

Course report 2026

Higher Media, SCQF level 6

We've written this report for teachers and lecturers. We recommend you read this with the published course assessment documents and marking instructions.

Note: we've made changes to the course assessment from session 2026–27.

Check your [subject page](#) for more information.

The report:

- provides a summary of how each course component performed
- highlights areas of the question paper and coursework where candidates performed well and areas where they did not perform well
- has advice you might find useful when preparing candidates for assessment

We collect and prepare the statistics in course reports before we complete the appeals process.

Statistical and grade boundary information

Course entries

Number of resulted entries in 2025: 1,595

Number of resulted entries in 2026: 1,654

Distribution of course awards (including minimum mark to achieve each grade)

Course award	Number of candidates	Percentage	Cumulative percentage	Minimum mark required
A	286	17.3	17.3	66
B	415	25.1	42.4	57
C	487	29.4	71.8	48
D	303	18.3	90.1	39
No award	163	9.9	100	Not applicable

We have not applied rounding to these statistics.

In this report:

- 'Most' means greater than or equal to 70%.
- 'Many' means 50% to 69%.
- 'Some' means 25% to 49%.
- 'Few' or 'a few' means less than 25%.

You can find [statistical reports](#) on our website.

General commentary on grade boundaries

Our main aim when setting grade boundaries is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and levels, and to maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.

For most National Courses, we aim to set examinations and other external assessments and create marking instructions that allow:

- a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional grade C boundary)
- a well-prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional grade A boundary)

It's very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject, at every level. Therefore, we hold a grade boundary meeting for each course to bring together all the information available (statistical and qualitative) and make final decisions on grade boundaries based on this information. Senior Qualifications Scotland staff normally chair these meetings.

Principal assessors use their subject expertise to evaluate the performance of the assessment and propose suitable grade boundaries based on the full range of evidence. We can adjust the grade boundaries as a result of the discussion at these meetings. This allows the pass rate to be unaffected in circumstances where there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more, or less, difficult than usual.

- We can adjust the grade boundaries downwards if there's evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more difficult than usual.
- We can adjust the grade boundaries upwards if there's evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been less difficult than usual.
- If levels of difficulty are comparable to previous years, we maintain similar grade boundaries.

Every year, we evaluate the performance of our assessments in a fair way, while ensuring standards are maintained so that our qualifications remain credible. To do

this, we measure evidence of candidates' knowledge and skills against the national standard.

For full details of the approach, please refer to the [Awarding and Grading for National Courses Policy](#).

How the course assessment performed

Question paper 1 — analysis of media content

Question paper 1 performed as expected. Feedback from the marking team and teachers and lecturers indicated that the paper was positively received by centres and was fair and accessible for candidates. Most candidates completed the two required sections in time. A few more candidates responded to question 2 in section 1. The film poster pairing in section 2 worked well.

Question paper 2 — the role of media

This question paper performed as expected. Feedback from the marking team and teachers and lecturers indicated it was positively received by centres and was fair and accessible for candidates. Sampling two roles of the media opened up the task for candidates and most candidates completed the paper in time.

Assignment

The assignment performed largely as expected.

How candidates performed

Areas where candidates performed well

Question paper 1 — analysis of media content

In section 1, most candidates selected an appropriate question for the texts they had studied. In questions 1 and 2, most candidates performed better in part (a) of the task, where they focused their discussion on just one key aspect.

For question 1, candidates who did well focused on specific examples of institutional factors as relevant to their chosen media content such as budget, in relation to examples such as set building, VFX or locations; or certification, in relation to specific editing, cinematography or sound decisions. For question 2, candidates who did well analysed narrative concepts such as a specific stage of narrative structure or a character function, as relevant to their chosen media content, and mostly applied one or more narrative theories to the text(s) in their analysis.

For questions 1(a) and 2(a), candidates who performed well discussed specific examples from media content in their analysis, demonstrating their understanding of the concepts through their discussion. In part (b), candidates who performed well selected specific examples of relevant key aspects from the media content they had studied, which they analysed in relation to the concept already discussed in part (a). These candidates grounded their analysis in specific and detailed examples from the media content they had studied.

For questions 1 and 2, most candidates who achieved high marks selected two concepts relevant to the key aspect(s) named in the (a) and (b) tasks to discuss in depth and detail, provided clear examples from media content to support their points, and commented on the examples given. A few candidates performed well by analysing just one concept in depth and detail, which enabled them to get up to 8 out of 10 marks. For part (b), candidates who achieved high marks combined a detailed analysis of their chosen concepts with comment on the relationship between these concepts and those discussed in part (a), analysing the relationship between content and context as relevant to the task.

Most candidates who did well wrote about one media text for section 1, and almost all candidates wrote about moving image texts — either film or TV. Candidates had studied a wide range of texts including feature-length films, individual TV episodes or two or three episodes from a season of a TV show. Candidates wrote about texts that included fiction and non-fiction, although most candidates wrote about fiction texts for this paper. Popular texts that did well included *The Last of Us*, *Chernobyl*, *Promising Young Woman*, *The Shawshank Redemption*, *Get Out* and *Children of Men*.

In section 2, candidates who did well selected clear examples of how language codes had been used in one of the posters, analysing in detail how and why these codes had been used before comparing this to the other poster in a separate paragraph. Candidates who achieved high marks focused on specific examples, analysing them in depth and detail, discussing the creation of meaning and relating this to purpose, genre and/or audience. Most candidates identified similarities and/or differences between the posters. Candidates who gained high marks discussed these similarities and/or differences in depth and detail in at least one paragraph. The marking instructions require a comparison of the posters to be discussed in detail once, therefore candidates making developed comment on the similarities and/or differences in the posters in one paragraph were able to access the top mark band. Most candidates found plenty of examples in the film posters to use for their analysis of the individual posters, and they found a good range of differences and similarities for the comparison part of the task.

Question paper 2 — the role of media

Most candidates responded appropriately to the task, making points about how media content they had studied could be said to have influenced attitudes and/or behaviour, and/or to have achieved its purposes of profit, promotion and/or public service. Candidates who gained the highest marks made points that either debated the ideas in the task or constructed a line of argument or opinion. Candidates who did well either focused solely on whether the influences in the texts they had studied were intentional or unintentional, or on the way specific purposes could be achieved by the text, or they focused on the relationship between the influences of a text and achievement of its purpose(s). Candidates who constructed a line of argument or opinion in response to the task took various approaches including looking at how a

text or group of texts might have a range of different influences (both intentional and unintentional); at how a text or texts might have a range of different purposes (with discussion of each purpose and how the text aimed to achieve that purpose); or at how the intentional influences of the text(s) might be seen to be helping to achieve the purpose(s) of the text(s).

Some candidates produced high-quality, well-structured responses that showed a strong understanding of the task and of the media content they had studied.

Candidates who performed well focused on a small number of texts (typically 1–3) and discussed how these texts could be seen to influence attitudes and/or behaviour, and/or to achieve one or more purposes. In their responses, they demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of how media texts do this. They built on this discussion by commenting on how specific examples could be seen to have an influence on audiences and/or achieve purposes, to expand on the points made in their discussion.

Most candidates chose to focus on a range of moving image texts, with many candidates choosing two or three shorter texts such as adverts or music videos. Some candidates successfully focused on longer texts such as a feature film or feature-length documentary. Popular texts that did well this year included music videos by artists such as Beyoncé, Taylor Swift, Jessie J and Sabrina Carpenter; adverts for companies including Lynx, Dove, and Always; documentaries from Louis Theroux and Michael Moore; and feature-length fiction films such as *Barbie*.

Assignment

Many candidates produced high-quality and well-structured assignments, demonstrating that they understood the task and were familiar with the marking criteria. Most candidates performed well when they wrote up their responses to section 1 at the same time as doing the required research and planning, before making their content. Candidates who performed well in section 2 showed clear understanding of the process of making media content, reflecting on what they had done and evaluating its effectiveness.

Most candidates created moving image texts which work well as this medium allows them to work with a range of codes to plan, implement and then evaluate their

creative intentions. Candidates selected a range of genres, allowing them to tap into their interests and strengths. This was then reflected in their written work as well as, in some cases, producing effective films.

Candidates accessed the full range of marks by using a clearly laid out and appropriately labelled structure and by following the task order in the coursework assessment task to organise the response, particularly in section 1. Using subheadings, bullet points or clearly separated paragraphs, and page numbers helped candidates to construct their responses. Where centres had set an appropriate brief, this allowed candidates space to negotiate and make their own decisions while working within clearly set out parameters, such as a realistic film length of 1–2 minutes, a zero budget or using specific technology available to them. Candidates who approached the brief in this way were able to access the full range of marks.

Many candidates performed well in section 1 when they clearly indicated the planning decisions they had made and justified these in terms of the requirements of tasks, relating their plans either to their research findings or to achieving their creative intentions.

In section 2, candidates who achieved high marks discussed what they'd done in detail and then expanded on the intentions behind their actions, making detailed points of evaluation throughout their discussion. For section 2(a), candidates who did well explained specific tasks they'd carried out or issues they'd overcome, in terms of the institutional context or of the production role they were carrying out. They reflected on how well they had done this, evaluating either their part in the process or the outcome of their actions.

For section 2(b), many candidates selected a short segment of the text to discuss how various codes such as camera, mise-en-scène, editing and sound had been used in that section, and then discussed how they had intended the codes to work together to create meaning or to have an impact on the audience. These candidates evaluated the effectiveness of this segment of their film by making judgements about how well they had succeeded in achieving their desired meaning or impact. Some candidates repeated this approach looking at five different segments of their moving

image text while others did this for two to four paragraphs and then considered codes that ran throughout the film, such as representations or narrative conventions, to make their remaining points. These candidates discussed in detail how they constructed a representation or used a narrative convention before evaluating its effectiveness in achieving their creative intentions.

Areas where candidates did not perform well

Question paper 1 — analysis of media content

For question 1, some candidates did not write about relevant institutional factors. Some candidates wrote about examples from the media content they had studied that were not relevant, for example the budget being spent on marketing campaigns, which does not have an impact on the text. Some candidates attempted to discuss examples such as casting or the input of a director or key member of the production crew without relating them to a clear institutional factor.

Some candidates confused the concepts of institutions and society and attempted to discuss society factors for question 1. All these issues had an impact on the marks candidates were able to access for parts (a) and (b).

For question 2, some candidates did not effectively analyse narrative, with some analysing genre conventions or representations rather than focusing their analysis on how narrative functioned in the text. Some candidates retold the plot of the text, using narrative terminology but did not analyse how it applied to the text. Some candidates attempted to analyse all the stages of the narrative structure in one paragraph rather than focusing on one or two stages in detail, which meant their analysis lacked depth. Other candidates merged an analysis of Propp's theory of character functions with representations, which led to a basic analysis of characters in the text and did not allow them to analyse the concept of narrative in enough depth. All these issues had an impact on candidates' ability to access the full range of marks available for parts (a) and (b).

For question 2(b) some candidates wrote about society factors that were not relevant to the media content they had studied, such as events that happened after the release date of a film, which therefore could not have influenced the content of the film. Some candidates wrote about audience factors in a too vague or generalised way, or they tried to discuss a wide range of different audiences, which did not allow for the depth of analysis required by the task. Some candidates named a demographic but did not fully decode that group in terms of needs, expectations, how they had been targeted, or how they might respond to the text being analysed. These issues affected the marks candidates were able to access for this part of the task.

Across questions 1 and 2, a few candidates did not integrate their discussion of the concept sampled in part (a) in their discussion of the key aspects sampled in part (b). This is an essential part of the task and meant they could achieve no more than 4 marks for part (b).

Some candidates who chose to write about more than one text in either question 1 or question 2 provided a less coherent response than candidates who wrote about just one text — particularly for part (b) in both questions. This was also the case for candidates who took a holistic approach to the task, writing an essay-style response that attempted to respond to parts (a) and (b) together. This approach did not work well for candidates as they found it challenging to cover both parts of the task in sufficient depth and detail. We advise candidates to avoid this approach.

Many candidates approached question 3 by attempting to reference both posters in each paragraph. They made a point about one poster then linked this to a similar point about the other one. This approach resulted in candidates making a series of brief points about each of the posters that did not achieve the depth required for a developed point of analysis. Although they made links between the posters, they did not develop their analysis in sufficient depth, which limited their ability to access the higher mark bands. For some of these candidates, the approach of referring to both posters in every paragraph also led to their points being too thin, with more explanation than analysis, which at times limited their marks to 4 out of 10. This approach also meant that candidates did not make developed comments about the similarities or differences between the posters and instead made a short link between the posters in each paragraph, therefore limiting their ability to access the higher mark bands.

A few candidates used the list of key aspects in the question paper as subheadings for their response, which led to a narrow focus on that key aspect and did not allow for a broader analysis of how codes function in combination or the depth of analysis required by the task. The question paper for session 2026–27 will not include this list, which should discourage this approach. Some candidates attempted to analyse institutions by listing the stars of the films or extracting details such as the names of the production companies from the billing block, but as these are not rich examples,

candidates were not able to do more than explain what these signified, meaning they could not demonstrate the depth of analysis required by the task.

A few candidates made a lengthy series of short points that were more like the bullet points typical of National 5 rather than the developed analysis required for Higher. This approach meant that what they said was brief and not more than identification with brief explanation at times.

Question paper 2 — the role of media

A small number of candidates did not respond by discussing at least one of the roles of media sampled in the task (influencing behaviour and attitudes and/or achieving a purpose) and rather discussed the roles of the media in a more general way in relation to the media content they had studied. A few candidates appeared to reproduce an essay they had previously learned, discussing the concept that was not sampled in the question paper (meeting needs), while others shared what they had learned in relation to all the possible roles that could have been sampled, rather than writing a response to the task in the question paper. The marks for this paper are awarded for the candidate's ability to discuss the specific role(s) of media sampled in the paper in terms of the task set, and for the ability to use specific examples of media content to back up these points. If a candidate does not discuss the role(s) sampled in the paper, this significantly limits the range of marks available to them.

A few candidates who did not perform well focused on the detail of specific examples from the media texts they had studied, giving lengthy descriptions of specific texts or analysing specific language codes used in these texts, rather than using these examples to make points in response to the task. Others made broad or sparse references to media texts alongside their discussion of the role(s) of media in the task, or they gave examples without comment to show how the examples were related to the points being made, which limited their ability to access the higher mark bands.

A few candidates focused on a broad range of different texts (for example, a feature-length documentary, alongside adverts for very different products, and/or unrelated music videos), which led to a lack of coherence in their response, as they offered several points of information but without constructing a line of argument or discussion

about the way the different texts functioned in relation to one or both of the roles sampled. Others who used a broad range of texts tried to cover too many different points in their response, which led to more basic discussion and/or references that lacked the detail required.

Assignment

The brief set by the centre is a key part of this assessment task. The brief given to candidates must lay out clear parameters in which candidates are expected to work, without being too restrictive. Some candidates found their brief too demanding or restrictive, which had a negative impact on their performance. Where a stimulus such as a specific song, poem or image was used, candidates had difficulty coming up with their own ideas, which meant they struggled to access marks across section 1. Some restrictive briefs led candidates to focus on things like product creation, promotion, distribution or marketing, which also restricted their ability to respond appropriately and access marks.

For moving image texts, briefs that required candidates to make films longer than a maximum of 2–3 minutes led to candidates doing much more work than required for their film, meaning they had less time to focus on the written response.

For print texts, briefs that required candidates to create one print text often restricted candidates' ability to discuss and evaluate a sufficient range of codes in section 2(b). Print briefs that allowed candidates to create content using the work of others (for example, photos of celebrities taken by professionals that candidates then took credit for, discussing mise-en-scène, framing and lighting) disadvantaged candidates as they could not gain marks for evaluating creative decisions that were not their own. In some cases, even with a range of print texts created, the texts were too simple and therefore candidates did not have a sufficient range of codes to evaluate in section 2(b).

For section 1(c), some candidates chose to write about a production role they did not fully understand, which meant they were unable to access marks for their plans that must be tailored to the specific role. This was very evident in screenwriting, where most candidates did not perform well. Many candidates also found the roles of producer and director challenging. Some candidates demonstrated a lack of

understanding of what an institutional factor is in their responses to this part of the task. Some candidates did not relate their institutional factors plans to specific research findings, which meant they were unable to access the marks.

Candidates who wrote up their responses to section 1 after making their media content often made the connections between research and planning less clear. This made it harder for them to access marks as they had already carried out their ideas and were writing up at a point when they could not fully recall the justifications for their decisions.

A few candidates used the 2019 structure for their assignment, meaning they did far more work than was required and repeated points, which was self-penalising. Using the 2019 structure for section 1 meant candidates spent more time than required on this section leaving less time for section 2, which was then short and did not meet the standards required to access the higher mark bands.

Across section 1, some candidates repeated plans that had already gained marks earlier in their planning. Candidates gain marks for justifying new plans in relation to the relevant part of the task, so cannot achieve marks for repeating a plan. This was a particular issue in section 1(d).

For section 2(a), some candidates wrote an account of what they had done, like a production diary, or for 2(b) they wrote an analysis of their film, without much reflection or evaluation of the examples they described. This made it harder for them to access the higher mark bands that require candidates to take an evaluative stance throughout their responses.

For section 2(a), some candidates described problems that had occurred and described solutions to these problems, but the lack of evaluation of the impact or success of these solutions meant they were unable to access the higher mark bands. For section 2(b) some candidates described the codes they had used to achieve their creative intentions without evaluating how effective these were. Other candidates simply evaluated sections of their product without also discussing their creative intentions. In both cases this meant they were unable to access the higher mark bands, which require discussion of the creative intentions and evaluation of how effective the implementation was.

Preparing candidates for assessment

When new to the course, you should ensure that staff delivering the qualification have the appropriate subject knowledge and expertise, and engage with the available support, training and professional learning opportunities. We provide a range of resources, including [Understanding Standards](#) materials, webinars and course support notes on our [website](#). The subject implementation manager for Media can provide centre development visits and tailored guidance.

Question paper 1 — analysis of media content

For questions 1 and 2, you should encourage candidates to write separate responses for parts (a) and (b) as this helps them to focus on addressing what is required by each part of the task. You should also encourage candidates to focus on two concepts from within the key aspect(s) sampled in the question, and to write about these in depth and detail. For part (b) you should allow time to look at ways in which the different contexts and key aspects of content can be seen to integrate with each other, so that candidates are comfortable with analysing these connections in response to that part of the task. Examples are available on our [Understanding Standards](#) website.

You should ensure candidates understand all the terminology that might be in the question paper, and that candidates are familiar with applying these concepts to the text(s) they have studied.

Most centres focus on feature-length films for this section although some centres use TV — either single episodes or two or three episodes across a full season of a TV show. Films and TV shows are appropriate for this paper as moving image content gives candidates plenty of material from which to draw exemplification. The [Higher Media Course Specification](#) has more detail on the types of texts that would be appropriate for the various sections of the course assessment. You should spend time with candidates exploring how best to select and use evidence from the text(s) studied in their responses, and ensure candidates have a firm understanding of all seven key aspects that could be sampled in the question paper. You should support candidates in developing their analysis skills in relation to these key aspects. This

enables them to use specific and detailed evidence from the text(s) they have studied to give a meaningful response to the question paper tasks.

For question 3, you should allow time in class for analysing a diverse range of film poster pairings, covering different genres, eras, styles and so on. You should focus on showing candidates how to analyse specific elements of the individual texts in some depth and detail, and how a point of comparison can be made in depth and detail. You could use examples from our Understanding Standards website to support teaching points. In teaching this part of the course, you should focus on in-depth analysis of specific and detailed examples from a single poster. This can then lead into discussion of the posters as a pair, focusing on one or two specific similarities or differences between the texts to discuss in depth. You should ensure candidates are aware that they do not need to make comparisons in every paragraph as this approach can often be less effective.

To prepare for this task, candidates could practise writing developed points of analysis of a specific combination of language codes selected from one of the texts and relating the use of language to other key aspects, for example genre, purpose, representations and audience targeting. They could then make a separate point where they either further develop this analysis in comparison to the other poster or select a new point of analysis for a developed comparison between the pair of posters. This comparison should be a separate point in a separate paragraph. You should discourage candidates from focusing on isolated codes and instead encourage them to look at how a range of the codes in one or both posters work together to create meaning. When comparing the posters, candidates should write in detail about the significance of the difference or similarity they have highlighted, focusing on the reasons for that difference or similarity. It may be helpful to encourage candidates to think about how the example they are focusing on is designed to achieve the similar or different purposes of the posters, or how it may appeal to similar or different audiences.

You should advise candidates against using a list of the key aspects as subheadings and emphasise that there is no requirement to cover all seven key aspects.

Candidates can achieve full marks by covering two key aspects. Trying to cover all

seven is likely to lead to responses that do not go into enough depth and detail to access the full range of marks.

From session 2026–27, we've removed the key aspects list from question 3 to ensure candidates focus on the specific requirements for the question. We've updated the specimen question paper but there is no change to the marking instructions.

Question paper 2 — the role of media

Candidates should respond to the specific task in the question paper to ensure they are able to access the full range of marks for discussion. You should teach candidates to develop a line of argument or opinion, making detailed points of information to back up their argument, in a single essay-style response. You should teach candidates to provide specific and detailed evidence from texts they have studied to support points they make in response to the task, commenting on how this evidence backs up their point(s). You should encourage candidates to spend time thinking about how to draw one or more conclusions in relation to the task and the evidence they have selected. Candidates must understand the importance of responding to the question paper task and not using a pre-prepared essay as marks are awarded for their ability to discuss the task in the paper.

Studying a variety of texts in class can allow candidates to select from a range of evidence and ensure they are able to respond to the specifics of the task set in the question paper. However, you should remind candidates not to refer to too wide a range of texts in one essay as this could limit the depth of their discussion. Two or three shorter texts is sufficient to provide enough evidence and discussion, or one longer text such as a 60-minute TV documentary or feature-length film is also appropriate. The texts studied by candidates should provide them with a range of evidence that will allow them to construct a line of argument in relation to any of the three roles of media that could be sampled. Many candidates who performed well studied a variety of shorter texts such as adverts or music videos, which meant they were prepared with plenty of examples to select evidence from that were relevant to the task in the question paper. Other candidates who did well selected a range of evidence from one longer text, which is also an appropriate approach. When

preparing for this paper, you should encourage candidates to reflect on how the text(s) they have studied might fit into all three of the roles of media, and they should learn about the sub-concepts in each role. You should ensure that the text(s) studied in class allow candidates to do this.

Time should be spent in class thinking about how an argument might be constructed within and across the different roles of media. You should ensure candidates are aware that more than one role might be sampled, as was the case this year, and you could spend time with candidates considering a range of different approaches that could work with the text(s) studied. If time does not allow for writing a range of sample responses, you could spend time constructing plans in response to a range of different tasks. This should involve looking at how the text(s) might intentionally or unintentionally influence attitudes and/or behaviour, or achieve the different purposes of profit, promotion and public service, or be seen to meet audience needs for information, education or entertainment. You should spend time getting candidates to consider more than one perspective for each of the roles of media that could be sampled in the question paper. This encourages them to think about how they can construct a line of argument in response to the task in the question paper.

Assignment

For the assignment, centres must set a suitable brief. This should provide candidates with some form of stimulus but should not restrict their ability to negotiate and/or make their own creative decisions. Some briefs were too restrictive and did not allow candidates enough creative freedom to do well. You should carefully consider the impact that any restrictions imposed by the brief might have on candidates' ability to complete all the tasks in section 1. Good practice is to provide candidates with two or more possible stimuli to choose from and some room to negotiate things such as genre, target audience, purpose, and so on. You should consider the technology available to candidates in the centre, and any other institutional restrictions that may have an impact. The brief should give candidates some parameters to work within but not be too restrictive. This means candidates will be able to make plans that they can fully justify, allowing them to access the full range of marks available in section 1.

We highly recommended that the brief specifies that moving image texts are no longer than 2–3 minutes, and that print texts should be part of a campaign of at least three posters or adverts. This encourages candidates to use a sufficient range of codes in their texts to allow developed discussion in their written response. We recommend that candidates should be making media content similar to content they are studying in other areas of the course — for example, if they are studying film for the analysis paper they could make short films, or if they are analysing print ads for the role of the media paper or film posters for the unseen task in question paper 1, then the brief could be for a range of ads or film posters for a print advertising campaign. You should make these connections clear for candidates so they can draw on their learning from other parts of the course when creating their own content.

You should use the sample briefs with commentaries available on our [Understanding Standards](#) website to help support you in creating an appropriate brief for candidates.

Candidates can work as part of a group to produce their media content but individual roles and responsibilities should be clearly set from the start. All the written responses relating to planning, research and evaluation should relate to work the individual candidate has carried out in relation to the areas of the group production they have taken responsibility for. Each individual should take on different production roles, for example, and carry out independent research for the relevant parts of section 1. In section 2, they will not be able to gain marks for discussing or evaluating the contributions of others in their group.

For section 1, you should encourage candidates to complete the written response discussing their plans and justifications as they go along. They do not need to complete the tasks in the order given in the coursework assessment task document, but it may be helpful to do so as they must be submitted in this order. They should record their plans and decisions, along with their justifications for these, as they work their way through the planning phase. Candidates should complete their written responses for this section as they work through each stage of the process and complete their full write up before creating their media content. This allows logical progression into section 2, where candidates evaluate how effective their plans were when put into effect. You should encourage candidates to redraft section 1 once it is

complete, focus on not repeating plans, and make sure each plan is clearly justified to ensure they can access the full range of marks.

For section 2, candidates must discuss their creative intentions and the processes they implemented to achieve these intentions in detail, and they must evaluate how effective or otherwise these were.

For task 2(a), candidates should focus on discussing in detail specific opportunities and constraints relating to the institutional context in which they were working, and specific tasks they carried out in their production role(s). They should evaluate how effectively they worked with these opportunities and/or constraints, and/or evaluate the impact of their actions, when carrying out their production role(s), in relation to the process and/or the finished content. It is the combination of detailed discussion of the development process, along with the evaluation of how effective any action they took was, that is assessed.

For task 2(b), candidates should discuss, in depth and detail, specific examples of how they hoped to achieve their creative intentions for the finished piece of content. They should evaluate, in detail, how effective the finished piece is in terms of their original intentions. In the discussion of their intentions, candidates should give details demonstrating how they have used a range of technical and cultural codes to create their intended meaning, and what impact they intended to have on the audience when using these codes. They should evaluate how effectively they achieved these intentions in their finished product. Their intentions do not need to have been successfully implemented, and they can discuss this in their evaluation. It is the combination of detailed discussion of the meanings and/or impact the candidates hoped to create, along with the evaluation of how effective this was in the finished content, which is assessed.

Centres should upload candidates' products (moving image and print texts) by using the digital portal. This process worked well and we strongly recommend that centres submit candidate work (the media product only) in this way. For moving image products, submissions should be in a standard format that can be easily read by media players such as VLC or QuickTime, and PDF for print. We can also accept a physical printout of print texts, which can be submitted along with the written

response. A few centres did not submit a copy of the brief with candidates' responses. Due to the change to the flyleaf, the brief must now be submitted as a separate printed document along with the candidate's written response.

Storyboards, hand drawings or sketches are not suitable products for the Higher Media assignment. Candidates are required to submit a finished product along with their written responses.

From session 2026–27, we've updated section 2 of the assignment to reduce the amount of evaluation required. Three developed points of evaluation are required for task 2(a) instead of four, and four developed points of evaluation are required for task 2(b) instead of five. We've updated the assignment task and marking instructions to reflect this.