External Assessment Report 2015

Subject(s)	Media Studies
Level(s)	Intermediate 1

The statistics used in this report are prior to the outcome of any Post Results Services requests

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 question papers and marking instructions for the examination.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

The average mark for Paper 1 and for Paper 2: Unseen Analysis was slightly higher than last year, showing an impressive range of media knowledge. There was evidence of excellent teaching by knowledgeable professionals, and most candidates had prepared well. This year's cohort was considerably smaller, given the dual running with National 4 and 5.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Unseen Analysis

In the Unseen Analysis, media knowledge was demonstrated but answers varied according to the types of texts selected, and depth of textual reference. Candidates who achieved high marks in this component did particularly well in questions on Language. Questions on genre, and technical and cultural codes were very well answered. The question bank was mostly used successfully.

Film posters and trailers were the most common types of text used for analysis; candidates had opportunities to perform well where these had clear genre markers, purposes and/or conventional uses of media language, and were rich in detail. Short audio visual clips were more successful than lengthy ones, giving candidates more time to analyse in detail.

Successful responses showed pre-existing knowledge of concepts which was exemplified in detail from the text.

Question paper Section One

Narrative was very well done, with candidates showing a thorough knowledge of Todorovian concepts. Narrative structure was discussed more often than codes, which can be more demanding for this level. Candidates weren't always able to discuss why certain narratives had been used. Many candidates showed a good understanding of different types of representations, and had studied suitable texts that allowed them to demonstrate their knowledge.

Question paper Section Two

In the reflective question, many candidates showed a good understanding of how to use research in the making of their media product.

There were successful answers on media codes, particularly on lighting, shot sizes and costume.

The advertising brief on installing a smoke alarm inspired some very creative responses, and the target audience of families helped the candidates relate to this.

Candidates related well to the dramatic nature of the scenario question and used interesting camerawork and sound effects to create this scene.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Unseen Analysis
There is still a misunderstanding of medium, despite this being a predictable question. Markers commented that less successful answers showed strengths in *either* Categories *or* Language, but not both.

Some texts were too demanding for Intermediate 1, in that the genre markers were too subtle. Some texts were too limited in their use of technical and cultural codes to give the candidates enough to comment on.

Question paper Section One
Many of the candidates who did not perform well in this section were those who simply retold the plot in the narrative question, or made sweeping statements about audience preferences without supporting this with evidence from the text. Question 6 (production issues) proved difficult for some candidates, despite the question allowing for content *or* production issues to be discussed.

Question paper Section Two
Several poor reflective answers were characterised by a tendency to discuss a product the candidate had invented for advertising, rather than the media product. Some candidates did not seem prepared for the codes question, instead simply naming things in their production without considering the effects of their chosen codes. Some candidates spent too long discussing problems, without demonstrating how solutions were reached.

For the creative and scenario questions some candidates spent too much time on storyboards or detailed drawings, rather than justifying their decisions.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2014	260

Number of resulted entries in 2015	40

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	30.0%	30.0%	12	66
B	22.5%	52.5%	9	55
C	15.0%	67.5%	6	45
D	5.0%	72.5%	2	40
No award	27.5%	-	11	-

Assessments performed as intended. No reason to adjust Grade Boundaries.

General commentary on grade boundaries

♦ While SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions which will allow a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional C boundary) and a well prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional A boundary), it is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level.

♦ Each year, SQA therefore holds a grade boundary meeting for each subject at each level where it brings together all the information available (statistical and judgemental). The Principal Assessor and SQA Qualifications Manager meet with the relevant SQA Business Manager and Statistician to discuss the evidence and make decisions. The meetings are chaired by members of the management team at SQA.

♦ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the exam is more challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.

♦ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the exam is less challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.

♦ Where standards are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.

♦ An exam paper at a particular level in a subject in one year tends to have a marginally different set of grade boundaries from exam papers in that subject at that level in other years. This is because the particular questions, and the mix of questions, are different. This is also the case for exams set in centres. If SQA has already altered a boundary in a particular year in, say, Higher Chemistry, this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter boundaries in their prelim exam in Higher Chemistry. The two are not that closely related, as they do not contain identical questions.

♦ SQA's main aim is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and all levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.