# GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**GCSE**
**WJEC MEDIA STUDIES**

**SUMMER 2023**

Grade boundary information for this subject is available on the WJEC public website at: https://www.wjecservices.co.uk/MarkToUMS/default.aspx?l=en

**Online Results Analysis**

WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC secure website.  This is restricted to centre staff only.  Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.

**Annual Statistical Report**

The annual Statistical Report (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

**General Comments**

It was rewarding to see how many candidates were able to respond to the questions set in the examination paper for Unit 1: Exploring the Media. These were generally well answered by most candidates. All questions proved accessible for candidates who were able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the key concepts of Media Studies and were able to analyse media texts in effective ways.

**Comments on individual questions/sections**

**Section A:    Representations - advertising, video games and newspapers,** the resource material, an historical advert from a magazine for Pepsi-Cola from 1957, featuring a male and female, proved effective in enabling candidates to demonstrate their analytical skills on an unseen media text, and to apply their knowledge and understanding of representations comparing it with their own contemporary studies of advertising. It was pleasing to see evidence of high-level comparison skills based on excellent knowledge and understanding of how representations of gender are constructed via advertisements and the messages and values that are imparted within them.

**Section B:    Music**, also proved accessible in allowing candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the music industry. There was clear evidence in the candidates' responses, understanding the impact how music videos portray women in either positive or negative way, or indeed both. There were good explanations how social media promotes an artist or band studied and how it is an important marketing tool for bands/artists. Candidates further demonstrated good understanding of interactive features used by the website of music magazines they had studied.  The knowledge and understanding of a wide range of media products, including radio programmes, music magazines, social media and music video was, at times, impressive and showed clear evidence of candidates being well prepared by their centres, selecting a range of texts that need to be studied for the specification.

**Comments on individual questions/sections**

**SECTION A:  Representations – advertising, video games and newspapers**

**Q.1    (a)**    The vast majority of candidates were able to achieve the full two marks for this question describing the women's costume in the advertisement. One mark was awarded for each appropriate explanation, maximum of two marks. Marks were awarded for stating wearing trousers, shirt, and waistcoat, dressed in a masculine way, leisure clothes, informal dress, neutral colours, comfortable attire.

Some students did discuss the colour of the female's hair, or the fact that she had red lipstick or nail varnish on her toes – these answers were not awarded marks as the candidate did not refer to the costume worn.

**(b)** This question proved accessible for most candidates. The question required candidates to describe how the woman was represented in the advertisement. Candidates were awarded one mark for each appropriate explanation but quality within the response was also considered, so if candidates made two well considered points, then maximum marks were awarded. A range of interesting and well considered responses were made by many, such as, how the female was positioned lower than the male, showing male superiority, typical for the time. Others said that she countered typical representation for the time in wearing trousers against the traditional dresses that most women in the 1950s adverts would be seen in. Others stated that she looked happy, relaxed and in control, had a sense of confidence in her interactions with the male figure. Others felt that she was serving the male whereas others saw that the male seemed to be serving her and that their relationship seemed more modern for the 1950s. However, there was a minority who just simply described her clothing again without any analysis to confirm how this constructed her representation.

**(c)** Candidates were asked to explain how design and layout was used in the advertisement. A range of answers were presented. Those candidates who were able to give a thoughtful, detailed response that focused how the design and layout communicated the message/value of the advertisement were able to access the higher mark bands, 4 and 5. Their answers included discussing the colour palette being very feminine, tagline suggesting that product was light and refreshes without filling, which was good for the diet conscious woman who wants to retain her slim figure and how this ideology played into the beauty myth of how women should look. How the layout showed the relax carefree style of the modern woman and that it appeared aspirational in its style. Many commented on the typography used, written in a cursive font eliciting an elegant and sophisticated feel towards the advertisement and bold letters were used to make the message stand out. Where some candidates identified some key features but were straightforward in their response, they were able to access band mark 3. for a satisfactory explanation. However, there were some candidates that simply described without considering how the design/layout created meanings to the audience which meant they self-penalised themselves and were unable to access marks beyond basic.

**(d)** This question required candidates to compare how gender was represented in the advertisement from the unseen –stimulus material studied, Pepsi- Cola advertisement 1957 with a **contemporary** advertisement they had studied. Acceptable answers sometimes focused just on females and others on both male and female. There were some excellent examples used that were able to highlight how representation has evolved for women, for example This Girl Can campaign which challenged the stereotype of the 1950s woman staying at home, domesticated front, or having the perfect figure and looks, often the blonde bombshell type, with a far more realistic portrayal of women today being more independent, strong, willing to be themselves as they exercise formulating a happy, contented image, creating positive role models. A popular advertisement analysed was Jimmy Choo with Kit Harrington whereby he is seen to be superior, in control, dominant as he holds the long slender legs of a faceless female, reducing her to an object.

2

Others discussed Lynx advertisements showing women drawn in hordes to any men wearing its fragrance reducing women to be rather simple in their quest for a male and that males are always seen as the winners, successful. Comparisons were often supported with very effective use of subject specific terminology based on a wide range of technical and symbolic codes. The use of positioning of images, and colour palettes selected, as well as taglines creating meanings, were thoughtfully analysed, and compared well to the stimulus material, additionally recognising similarities within both advertisements. For candidates awarded the higher marks in band 5, there was often clear reference to theoretical perspectives such as binary oppositions. Laura Mulvey's male gaze. The best answers often explored the complexities of the gender representations and whether there had been much evolvement of how gender was portrayed in the 1950s to the present day, with many contemporary adverts using the concepts that sex sells and whether this was empowerment for women or using women's bodies to sell more products.

However, there were some candidates that struggled with the question as they selected an historical advert to compare and not a contemporary one which meant that the most marks, they could be awarded was a satisfactory response if their response was a good answer. Many were capped at basic, band mark 2. A significant number of students compared the advertisement with one from Quality Street, Tide, or Schlitz beer. A minority of students just discussed female representation from the Pepsi advert with no comparison.

### SECTION B: Music

**Q.2** **(a)** Most candidates achieved one mark for identifying one way a music magazine promotes an artist or band. Many stated front covers with central image of the band, articles within the magazine, selling/cover lines on the front cover, interviews within the magazine. Some students just stated that that the magazine promotes an artist/band but did not say how gaining no marks.

**(b)** Candidates were asked to outline two interactive features used by a website of the music magazine studied. Better responses stated the name of the magazine studied and gave two distinct interactive features, such as podcasts, videos, hyperlinks, navigational bars, shared options with friends to different social media platforms. These were awarded full marks. However, some students just said a link to a page and a link to another page that were similar in content – when this was done, they were awarded two marks as they had only outlined one interactive feature. Some mistakenly discussed an artist/band's own website and not a music magazine and were therefore awarded no marks.

**(c)** Candidates needed to state a specific artist/band and how they used social media to promote themselves. When candidates did this, they were able to give detailed examples how artists/bands made good personal use of social media in interacting with their fanbase. Most candidates were able to engage well with this question. Answers included updated information from the artist/band on latest releases, tour dates, photo galleries, sharing of personal information, direct link with their fans, competitions, sale of merchandise, the feeling of belonging. It was very pleasing to see how well this question was answered with clear examples form specific artists/bands being presented in candidates' responses.

However, some did not state a specific artist/band and their answer was generic in how social media is used and were therefore unable to gain higher than band 2 or 3 depending on response.

**Q.3.** This question proved difficult for some as the question asked for candidates to explore how the music programme studied targets its audience and were asked to refer to a specific programme in their answer. Too many referred to a radio station and discussed generically codes and conventions that would be used to target their audience. Sometimes, the target audience was vague and not specific. This meant that candidates could not get higher than a basic or at most a satisfactory response at the lower mark within the band. Those who stated a specific programme and were able to give clear evidence from the programme style and content and how these were appropriate in targeting intended audience, were often good to very good responses, with thoughtful consideration of several factors, such as language, music and guest choices, quizzes, latest celebrity news, phone ins, competitions. Many discussed Greg James Breakfast Show on BBC Radio 1 as an example, Jamie Theakston and Amanda Holden on Heart radio station, Live Lounge on Radio 1, local stations such as The Wave. Some discussed Nick Grimshaw as having the breakfast slot on Radio 1 – he has not been a Radio 1 DJ since June 2021. It is important that centres ensure that radio music programmes studied are still relevant and up to date. Candidates were not penalised on this occasion.

**Q.4** This question, in general, was answered well. Candidates were asked to explore how women were represented in one music video they had studied. Candidates could choose any music video they had studied from any year. Taylor Swift music videos were a popular choice as was Katy Perry's Roar, Madonna Like a Virgin, Papa Don't Preach, Beyonce's If I Were a Boy, Pretty Hurts Duran, Duran's Girls on Film, Michael Jackson's Thriller. There were some very engaging answers that considered how the technical, visual, and audio codes helped to construct meanings, such as the framing techniques that helped to position the audience. Many candidates were able to apply appropriate media terminology for representation, discussing stereotypes, and how these were either challenged or reinforced within the video. It was good to see that some students were able to discuss what feminine dominant ideologies were, place them into context, and then analyse how far the music video conformed or subverted them. Many were able to apply theoretical perspectives, such as Laura Mulvey's male gaze, Strauss' binary oppositions.

There were some candidates that struggled with the question, simply describing the music video without considering why the females were being represented in the way they were. A minority did not state the name of the music video and artist/band and were limited in their findings.

However, many candidates were able to access the higher mark bands demonstrating that good guidance and teaching was in evidence and that candidates had been prepared well for this type of question.

**Summary of key points**

Overall, the paper proved successful in allowing candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the key concepts within the specification for Unit 1: Exploring the Media. In most cases students were able to complete the whole paper with few questions not attempted.

It is pleasing to report that the time management by candidates in the examination proved effective and manageable, with only a few candidates not completing. There were many good examples where candidates had been well prepared demonstrating excellent guidance and support from their teachers. These centres are to be highly commended, and candidates are to be congratulated for their detailed and interesting responses.

**In summary, centres should:**
- Remind candidates of the marks awarded for each question to ensure longer, more detailed responses are given for questions allocated higher marks, particularly for 1d, 3 and 4.
- Ensure that a range of examples are explored for representation – both historically and contemporary.
- Ensure all the codes and conventions of the print products for Section A are studied and how they are used to construct representation in advertising, video games and newspapers.
- Study specific artists/bands, radio programmes and music magazines both print and online version for Section B reminding candidates to refer to these when answering examination questions.

5

# MEDIA STUDIES

# GCSE

# Summer 2023

## UNIT 2 : UNDERSTANDING TELEVISION AND FILM

**General Comments**

It is very pleasing to report that on the whole candidates responded well to the questions set on both Section A: Wales on Television and on Section B : Contemporary Hollywood Film. There is clear evidence of candidates performing at their own levels of ability to address the key concepts of Media Studies examined on this years' paper, whilst offering some very personal responses to the study of the set texts. There was evidence of some very good performances, particularly in the higher mark bands across both sections of the paper, with little evidence of candidates not being able to offer a worthwhile response to all the questions set.

The questions on Section A of the paper performed particularly well with time managed effectively in completing the section, with answers of appropriate length and depth to warrant the marks available. This led to some very well developed and detailed responses to question 1d with the greatest number of marks available. Section A of the paper was particularly well managed this year. Many candidates therefore performed well on this section, completing all questions to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the television industry and of their chosen set text from a television programme produced in Wales.

Section B of the paper also provided many examples of excellent responses to the questions set to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the Hollywood film industry and of the products they produce. Questions 2a, b and c provided excellent opportunities for candidates to demonstrate the changing nature of the film industry exploring the impact of technology on production, distribution, and audiences. The responses to Q3 on the global nature of the Hollywood film industry was well answered in the main. The final question on use of sound in franchise films, whilst often effectively explained, for a number of candidates was restricted in development due to time management of the paper which led to a number of shorter and less well-developed responses.

Overall performance by candidates was slightly improved on last year with a greater range of responses in the higher band levels clearly in evidence. There was little evidence of incomplete papers or of non-attempts at certain questions which resulted in a far greater success rate across the whole paper cohort from grades A* - G.

**Comments on individual questions/sections**

**Section A: Wales on Television**
**Q.1** **(a)** Generally, most candidates could offer a way that television programmes in Britain are funded. Most candidates offered responses which included the licence fee, adverts of subscription. Several candidates offered responses which were incorrect such loans from donors. Responses which suggested they were funded by a tax on the public were marked as correct.

**(b)** Generally, most candidates offered a response to the question often naming the organisation, the BBC and then explaining the range of channels and being funded by the public and the Licence fee.

The best answers specifically explained its remit to educate, inform and entertain and in a few excellent answers described it as a public service with some sense of public service broadcasting.

**(c)** This question was answered particularly well with most candidates explaining that online media was used to promote the television programme both at its time of production and continuing its popularity with fans in the contemporary media environment. Many candidates explained its presence on the BBC website, on YouTube and the use of wider marketing and distribution strategies on chat shows news and on radio.

**(d)** The range and quality of many of the answers to the highest tariff question on the paper was impressive, namely in exploring issues of Welsh identity. All the scripts viewed were on the programme *Gavin and Stacey*, and all focussed on the required episode.

There was evidence of some excellent and perceptive explorations of the challenging topic of Welsh identity often through the use of mise-en-scene in the terraced houses and streets of Barry, to the beach, fairground and back gardens. The assessment objective AO1 was particularly impressive in the broader exploration of Welsh identity with key concepts of stereotyping and how these were either reinforced or subverted. Key issues of representation of social class, gender and 'Welshness' were particularly well addressed. However, the assessment objective for AO2 was less effectively explored with only little reference to the media language used through technical codes of camerawork, editing, sound and lighting. Many candidates awarded the higher band marks did indeed address these features in analysing their chosen text to explain how they constructed a Welsh identity. Visual and symbolic codes were more effectively used to explore how Welsh identity was constructed. Several candidates did attempt to explore the themes addressed in the episode studied but found it challenging to explain how these issues constructed and reflected Welsh identity.

Overall, a very successful examination session with the paper and questions performing particularly well. Evidence from the scripts suggests that candidates found both sections of the paper accessible with most candidates completing all questions in the time allocated.

## Section B. Contemporary Hollywood film.

The vast majority of candidates wrote about an appropriate film but in a small number of scripts candidates had used films outside of the 10-year timeframe such as *Harry Potter* or used a film which was not from a Hollywood franchise.

**Q.2** **(a)** Most candidates offered a response as to how you can now watch films using digital technology.

**(b)** Most candidates could explain how digital technology has impacted on watching films. Frequent answers included accessibility, 'watch what you want when you want, control of the film as spectators, rewinding, re-watching, rescheduling. Some interesting explanations involved candidates exploring the benefits of cinema through widescreens, 3D, Imax or shared social experiences with friends and family.

**(c)** Many candidates offered detailed responses of appropriate length to explain how digital technology is used to market films. However, a significant number of candidates did use non digital or analogue marketing methods such as posters. The best answers explored the use of digital technology in marketing film including trailers on the web in production websites, social media sites, digital posters and digital billboards as well as digital publishing in magazines and newspapers. However, several candidates did explore analogue methods of marketing.

**Q.3** Most candidates could offer at least a satisfactory exploration of how films attract global audiences. A range of reasons were offered including production effects and camerawork, settings and locations, props and costumes stars and genres. Candidates also used examples from character and narrative devices but found difficulty in suggesting how this applied to global audiences. Many candidates did explore aspects of distribution in the global success of franchise films such as the marketing methods used such as websites, social media, billboards as well as posters and trailers. Some candidates also explored issues of representational issues e.g. *Black Panther* and how the representation attracted worldwide audiences through narratives and representations of ethnicity.

**Q.4** As the last question on the paper there was some evidence that candidates offered less well-developed or detailed responses given the time constraints of the examination. However, there was much evidence of many higher band responses often exploring diegetic and non-diegetic sound. Most responses often explored the use of music and sound effects but in many instances, it was apparent that many candidates confused diegetic and non-diegetic sound. In the answers awarded the higher band marks there was some evidence of exploring sound in more detail with reference to dialogue and foley sound, pleonastic and exaggerated sound. Most candidates did explore the effects of sound on audiences in some way to create tension, drama, action and relate the use of sound to wider genre issues and character functions. At its very best candidates explored aspects of contrapuntal sound, parallel sound and musical motifs. It was very impressive at times to see references to specific genres of music, instruments and language related to music such as crescendo, rhythm, pace and tone.

Overall, a most successful examination session with the vast majority of candidates responding well to the paper in its entirety and with no adaptations imposed due to the effects of the pandemic on last years paper. General trends observed suggest an improvement in the quality of candidates' responses on both sections of the paper which is very encouraging for Centres and individual candidates.

**Summary of key points**

- Ensure that candidates have a good knowledge and understanding of organisational issues for both the television industry and Hollywood film industry.
- For Section A question 1d., candidates must explain how key themes and issues construct representations.
- Candidates must continue to practise time management of the paper, particularly Section B.
- Centres must ensure the franchise film studied for Section B is appropriate i.e. a Hollywood franchise film and within the last 10 year time frame.

**MEDIA STUDIES**

**GCSE**

**Summer 2023**

**UNIT 3: CREATING MEDIA**

**General Comments**

After the disruptive pandemic years, it was pleasing to see candidates submit the full requirements for NEA Unit 3 portfolios for moderation, as outlined in the current specification.

The set briefs proved accessible to the full range of candidates. All four components: Research, Planning, Production, and Reflective Analysis demonstrated a full range of media production skills and the application of knowledge and understanding of the key concepts of media language, representation, and audiences, in relation to a production for a specified audience, as set out in WJEC's GCSE Media Studies Unit 3.

**Comments on individual questions/sections**

**Administration:**
- Centres uploaded Unit 3 evidence using SURPASS which enabled efficient moderation management of sample materials.
- Only a small number of centres did not upload moderation samples in the specified file formats; this led to some interruption to the moderation process and necessitated candidates' NEA portfolios to be re submitted.
- Most centres met the 5$^{TH}$ May deadline; this was much appreciated by moderators.
- A small number of centres contacted the Media Team at WJEC directly regarding issues related to the submission of the moderation sample.
- In cases where candidates with incomplete NEA portfolios are selected for moderation, centres should contact the Media Team to request new codes for replacement candidates who have marks closest to the incomplete folder. Centres are reminded to include a cover note to inform the moderator should a candidate be substituted in the sample.
- It is imperative centres identify all files: as Research, Planning, Production and Reflective Analysis respectively. The work itself should include the candidate's surname, forename, and candidate number.
- It is mandatory all forms are signed and dated by teacher and candidate.
- Three authentication signatures of candidate and teacher with dates (which cover the production process) should also be completed on the coversheet.
- When uploading paired (audio visual) work, it is important to complete the pair work form indicating both candidates' names, numbers, and the role they have taken.
- All correspondence related to the moderation sample between the centre and WJEC should be uploaded on SURPASS and clearly labelled for the moderator.
- When completing teacher's summative comments on the coversheet, the moderator should be provided with sufficient detail to have a clear understanding of the context of the work. Comments should reference the mark grid and explain how the marks have been awarded with brief examples from the work itself. Importantly, this does not mean simply cutting and pasting the statements from the making grid.

Moderators noted many centres took a minimalistic approach when providing supporting commentary to justify the marks awarded this year; this approach does little to help direct the moderator to how individual candidate's specific outcomes have met the assessment criteria. Although it is no longer a requirement to annotate individual pieces of work, (but much appreciated by the moderator) this form of assessment does help highlight specific points where work exemplifies assessment criteria being met. Summative teacher comments therefore may be the only opportunity for the centre to justify the marks awarded.

- Please ensure all marks are included on the cover sheet and the total mark submitted before uploading onto Surpass.

**Assessment and Task Setting:**

In most of the centres, assessment was secure, and moderators agreed with the centre's judgments regarding the Bands candidates had been placed. Where assessment was judged to be generous, centres will be advised in their centre reports. Generally, over rewarding of work was because assessment criteria did not reflect the evidence in the work presented. Moderators saw examples of over warding across all four elements of the NEA portfolios. However, it is pleasing to note this year there was far more evidence of centres using the assessment criteria accurately when applying individual marks to each component.

A further reason for generous assessment was because tasks other than the official production briefs, which are published by WJEC for the year of the accreditation, had been undertaken by candidates. Centres should not design tasks outside the remit of the specification. Marks cannot be awarded for work undertaken which is irrelevant and extraneous to details outlined in the specification pages 21-24 and explicit criteria in the marking grids for Research, Planning, Production and Reflective Analysis respectively. Where there was evidence of non-compliance of the specific details, it may have led to insecure assessment. For centres where this was an issue, they have been advised in their centre reports.

When assessing candidates, centres are advised to adapt a best-fit approach, using the assessment criteria in the mark grid for each component which best describes the evidence. Once the Band has been agreed, centres should then place each piece of work within the Band. At this point summative comments can be written with the justification for marks awarded, and if appropriate, annotations added to the candidate's work.

**Research:**
Most candidates presented appropriate research evidence and placed in the correct Bands. The requirements are clearly set out on page 21 of the specification.

The purpose of research is to provide candidates with the knowledge and understanding of genre conventions of the media text and form they have chosen from the set brief to construct their own productions. Effective research reports used the word count (550-750) to focus on the three areas of study: knowledge and understanding and analytical exploration into specific genre codes, representations of people, places or events and analysis of appeal to the intended audiences.

Generous assessment was seen by moderators when centres awarded marks in the wrong Band for the application of knowledge and understanding of genre, representations, and audience. For candidates to be awarded Band 5 research should make explicit reference to textual details, codes, and conventions.

Excellent exploration and analyses of the representation of, for example, stereotypes which enable audiences to interpret media texts quickly is a rich area for research and could be used to greater effect in many centres. How the representations reflect social, cultural and industry contexts may also be a valuable area of research. Excellent analysis of how media language is used to target specific audience is expected at Band 5. Exploration and analysis of: visual codes, technical codes, camera work, framing, editing, language, or sound codes is required from Band 3 and higher. It is not sufficient to imply this knowledge. Band 1 and 2 responses often relied on basic superficial textual identification and descriptions of how media language is used to target specific audiences and discussion of representations was often simple labelling or descriptive prose. Many candidates at this level made no explicit reference to representations, genre codes and audience. The acquisition and development of media technical language is an important skill which will enable candidates to make incremental progression in their analysis responses and should be supported.

Candidates' selection of the two products should be relevant, appropriate, and comparable with their chosen production. Assessment was generous at some centres who over awarded candidates' research when it was not highly relevant and appropriate to the future production, for example there are no marks available if the two texts are used for direct comparison.

There was increasing evidence of candidates referring to media theories in the research component; it is not a prerequisite to achieve even the highest Band marks, but if applied accurately and appropriately to support analysis can underpin knowledge and understanding of media concepts.

The word count of 250-500 words was adhered to in most moderated samples. A reminder to centres that should candidates exceed this limit, there is a 10% tolerance for work that is over the specified limits for time and length. If research 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 as set out on page 26 of the specification.

An issue in a small number of centres was the inclusion of secondary research evidence; this is not a requirement for this specification. Film synopsis, reviews or questionnaires cannot be awarded any marks. Research requirements are clearly set out on page 21 of the specification. Most research reports presented for moderation were appropriate, however the message to centres remains consistent; it is imperative to review task setting to ensure candidate's outcomes will enable them to access the criteria within the mark grid.


**Planning:**
Most centre placed candidates in the correct Band when assessing planning outcomes. Best practice in planning showed a direct correlation between candidate's research and informed candidate's final production.

Moderators identified a few issues in planning which in some cases contributed to generous marking. Firstly, planning requirements state candidates should submit a hand drawn storyboard for the audio-visual options, (approximately 15-20 frames in length). Assessment was generous for candidates who for example were awarded Band 5, but the storyboards were poorly drawn and did not include excellent technical details such as camera work, editing, lighting, timings, and language/audio codes to demonstrate appropriate and 'relevant' planning. It is important centres make careful consideration when selecting storyboard templates to ensure candidates can meet the assessment criteria for this component.

11

Several centres included extraneous planning activities including montages, scripts, character costume designs and edits for photographs none of which can not be credited within the mark grid. For centres who had awarded marks for this type of planning, assessment would have been generous. Centre reports will highlight this issue if relevant.

It is pleasing to report, moderators saw fewer examples of grabbed stills from completed productions to produce storyboards. Storyboards devised in this way do not meet the specification requirements since they exemplify post-production activities.

Assessment was more secure when candidates produced planning as described in page 21 of the specification. For print and on-line products: a draft design per page using appropriate software (not hand drawn). Plans which were hand-drawn are limited to Band 1 and 2 since such planning is only partially relevant and appropriate at best.

Planning should demonstrate how media language is used to establish genre conventions and representations, and appeal to the intended audience. Candidates should consider how to apply the knowledge and understanding gained from their research to plan their production, so it appeals to the specified audience, make representational choices, and apply genre conventions through the visual composition including use of space, layout of images, framing; mode of address; lighting; use of mise-en-scène and language content and tone.

At Band 5 candidates are expected to demonstrate evidence of excellent application of knowledge and understanding of genre, representations, and audience and show excellent application and correlation between research and the final production. For a significant number of candidates, this was not the case. If any planning other than draft designs plans submitted for moderation which meet the assessment criteria, despite candidates demonstrating good and excellent planning processes, marks shouldn't be awarded.

Another issue with planning moderators commented on were candidates who constructed out line flat plans which included descriptions of contents. Other candidates annotated their plans. Although both approaches demonstrate candidate's thinking behind some decision making, again, no credit can be given. In a small minority of centres some candidates included explanations of their planning within their research, rather than present the evidence in a separate component in the NEA portfolio.

Incomplete planning cannot be awarded marks higher than Band 2, and where this was the case marking would have been generous.

Hand drawn draft design plans are not appropriate for print and on-line planning. Although original images are not a requirement for planning, candidates are required to use appropriate software. Page 23 of the specification states: learners need to have access to suitable software and resources for their production work, which includes planning. Should candidates not use software for their planning, this must be considered when awarding marks.

**Production:**
Moderators reported most productions were accurately assessed and candidates placed in the correct Band, although there was evidence of marking being generous within the Band. Centres are advised that where productions do not meet the all the requirements and standards for each Band in the mark grid, this should be reflected in the marks awarded.

Many candidates across the ability range were able to apply knowledge and understanding of concepts of Media Studies which was relevant and appropriate. Productions presented for moderation were often technically and creatively excellent pieces.

Magazines, print adverts and DVD covers were the most popular print productions. Online print options were more prevalent than in previous years and audio- visual options remain popular for many candidates.

Successful productions had been explicitly derived and influenced by appropriate research and focused effective draft design plans and storyboards.

A strong feature of productions across the ability range was the use of media language. Band 5 candidates demonstrated excellent creative skills, including colour coding and photographs effectively composed in magazines, on DVD sleeves, film posters, pint adverts and in web page designs. At this level, candidates constructed highly appropriate representations which addressed issues, ethnicity, youth, and gender for example, in positive ways applying excellent anchorage written codes. Excellent technical skills were also evident at this level, for example through the way candidates arranged different elements in their productions. Genre codes were highly appropriate for example in magazine productions with highly appropriate layout, pull quotes and designed typography used to create distinctive and highly effective covers, contents, and article pages.

Moderators commented AO3 assessment was sometimes over rewarded for a number of reasons: good and satisfactory technical and creative skills given marks in Band 5 but the production did not demonstrate excellence in both technical and creative skills or there was some inconsistency across the whole production. A few candidates were marked in Band 5 but did not have a complete production, for example no article page for a magazine. Centres should adjust the marks awarded to candidates in such cases.

Audio- visual productions included adverts, music videos and tv extracts. Successful productions had utilised planning story boards with excellent effect. Technical skills, framing, shots, lighting, editing were also excellent. Genre codes were constructed through mise-en-scene, character representations and audience address using effective narrative, music video or advertising style production codes and values.

Productions that exceeded the time limits can only be assessed up to the times set out in the individual briefs, with the 10% allowance applied. Productions which fell short were sometimes over marked since such productions are technically incomplete.

Centres are reminded it is their responsibility to ensure candidates do not infringe copyright restrictions. These apply specifically to the use of existing brands and products, which is not permitted. In music video productions, learners can use an existing song or track by a band or artist for the music video production, provided the track chosen for the music video doesn't have an existing video. Other restrictions apply to 15 seconds of found footage in an audio video or online product and 1 found background image per page of print or online products.

Page 22 of the specification provides detail of key skills in audio-visual productions. Further helpful advice is available in the supporting resources available for WJEC GCSE Media Studies.


**Reflective Analysis:**

Reflective analysis requires candidates to analyse and evaluate their production in relation to the two products they researched. Assessment was generally more secure for this component. At Band 5 reflective analyses were excellent showing candidates' ability to evaluate concepts in their own production pieces. Reports were articulate and detailed, highlighting, and focused, evaluating how key media concepts had been incorporated.

At Band 3 there was often less analysis, or focus on the media concepts of representation, audience, and genre. At Band 2 and below, reports generally contained simple observations, or simple descriptions the production process and some used word count to identify ways they would change their work for future productions. Candidates who did not use the full word count were generally self-penalising. Candidates' reflective analysis reports should demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the application of media language; be selective and focus on evaluating the media concepts of significant genre codes, representations and audience address in the 500 -750 words limit. Excessive word counts should not be rewarded beyond the 10% allowance.

**Summary of key points**

- Appropriate task setting is paramount if candidates are to fulfil the Specification requirements for research, planning production and reflective analysis.

- Centres are encouraged to contact the media team at WJEC if there is any clarification required on the specification requirements.

- Learners should analyse two products comparable with their chosen production in Research tasks.

- No secondary research can be accredited marks.

- Research should focus on the key media concepts of genre, representations, and audience.

- Candidates can only be rewarded for work completed that is within the requirements of the Specification; any extraneous work that is submitted cannot be assessed.

- Planning is required in **only two forms**: a story board for audio visual.  All print products: a draft design per page, using appropriate software.

- Centres must not deviate from the set briefs when setting the tasks.

- Specific requirements in each brief need to be noted.

- Reflective analysis reports should be focused on significant aspects of the production to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key concepts of genre representation and audience address in their evaluations. The reports should reflect finding from research and are not required to consider changes that would be made in future productions or distribution of the product itself.

14

WJEC
245 Western Avenue
Cardiff  CF5 2YX
Tel No 029 2026 5000
Fax 029 2057 5994
E-mail: exams@wjec.co.uk
website: www.wjec.co.uk