

## Teaching guide: NEA

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This is an overview of the GCSE Media Studies Non-exam assessment (NEA) component. It outlines the types of tasks students can be asked to undertake, providing a breakdown of the requirements of the assessment in relation to the theoretical framework. Use this alongside the specification, the Sample Assessment Materials (SAMs) and standardisation materials.

### Differences between NEA and controlled assessment

The NEA element of GCSE Media Studies focuses on students applying their knowledge of the theoretical framework (specifically media language, media representations and media audiences) in a practical way. It has replaced the previous controlled assessment element.

There are some marked differences between the previous specification Unit 2 controlled assessment (4810) and NEA.

- The NEA component of 8572 is worth 30% (4810 was 60%).
- Only one piece is required for 8572 (4810 was three pieces).
- Only the final production piece is assessed in 8572, apart from the Statement of Intent.
- Marks for 8572 are split discretely between Statement of Intent, Media language, Media representations, Media audiences (marks for 4810 were split holistically between Planning/Research and Production/Evaluation).
- 8572 does not require an evaluation to be completed.
- 8572 is prescriptive, with five forms being made available to students during any given assessment, of which only one may be chosen. 4810 offered eight media forms of which three could be chosen by students.
- The NEA component of 8572 requires students to respond to a set brief; they can no longer choose the content of their production work.
- The briefs for 8572, and available media forms, will change every year.
- Students must submit individual productions for 8572; group productions will not be accepted.
- Film is not offered as a production form for 8572.
- All material used within 8572 must be original. Students cannot use 'found' or 'archive' material.

- The briefs for 8572 are released on 1 March in the year before the exam. You can no longer begin tasks throughout the year.
- The NEA briefs for 8572 will always link to the close study products (CSPs being studied as a key element of the course, unlike 4810 where products created could not link to the topic of the final exam).

## Similarities with the controlled assessment

- Products will be internally assessed and externally moderated.
- Students must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework within their products.
- Products will be complete.
- Products will run to a specific length (failure to adhere to these will be penalised).
- Signed Candidate Record Forms, (CRF) which include production information and detailed comments explaining exactly why marks have been given with reference to individual products will be completed.

It is important that students understand the importance of covering the theoretical framework within their pieces. It is also vital that their work fully meets the requirements of the chosen brief.

## Production work overview

### Available forms

Students will be expected to individually create one complete and recognisable media product. The product will be from one of the following forms:

- television
- music video
- radio
- newspapers
- magazines
- advertising/marketing
- online, social and participatory media
- video
- video games.

Not every form will be available every year. Five briefs will be published on 1 March of the year before the exam (these will be found on the Secure Key Materials site – a link will be available from the Media Studies section of the website). The briefs will indicate the forms available for assessment. The example briefs within the SAMs include the following media forms:

- television (pre-title sequence)
- online, social and participatory media (website including radio)
- magazine (focused on a vlogger)
- music video (anti-bullying campaign)
- advertising/marketing (print adverts).

## Briefs

The content requirement of each NEA brief is very detailed and will be clearly linked to one (or more) of the CSPs. The student booklet, published annually, will contain five briefs and all of the information required by students to complete the NEA. Each brief will include a short overview of the project, including expected content, amount/length, audience and focus. This will be supported by a section covering minimum requirements, which will outline exactly what a student will need to include within their production. These should be used to inform the Statement of Intent as well as being the basis of any (unassessed) research and planning that students might undertake (they could, for example, form the basis of a production plan).

As well as the student booklet, a more detailed teacher booklet will also be available. This will include guidance on indicative content as well as marking, and should be used to provide students with further information which will assist their production work.

It is not a requirement that all briefs be made available to students. The briefs offered should consider the resources available as well as the expertise of, or support available to the teacher. It is acceptable for all students to submit responses to the same brief (although these must be individual products – see the section on groups below).

## Timeframe

The time available for completion of the NEA is more limited than that available for the previous controlled assessment. Students undertaking NEA can only begin production work in March of the year prior to their exam as the briefs will change every year, eg students being assessed in 2020 should only use the NEA document published in March 2019 (2020 submission). Schools intending to offer 8572 over three years must take this into account when planning programmes of study. All schools must make sure that the NEA briefs are refreshed annually.

## Theoretical framework

Products must clearly demonstrate knowledge and understanding of Media language, Media representations and Media audiences (media industries are not formally considered within the NEA). Marks for NEA require a discrete assessment of the three separate elements of the framework (as well as the Statement of Intent).

## Statement of Intent

The only pre-production element of the NEA which may be assessed is the Statement of Intent. This document must be submitted to the teacher by 1 April in the year of assessment and will be included as part of the overall assessment submitted to the moderator (see below). The Statement of Intent provides an overview of the product to be created, explaining clearly how it will meet the needs of the brief, demonstrates use of media language/media representation and how it will appeal to the audience. The Statement of Intent must be completed using the template provided. This template will be made available on 1 March in the year before assessment and will be included within the NEA student booklet containing the set briefs.

The Statement of Intent can be given a maximum of 10 marks. The statement should be detailed (to the extent that 300 words allow) and clearly outline how media language will be used to communicate specific representations to the target audience, whilst relating consistently to the brief. It should make direct reference to appropriate elements of the theoretical framework and show the ability to apply relevant and accurate terminology in an appropriate and sustained way. Students are not required to write the statement in continuous prose; bullet-pointed lists or tables are acceptable, providing the requisite level of detail is included.

If a student only submits a Statement of Intent with no accompanying media product, they cannot be given a mark for the NEA.

An example blank Statement of Intent is available as part of the [SAMs](#).

Example Statements of Intent will be made available in due course.

## Groups

Students must only be assessed on an individual basis, no group work will be accepted. Students may be assisted by others in the creation of their pieces (for example, using other students to act in a television piece, act as models for a photoshoot or to film/record material to be used in an advert) but it must be made clear that these participants will not be assessed. Participants must be clearly directed by the student undertaking the NEA (for example, the student must write their own script/copy, photograph models or clearly explain the required shots/footage to be recorded). Elements that have not been directly influenced by the student being assessed may not be credited when the work is marked.

## Original material

Students must use original material. Use of 'archive' or 'found' materials, eg text copied from a website, photographs students have not taken themselves or composed clips from existing sources such as YouTube) must be considered when work is marked. Such students cannot be marked beyond level 2 for communicating meaning to an audience since a main requirement of the brief, use of original material, has not been met.

The only exception to this is where music is used. Students are not expected to create their own music for soundtracks or for music videos. However, credit for tracks – source, copyright info and publication details – should be included on the CRF and, where appropriate, in the product itself (where to do so would be a convention of the form being used).

## Templates

Students must create an original final product for submission to achieve marks in the higher levels. This should be completely unique and should not be based on existing templates, eg online magazine generators, InDesign/Publisher pre-sets, editing frameworks in iMovie etc. However, if a student chooses to complete an NEA project that involves creation of a game or a website, they may use online templates, design apps or games design software as a framework. Students must demonstrate that they have taken responsibility for the overall design of a website, eg a Wix or Wordpress site must demonstrate evidence that the student has gone beyond the standard structure for higher level marks to be given. For games, a game designed using FlowLab must utilise original backgrounds and character design. All copy, imagery and audio-visual content (apart from music) must be completely original, meaning that any pre-set placeholder pictures or text must be replaced. Use of software (either on or offline) and of specific templates must be noted on the CRF.

## Marking

It is important that products are considered “in the round”, to identify how the specifics of the brief are being met. These qualities can then be matched to the respective level descriptors found within the marking criteria.

There is a degree of flexibility to some aspects of the marking, and a “best fit” approach should be taken, particularly if a product demonstrates some (but not all) features of a level. As with previous specifications, it is essential that marking refers clearly to the ways in which a product meets the level descriptors. Although the level descriptors can be used to support why marks have been given, these should not be included on CRFs without evidence taken from the Statement of Intent or associated production work. It is an Ofqual requirement that comments direct a moderator towards evidence that the marking criteria have been met; these must be included on a student’s CRF.

There are some specific guidance notes that must be considered before marks are finalised.

- If a student has only produced a Statement of Intent without completing their production, they must be given a mark of zero.
- If a product is longer than the requirement outlined in the brief, only work up to the specified length should be marked.
- Regarding print/online products, if more than the required amount of material is submitted, the entire project should be marked but then only the best pages (up to the required length) credited; this should be noted on a student’s CRF.
- Products shorter than the required length should not be directly penalised, since this will be considered through marks given for Production: Effectiveness in communicating meaning to an audience (any such product could not be said to have met the main requirements of the brief and therefore cannot be placed much higher than the bottom of level 3 for this element. It is also unlikely that such products will contain enough evidence to demonstrate content beyond level 3 for Production: Media Language and Production: Representation.
- Students may only be marked for work they themselves have completed. If additional assistance is given beyond that specified in the groups section, or

where use of a template has gone beyond the parameters outlined in the Templates section (above), marking must take this into account.

Standardisation sessions will be held and example materials will be made available in due course. Please see [aqa.org.uk/8572](http://aqa.org.uk/8572) for details.

If more than one teacher is marking NEA, marks must be internally standardised before submission, with one teacher leader being responsible for this.

## Submission

All submissions for NEA must include:

- A completed CRF signed by the student (to confirm authorship of the work) and any teacher who has supervised and marked that student. If a CRF is not signed, AQA will not accept the work for assessment and a mark of 0 will be submitted.
- The CRF must also include full details of any support the student has received, eg non-assessed performers, technicians, websites, templates, games-design software used etc.
- Marks should be written on the CRF and should be correctly totalled.
- Total marks for individual students should be submitted by the specified deadline (usually during the first week of May of the year of assessment).
- Work must be attached to the CRF.
- NEA work will be moderated by AQA:
  - if fewer than 20 students are entered, or work is submitted electronically, the work of all students must be sent to the moderator
  - if more than 20 students are entered and work is not being submitted electronically, a sample will be requested.