the resultant planning decision made.

#### **Development**

It was clear to see the very high number of candidates who had really enjoyed the making of a media product, and learned a great deal. This was evident from both the written word, and the pride taken into the storyboards, films, posters etc.

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

## Section 4: Areas which candidates found demanding

### Component 1: Question paper

- ◆ Question 3(b): Some candidates couldn't explain the link between the narrative and the reasons for its use. Some made vague statements such as 'because audiences like it' without giving any further detail.
- ◆ Question 4(a): Many candidates misunderstood 'preferred reading' and instead described the target audience.
- ◆ Question 4(b): Many candidates made simplistic statements such as 'men would like this action film because men like scenes with violence' but were unable to give sufficient detail from the media content to support this.
- ◆ Question 5: Many candidates used the wrong type of text for this. Two centres used non-commercial examples such as public service texts and therefore found it very difficult to answer the question.

### Component 2: Assignment

#### Planning

Some centres had negotiated briefs with their candidates that did not lead to successful products or written work. For example, asking candidates to create a magazine advertisement using 'cut and paste' from other magazines did not work well. Similarly, creating a trailer from footage from a professionally produced film became merely an exercise in editing.

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

#### Development

Some candidates had produced very detailed media products but had not supported their ideas with sufficient written information, sometimes hampered by the format they had been given to write in — ie small sections for each code which didn't allow them to expand on their ideas.

## **Section 5: Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates**

### **Component 1: Question paper**

It is advisable to give candidates a selection of texts to choose from in answering the questions as some questions are more suited to certain type of media content, such as those designed to make profit and those designed to give information. The roles of media should be taught with different types of media content, such as: advertisements for charities; informative texts about bullying; 'blockbuster' films and posters.

It would be useful to teach the candidates about more than one narrative theory — for example, Barthes, Campbell, Propp, and Todorov — to allow for fuller answers, although it is possible to achieve full marks on one theorist.

### **Component 2: Assignment**

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

Careful consideration of a suitable task is extremely important. The preferences of the candidates and available technology need to be considered. Negotiating the brief is a key stage in the process.

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 finish of the product.

Adapting professionally-produced media texts is inadvisable as it means the candidate can't justify many of the choices, because they have been made by others.

Giving too wide a choice of brief, eg 'an advertisement for a new gadget' can lead to the candidates spending far too long on inventing the item, rather than focusing on the media product. Keeping the media product simple, rather than overly ambitious, is preferable.

It is crucial that candidates write up their notes on planning as they work through the assignment, rather than tackling this at the end. If they do this, they will demonstrate full understanding of how research into audience, internal and external and institutional factors and key aspects has influenced their plans, rather than simply revert to describing the product they made. It is not advisable to change the questioning style as given in the Task document on the secure site (page 10).

For both planning and development, the candidates should be given adequate space to write up their findings. A brief note is not what is being looked for: a detailed explanation of their planning and development is required.

## Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2013	0
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Number of resulted entries in 2014	254
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## Statistical information: Performance of candidates

### Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark 100				
A	13.4%	13.4%	34	63
B	20.9%	34.3%	53	53
C	26.0%	60.2%	66	43
D	12.2%	72.4%	31	38
No award	27.6%	-	70	-