

WJEC GCSE MEDIA STUDIES FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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PLEASE NOTE: Although you may have been given a username and password for the Portal website from your exams officer, you may not have been given access to the Resources section. If you cannot find any of the above on the Portal website, please see your exams officer in the first instance.

If you have any queries which are not answered below, please contact us at media@wjec.co.uk

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Where can I find the entry/course/specification/QAN codes?

The entry/course/specification codes can be found on page 27 of the [specification](#). The QAN (qualification approval number) can be found on page 2 of the specification.

Are there any textbooks for WJEC GCSE Media Studies?

There are WJEC endorsed textbooks that are primarily designed for those following the Eduqas specification, however some of the content is also relevant to those following the WJEC specification, and there are overviews and helpful indicators throughout which are solely pertinent to the WJEC specification.

All textbooks can be purchased directly from the publisher, [Illuminate Publishing](#).

Where can I find grade boundaries for GCSE Media Studies?

Grade boundaries can be found on the [Grade Boundaries Tool](#). Please ensure you have selected all the correct options on the drop-down menus.

Where are the CPD Materials for Media Studies?

All our CPD course materials are available on the [WJEC Portal website](#) under Resources > Subject Specific Support Material > CPD Materials > Media Studies CPD Material > WJEC GCSE Media Studies.

The screenshot shows a search filter interface titled "Options" with a gear icon. It features several dropdown menus: "Subject" (Media Studies), "Level" (GCE), "Type of document" (CPD), "Publication Year" (All), "Language" (English), and "Brand" (WJEC). Below these is a text input field labeled "Enter free text search". At the bottom left is a blue "SEARCH" button, and to its right, it says "Records found 6".

Is exemplar work available for each unit?

There are example responses for all units in the CPD materials on the WJEC Portal website. These illustrate work in the different bands. The [online exam review](#) (OER) also gives examples of candidate responses to particular questions from the last series along with assessment commentary and statistics.

Can learners resit individual units for this qualification?

Candidates may re-sit an individual unit ONCE only. The better mark from the two attempts will be used in calculating the final overall qualification grade.

A qualification may be taken more than once. However, if all units have been attempted twice, candidates will have to make a fresh start by entering all units and the appropriate cash-in(s). No result from units taken prior to the fresh start can be used in aggregating the new grade(s).

EXAMINATION UNITS

SET PRODUCTS

Does WJEC provide the set products?

No, centres are responsible for accessing the set products for all units. Details of all the set products can be found in the specification.

When will the set products change?

As stated on page 14 of the specification, the set products for Unit 2 will be reviewed periodically and changed where necessary. This does not necessarily mean the set products will change when reviewed. The first review will take place in 2020 and information released for first teaching Sept 2021 and first examined in June 2023.

UNIT 1 AND UNIT 2

What are the recommended timings for Units 1 and 2?

Learners are advised to spend approximately 45 minutes on section A and 45 minutes on section B. This guidance is provided on the front page of sample assessment materials and 2019 exam paper.

Is there a possibility of an audio-visual resource in either the Unit 1 or Unit 2 exams?

No. Learners will be provided with an unseen print resource for the Unit 1 exam related to advertising, video games or newspapers. There is no unseen resource material for Unit 2.

In an exam response, is it better for learners to explore a small number of points in a lot of depth or to cover a larger number of points in less depth?

Learners need to address all elements of the question that is set and be guided by the number of marks available. There is no prescriptive approach to an exam question and there are different ways to fulfil the assessment criteria. However, learners do need to address the question in sufficient depth to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. The SAMs give further indications of the likely responses at the different bands of the mark scheme.

Which areas of representation do we need to teach in relation to Unit 1, Section A?

The focus in this topic is on the construction of representations of gender and events, as detailed on page 10-11 of the specification.

What products should learners study in preparation for Unit 1, Section A?

On pages 10-11 of the specification, information is provided that details the products that learners should study in order to prepare for the analysis of the unseen resource in the examination for this section.

In Unit 1 Section A, should learners only analyse the unseen resource, or do they need to refer to set or other products analysed in class?

In Unit 1 Section A, there will be one stepped question which will require learners to discuss both the unseen resource and one product that learners have studied in class in the same media form. Learners will be expected to compare the unseen resource with the resource studied in class.

Do learners need to refer to theory in their responses to questions in Unit 1 and Unit 2?

Learners should only refer to theory where relevant and appropriate. Learners will not be disadvantaged if they do not apply theory/critical perspectives in their responses.

In Unit 1, Section B, will learners be expected to discuss the radio station or make specific reference to an edition of a programme?

Learners should study a specific radio programme, such as Radio 1 breakfast with Greg James, or Capital Breakfast with Roman Kemp. Learner should study one edition of the programme and should be able to make textual reference to that edition if required in the exam.

Who was the original broadcaster of *Gavin and Stacey*?

The specification states that the original broadcaster for Gavin and Stacey was BBC3. While this is correct, the set episode was first broadcast on BBC2. Candidates would therefore be credited for giving either answer in the exam.

In Unit 2, Section B, would a film that was produced within ten years before the start of teaching of the qualification be accepted even if the franchise itself is older?

Yes, however the film itself must not be used if it was produced more than ten years prior to the start of teaching. In short, any film that was produced before 2005 should not be used.

In Unit 2, section B, will candidates be expected to discuss representations in their chosen Hollywood films?

No. Representation is not assessed in Unit 2, Section B. there are bullet points on pages 16-17 of the specification that detail what candidates must study in preparation for this section of the exam.

Will learners be assessed on the quality of written communication, including appropriate use of Punctuation and grammar in the exam?

Yes. This will be assessed in Unit 2, Section A.

NON-EXAM ASSESSMENT

ADMINISTRATION

How long should learners spend on their NEA?

It is recommended that learners complete their production within a time-period of approximately 24 – 28 hours to enable an appropriate balance between work for the production and for the examination units.

What is the NEA submission deadline?

For GCSE, all marks and work must be submitted online by the 5th May. This date is the same each year and does not change, even if it falls on a weekend.

How are marks and work submitted for moderation?

Marks for all learners in your cohort must be submitted on the Mark Input System via the [Portal website](#). Once you have submitted your marks the system will automatically generate your sample.

All assessed work, including the coversheets, for the **sample candidates only** must then be uploaded to our online Surpass system. Your exams officer will have received key codes for all candidates to allow you to do this up to three days after the marks are submitted and the sample is generated.

Please ensure all work is clearly labelled and uploaded according to the specific elements of the unit. Work should be submitted in as few files as possible, e.g. one document for Research titled '[candidate] Planning'.

For further information on Surpass and the process of uploading work please see our [Guide to E-Submissions](#) and the [E-Submissions Video Guide](#).

What work needs to be submitted for moderation?

For each candidate in the sample you must submit:

- Fully completed and signed coversheet (3 sections)
- Research into **two** products comparable with the production (250-500 words per product)
- Planning (a storyboard for AV productions or a draft design per page for print/online productions)
- Production
- Reflective Analysis (500-750 words)

What should I do if there is an error with the submitted marks?

If you notice an error with the marks entered on the Mark Input System once you have submitted them you will need to contact gcse@wjec.co.uk. Please include your centre details, the candidate details, the subject and component, the old mark and the correct mark.

What should I do if there is an error with the work submitted for moderation?

Once a key code has been used and work has been submitted that key code will not work again. If there is an error in the work that has been uploaded, you will need to contact media@wjec.co.uk to request additional key codes.

Please include the following in your email, if these details are not included we will be unable to generate any keycodes:

- Centre number
- Candidate Name
- Candidate Number
- Level
- Subject
- Unit

Is there a requirement to annotate work for Unit 3?

No, there is no requirement to annotate work for Unit 3. We have moved to the electronic submission of the NEA, and so centres should submit the work electronically using the file formats listed in the e-submission guidance. Detailed comments and examples on the cover sheet to explain the rationale for the marks awarded must be included in place of annotation.

How should teachers record evidence of internal standardisation?

In centres where there is more than one teacher responsible for assessing NEA work, internal standardisation should take place. While we expect internal standardisation to occur within centres as standard practice, we do not require any evidence that this has taken place, however this can be recorded by a brief comment on Section B of the cover sheet. The final marks awarded should be clearly evident.

How should we assess work that is under - or over - the specified limits for length/ quantity?

There is no penalty for work that is under the specified limits for time and length, as this is likely to be self-penalising. There is a 10% tolerance for work that is over the specified limits for time and length. If work exceeds the limits by more than 10%, the teacher/assessor should not mark the additional work submitted beyond this limit, as candidates can only be credited for work that falls within the stipulated limits for time and length. Please see the first page of the Unit 3 marking grid (p.28 of the specification) for detailed guidance on applying the marking criteria.

Can the coversheets be completed and signed digitally?

Yes, both handwritten and typed/digital signatures and forms are acceptable.

NEA BRIEFS

Can learners work in groups to complete Unit 3?

All productions must be individual with the exception of audio-visual productions. For audio-visual productions, learners may work either individually or in pairs in clearly identified roles: one learner will be responsible for camerawork and the other learner will be responsible for editing, including sound. **Learners working in pairs must carry out individual research, planning and reflective analysis.** Please see page 22 of the specification for further details.

If working in pairs, should learners comment on their own work only or the whole production in the reflective analysis?

Learners should comment on the whole finished product in the reflective analysis.

Can candidates appear in their own productions?

We advise that candidates do not appear in their own productions. Although it would not be a breach of the specification requirements for the candidate to do so, it is important to remember that candidates are being assessed on their production skills. Our concern would be that if the candidate is featuring in the production, then somebody else would then be responsible for the production and direction of that piece at that time.

What is an unassessed participant?

An unassessed participant is any participant in a production apart from the candidate being assessed, e.g. actors/models etc. Unassessed participants can be other Media Studies students.

When will the set briefs change?

The set briefs do not change each year but will be reviewed annually. Any changes to production briefs will be published on WJEC's website two years in advance of their first assessment.

RESEARCH & PLANNING

For Unit 3 Research, do learners discuss both products within the word limit of 250-500 words?

Yes. Note that for print productions, a PRODUCT may be classified as ONE DVD cover or ONE magazine cover.

In Unit 3, should the learner's research be based on one edition or episode of the chosen product or a range?

We would advise that learners select a specific edition or episode to focus on, although we would expect that, in the course of their research, they have looked at more than one edition/episode. It would benefit

learners to focus specifically on what they are planning to create (the opening sequence of the TV programme, for example).

Should learners refer to critical perspectives in their research?

There is no requirement for learners to refer to theoretical and critical perspectives, however they will be credited for discussion provided that it is accurate, relevant and appropriate. Learners will not be disadvantaged if theoretical or critical perspectives are not discussed.

Should learners research a product that is from the same industry context as the one for which they will be creating their product?

GCSE learners are not assessed on media industries in Unit 3 and therefore there is no requirement to do so. It is imperative that learners research, plan and produce products that are for the specific audience and that apply appropriate conventions of the form/genre.

Can learners research a product that they have studied elsewhere on the course?

No; the research investigation must be independent work, and therefore learners must not research a text that they have already studied in class.

Can learners research the same products as each other?

We would advise not, as the research must be independently undertaken.

How long should a storyboard be?

There are no specific limitations on how long the storyboard should be, however we would expect that, in order for the planning to demonstrate an appropriate level of detail, storyboards should be between 16 and 20 frames in length, and it should detail all aspects of planning such as sound, editing, shot type and duration, and so on.

How should learners submit their website productions for moderation?

Learners should submit the URL for their website on the cover sheet.

Can learners use software such as Wix and Wordpress to create their website?

It is acceptable for candidates to use web design software or templates in the online options of the briefs. However, candidates must be responsible for the design of the website and all content (such as written text/language, images, audio-visual material) must be original.

Can learners use animation in their audio-visual productions?

We advise that learners should not produce animation for their audio-visual productions. Animation tends to be extremely labour intensive and as it cannot be credited anywhere in the mark scheme learners would end up spending a great deal of time and energy on creating the animation with no possibility of it increasing the success of the production from an assessment point of view.

Can learners use any found images or footage?

Learners are required to create original material for the production itself, although found material can be used for planning. In certain circumstances, it may be necessary to include non-original, found images or footage. In such cases, found material may be used provided it is not the main focus of the product and is only used as supporting images or footage. The use of non-original material is limited to:

- 15 seconds of found footage in an audio-visual or online product (in addition to the time limit)
- 1 found background image per page of print or online product

Non original material cannot be assessed. Learners can be rewarded for selecting appropriate images/footage, but not for creating the image or footage.

Can learners draw their own original images if appropriate to their chosen genre and form?

If the research demonstrates that drawn images are a convention, learners may create and edit their own original hand-drawn images into their production provided that this is in line with the requirements of the brief. They should, of course, be mindful of the requirements of the mark scheme to use media language to communicate meanings and construct representations.

MUSIC BRIEF

Can learners create their productions around existing artists?

No, learners should create their own artists in line with the requirements of the brief.

Can learners create a video for an unsigned artist or band?

Yes, this is acceptable. Learners should research artists/ bands in the same genre to develop their knowledge and understanding of codes and conventions.

Does the artist/band whose track is used have to be unsigned?

No. Learners can select a track from an existing artist, and then will create a fictional artist/band, marketing the track as though released by the learner's created 'new' artist/band.

Learners need to select a song that does not have an official music video; however, can they choose a cover version or remix of a song that has an existing video?

No, as it is the song (rather than a particular version of the song) that must not have an official video.

What about a song that has a recording of a live performance or a fan video?

If there is a simply a live concert performance of the song that has been recorded but is not an official video then this would be fine to use, as would a fan video.

What about a song that has a lyric video?

If the lyric video contains imagery or animation, it **does** count as a music video and should be avoided. If the lyric video is just text on a screen or over a static image, then it would not count as a music video and would be fine to use.

What if the song does not have a music video that has been released in this country but has released in a different country?

This would still count as an official music video and therefore the song should be avoided.

If a learner selects and creates a production for a song that does not have an official video but then the record company releases the chosen track as a single with a music video at a later date, what should the learner do?

If the learner has commenced the production prior to the release of the video, then they may proceed. The crucial factor is that they should not be influenced by the official video. Please add a comment to this effect on the cover sheet to alert the moderator.

FILM BRIEF

Do the measurements need to be accurate when creating products such as posters, for example?

We would expect that learners are working to the correct ratios when producing posters. Where this is not possible, such as would be the case with a billboard poster, we would expect that the ratios be accurate but the size of the product be reduced.

Are learners able to use templates for print work, for example a DVD cover?

Learners may use a blank template for outline sizing purposes only. Learners must be responsible for the layout and design of their print work.

Can learners copy and paste existing billing blocks or are they expected to create their own?

Learners are expected to create their own billing block. The only found material that learners can use are existing generic logos such as production company logos, age certificate logos and barcodes.

Can learners create a marketing campaign for a film that is a book adaptation or sequel to an existing film?

Learners should create an original product and not an existing brand, so we would advise against both of these.

Can learners create a marketing campaign for a film that is based on a real-life character?

We would advise caution here, as learners are being assessed on their ability to construct representations and narrative, and this may be limited if learners are basing their representations and narrative on real events. This may result in the learner's work being self-penalising.

TELEVISION BRIEF

Can learners create an animated television sequence?

No, the brief requires that learners need to create live action television sequences in order to meet the requirements.

MAGAZINES BRIEF

Are learners able to use templates for print work, for example a magazine cover?

Learners may use a blank template for outline sizing purposes only. Learners must be responsible for the layout and design of their print work.

Learners are required to create an original title for the magazine – must they avoid older magazines or those produced in different countries?

As far as possible, learners should create a new title for their magazine – they should conduct research at the planning stage to try to establish that there is not another magazine with the same title.

Do learners need to design their own masthead?

Yes. This may mean that they design a new font using software, such as daFont, Glyphr Studio, or it may mean that they use an existing font. However, the font used must not be one that has been used for another magazine's masthead; the design of the masthead must be the learner's own and must establish a sense of the magazine's own brand identity.

The briefs stipulate that learners cannot use existing brands. However, if they are creating a magazine that features images of, for example, fashion/clothing or camera equipment, do they need to create their own brand for these products?

The requirement relates to brands of media products, so learners should not create their own edition of, for example, *Grazia* magazine; they should create a new magazine. If they feature images of particular products, they do not need to 'invent' a new brand, although if they were to include a feature article with a new young designer for example, they could of course invent a new fashion label.

Does the magazine need to include images of people?

Learners are assessed on their ability to apply knowledge and understanding of representations of individuals, groups and issues/events. They are most likely to be able to demonstrate this ability and access the higher levels of the marking criteria through constructing representations of people (as opposed to cars or food, for example).

Could learners use found images of celebrities?

Images do need to be original so learners should not include found images of celebrities. Learners could 'create' their own celebrities for their magazine work. It would be better for student to their own fictional 'stars' rather than using the names of existing celebrities alongside models who are clearly not that celebrity.