



Teaching guide: Non-exam assessment

Contents

Section	Page
Before Setting the NEA briefs	3
Setting and understanding the NEA briefs	7
Working on NEA responses	9
Marking and submitting work	14
Further guidance	18

Introduction

This guide is intended to provide you with the information you need to be able to successfully approach AQA Media Studies GCSE non-exam assessment (NEA) tasks with your students.

The questions and sections are those that NEA advisers are asked about most often, and the responses have been adapted from real responses given to individual teachers over the past few years.

If you have any further questions following your reading of this guide, please remember that you have email access to a GCSE Media Studies **NEA Adviser**. If you don't yet know the details of your adviser, please contact eos@aqa.org.uk and include your centre number in the email.

1. Before setting the NEA briefs

Do AQA need to know that we're doing GCSE Media Studies?

Your exams officer needs to let AQA know that you're submitting students for the GCSE. This happens when you make entries, usually in January or February of the year of examination. You can start your NEA before this happens.

When should I do the NEA?

The live briefs for each year are released on 1 March of the year before submission. So, for example, the brief for submission in June 2024 came out on 1 March 2023. Marks must be submitted by 7 May in the year of submission, and you will need time to mark the work prior to that. You therefore have a window of just over a year, for example from 1 March 2023 to April 2024, in which you can set and complete the NEA.

Different centres choose different times within this window to suit their own circumstances. If these times are considered as being largely within the summer term of year 10, the autumn term of year 11 and the spring term of year 11, then a slightly larger proportion of centres work on the NEA in the autumn term of year 11 than in the other two terms. There are no hard and fast rules for this, however, and many centres straddle two terms.

Questions to consider:

- At what point will you have taught the practical skills needed for students to be able to succeed in the NEA?
- Do you want time between seeing the briefs and giving them to students, so you can ensure you've covered all the necessary codes and conventions for the products they will be making?
- Are there restrictions in your centre on when you can access the equipment you need for the NEA, such as computers/tablets?
- Is it better for your students to do the NEA later, when they have learnt more and their thinking is more mature, or is better to do more theoretical learning at that point, nearer to the final exams?

Where do I find the briefs?

A set of five new briefs is released each year on 1 March for submission the following year. Only the live briefs relevant to the year of submission can be used.

The briefs can be downloaded from [Centre Services](#).

Once in the secure site, go to Resources/Assessment and Training/Media Studies. Use the following filters:

- Qualification – GCSE
- Specification – 8572 Media Studies
- Exam session – select June and the year of submission.

In the list of files, you should see **two NEA Booklets**, one for students and one for teachers. Download both. In the teacher's booklet there is some extra guidance after each brief to support you, that is not necessary for students to see.

Do I have to use all the briefs?

You can choose how many briefs your students see. There are always five briefs, covering four media technologies: audio, e-media, print, and video.

If you are new to Media Studies, you might want to limit the briefs you offer to your students unless/until you are very comfortable in your own knowledge of advising on practical processes across the five briefs. Many centres limit the choice to one, two or three briefs, with more than half offering print or web and at least one other media format depending on the teacher's preference and their knowledge of their students. Only a small proportion of centres offer the full range. It's helpful to also consider the resources available in your centre when deciding which briefs to offer to your students.

Aren't some briefs easier than others?

All media products carry the same potential marks, so any of the briefs *could* earn a student maximum marks. It could be that students in your school have, in the past, had better marks for film products or for print products, for example - some centres definitely have a bias towards one medium or another - but nationally none of the media formats performs better than the others. The minimum requirements have been designed to ensure parity between the briefs in terms of complexity.

As the briefs change every year, you may want to wait and see what they are for the year ahead before making your decision about what to offer the students.

What should I have taught before the NEA?

Students shouldn't be meeting practical skills for the first time while undertaking the NEA. So, make sure they've already had some practice with the software, hardware, planning skills and production skills they're going to use.

Each of the NEA briefs is related to at least one of the CSPs, so students should know and understand the codes and conventions of the CSP that their NEA task is most aligned to. If you've not yet covered the relevant CSPs in your scheme of work, you might want to add this learning in before you give out the NEA briefs.

What are students going to be handing in at the end?

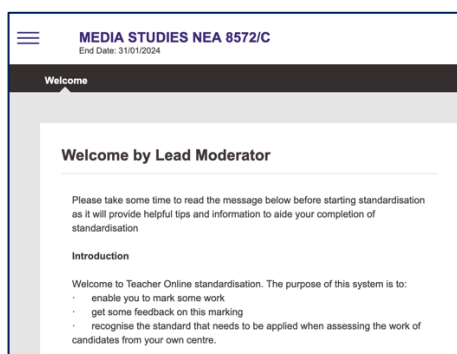
There are only two NEA elements that students need to submit: the 300-word statement of intent and the final product. You will submit these to AQA along with a candidate record form for each student and one centre declaration sheet for the whole cohort.

Can I see some examples?

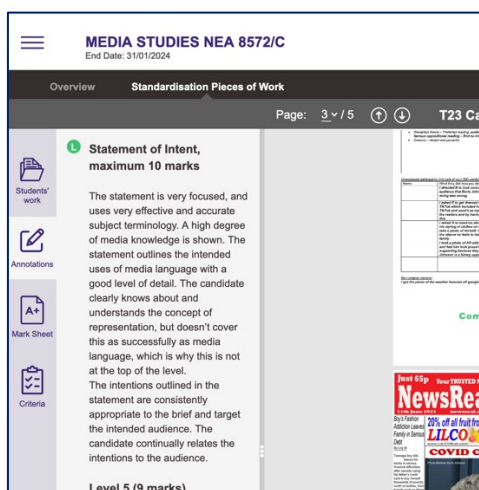
Teacher Online Standardisation (T-OLS)

You can see examples of existing work on the T-OLS platform on [Centre Services](#).

- In Centre Services, go to Pre-Exams/Teacher Online Standardisation/Teacher Online Standardisation.
- Select GCSE, and in the Arts/Media/Music list, select Media Studies NEA 8572/C.
- Choose whether to have your marks saved or not – it makes no difference to AQA, only to you. Click on Start Standardising.
- Go to the navigation icon in the top left corner, and select either 'Standardisation' or 'Search for other pieces of marked work'.



- Under 'Standardisation' click on the tab for 'Standardisation Pieces of Work'.
- Under 'Search for other pieces of work' click on a student's identifier.
- When looking at the work, click on the Mark Sheet icon and enter your marks. You will then be shown the actual marks given by AQA.
- Going back to the piece of work and clicking on the Annotations icon at this point will show you the thinking behind the marks.



NEA Responses and Commentaries

Examples are also available in the **NEA Answers and Commentaries** resource. This shows examples of student work at high and medium grades for previous briefs on each of these formats: Television, Music videos, Radio, Newspapers, Magazines, Advertising and marketing,

Online, social and participatory media, and Video games. You can find this booklet on Centre Services.

What basic steps should I plan for in the NEA process?

The NEA process should take about 30-40 teaching hours. You know your students best, and their prior knowledge, but these are the main steps to consider building in to your NEA process:

Pre-production

- Students learn and practise the practical production skills needed on a small, guided piece, if they've not already learnt these skills.
- Introduce the briefs and show examples of previous student work for earlier briefs (available on the T-OLS system on Centre Services).
- Students look at similar professional products to the ones they are going to create, including the relevant CSPs (e.g. for the 2024 magazine brief, look at Tatler magazine amongst others). They should note down the conventions they have discovered that they need to use in their own products.
- Use the brief and the conventions to plan their overall ideas. Ensure they fit the chosen brief.
- Use the brief, conventions and outline planning to create detailed planning, choosing colours, fonts, mise-en-scene etc, drawing storyboards or diagrams, writing scripts, drafting layouts etc.
- Write the statement of intent, first draft, outlining what they intend to create and why, in response to the brief.

Production

- Film, photograph, record and write, as appropriate to the brief, following their planning.
- Re-draft the statement of intent to create a final version, no more than 300 words in length.

Post-production

- Edit the production - laying out websites or print products, editing videos or audio productions.
- If need be, re-shoot, re-record or re-write anything that's not quite working, during this period, to add into the edit.
- Students to check the production against the brief and their statement of intent to ensure they've not forgotten anything, and amend if necessary.
- Export to the correct format for submission to the teacher and then to AQA.

2. Setting and understanding the NEA briefs

Why are there two columns to each brief?

There is a difference between the 'brief' and the 'minimum requirements', but both are just as important.

Example of a brief, this one is for submission in 2024.

Brief Five	
Brief	Minimum requirements
<p>Create a two-minute sequence for an episode of a new television fantasy drama series, which includes a recognition of the disruption within the narrative.</p> <p>This series is aimed at a family audience with older children/teenagers.</p>	<p>At least two filming locations.</p> <p>At least two characters, including a protagonist.</p> <p>Variety of shot selection, framing of the image and camera movement.</p> <p>Diegetic sound (which could include but is not restricted to dialogue, foley sound and ambience/atmosphere) and non-diegetic sound (which could include but is not restricted to music and voiceover) as appropriate to create meanings.</p> <p>Use of narrative codes appropriate to the genre to portray the recognition of the disruption within the narrative.</p> <p>Editing of the footage, soundtrack and dialogue to establish meaning.</p>

The information in the left-hand side of the brief is what 'the client' wants. These are the overall requirements of the brief that *must* be met. If students stray from these at all they will not be meeting the brief.

The information in the right-hand side gives the *minimum* requirements the student must submit in order to be able to fully show their understanding of the codes and conventions of the chosen media format. They can include *more* than this, as long as this doesn't contradict the brief itself.

In the example above, the length of the video is stated in the left-hand column which means it's a *definite* requirement, and anything beyond two minutes shouldn't be marked. The need for two characters is in the *minimum* requirements in the right-hand column, so there's no problem with having more than two characters.

If anything in either side is not met, then students can't access the top marks for Production: Effectiveness.

If, for example, the submitted piece is over or under the required length (by more than a few seconds in this case), it hasn't met the brief and so will be penalised in the Production: Effectiveness section of the marks. In addition, the moderator doesn't have to watch/listen past the required length, so if some of the minimum requirements aren't included in this section, the piece wouldn't have met the brief in full.

Should I actually give out the briefs?

Once you've chosen how many briefs you're going to allow students to choose from, ensure you have copies of these for each student, from the **NEA Student Booklet**. Students can be given these electronically or physically, but it's important that they have their own copy, so that they can see all of the requirements and continually refer to these as they work on their NEA.

It would be good for the students to be able to use their brief as a checklist during the NEA process.

What if the students have questions?

Students will have questions and suggestions. You and they should keep going back to the brief to see if what they are suggesting fits comfortably within the wording. Remember that you also have additional guidance in the **NEA Teacher Booklet**. Also check similar professional products to see if what they're suggesting is viable within existing products. Don't try to squeeze something in that doesn't fit, as the student will lose marks for not meeting the brief or not using conventions if this is the case. If you're not sure how to answer a student's question, please contact your **NEA Adviser** to get clarification.

What expectations should I set?

Set clear deadlines for each stage of the process.

Explain that:

- straying from the brief will limit their marks
- you will expect to see professional codes and conventions of the chosen format and genre
- everything must be the student's own work – ie they have made all the decisions about the creation of each aspect of their product.

3. Working on NEA responses

How long should the NEA take?

There is no limit to the time you can use, but you have to balance the NEA against the learning time for the theoretical framework. As a guide, the whole NEA process, including research and planning, should take about 30-40 hours, with up to 30 hours on the practical production itself.

How do I start?

First steps would be to present the brief and analyse some examples of similar professional media products. Ensure that students are clear about the needs of the brief itself, and the minimum requirements of the chosen brief, before they start to think about their own ideas, otherwise they may get an idea stuck in their head and support/guidance may be difficult.

What about the statement of intent?

Is there an official form for the statement of intent?

The 'official' form for the Statement of Intent is given on the final page of the **NEA Student Booklet** each year. As this is not a format that can be typed into, you could copy and paste the words into a Word document and save it as a template to give to your students.

When should the statement of intent be written?

Students should have planned their product in detail, perhaps carried out some of the pre-production work, but not have started to layout/edit their work, before they write the statement of intent. It is exactly what it says it is – and should therefore discuss intentions, rather than a product the student has already made. If they haven't yet planned their product in detail, however, they can't write in detail.

How strict is the 300-word limit for the statement of intent?

It is important that students stick to the word limit give or take 10%. You can encourage students to use headings and bullet points to support them in shaping their statement; hopefully this will allow them to present the information in a more focused way.

What should the statement of intent focus on?

The key to success is to answer the question that has been set for the statement of intent. This is found at the end of the student booklet, on the suggested outline for the statement of intent. It asks: **How will you use media language and media representations in order to create your product and meet the requirements of the brief and the needs of the target audience?** So, this means that students need to discuss specific examples of the media language they will be using in order to create specific media representations. They need to explain how these will be understood by the target audience and will fit with the brief.

For example, for a music video for a new artist (2023 brief), they might discuss exactly how they are creating the representation of the singer or band in order to attract the audience - clothing, attitude, actions etc. They might also discuss specific conventions they are going to

use from the specific genre of music video they're going to make, such as specific camera shots, lighting, or aspects of mise-en-scene.

What hardware and software should we use?

It's not necessary to use any specific software to create the production tasks; what you use depends on what you have available to you. If your centre allows students to use mobile phones in lessons, then these can probably do everything you want students to be able to access, for free. There are also free or easily accessible computer-based ways to complete products in all of the four media technologies: audio, e-media, print and video.

A separate booklet, [Teaching Guide: NEA Production](#), is available on our website. This includes guidance on accessing each of the technologies.

A separate word about creating websites, as this is the area that creates the most concerns regarding software: The website needs to be viewable in a standard web browser, such as Firefox, Google Chrome, or Safari. If creating it in PowerPoint or a similar non-web-specific program allows users to look at the completed website in a web browser, that's fine. Otherwise, consider some of the free online apps to create websites, such as Wix or Weebly, but see the points below.

Can students use online apps and aids?

Students are able to use apps such as Canva (for print products) and Wix or Weebly (for websites) but they should replace the template contents with their own images and text. They should, for example, remove any backgrounds that came with the app if they can, to enable their own use of media language to be shown. This will ensure that everything is constructed as the result of their own selection and decision-making.

Students can also use logo design programmes on the internet if they choose to do so but if they do this, such logos should not be included in the count of original images used. Alternatively, students could draw by hand and scan, or create their logos within a drawing programme or something like WordArt.

Can students create their production work by hand?

Students can create some elements of production work by hand to some extent. Basically, students need to ensure they are following established practices and conventions. There are some adverts that use hand-drawn imagery, so that in itself is fine. What those adverts' creators do is to then add the text digitally. So, if students completed the imagery by hand, then photographed or scanned in the image before finalising the advert digitally, that would fit within established practice. There would have to be a good reason for using hand-drawing, as the students will be assessed on their decision to do so - so the use of hand-drawing itself would be expected to add to the meanings in the advert.

Can students use animation instead of live action in video?

Animation is absolutely fine where this is within established conventions. If you or your students can point to real examples within the same or a similar genre that use animation,

then there's no problem with using it. They need to ensure that their animation is as good as (or better than) their live action work would be in showing their understanding of media language, media representations and addressing the needs of an audience.

Do 'characters' have to be human?

The word 'character' has been deliberately chosen so that it can be interpreted however the student wants. Again, the work produced should fit within established conventions, so if it's absolutely conventional to only use humans, then that's what is needed. But if professional products make use of non-human characters, that's fine. The student should note their reasons for doing this in their statement of intent.

Can students help each other?

The students can ask anyone to act as their 'crew' as long as all the creative decisions are the student's own. Any use of 'non-assessed students' has to be explained on the candidate record form, including an explanation of how the candidate directed them.

Students could, for example, use images of themselves if they directed a friend or family member to take the photographs and then they explain on the candidate record form what they got the person to do. That would be fine, as long as the decisions are the candidate's and they have explained those.

Can students work together?

All work must be created under the direction of the student themselves, with the assessed student making all of the decisions. The creation element must be individual.

A pair or small group of students could use the same 'haunted house' for a video's main setting, for example, as long as they're not collaborating. Each student's video would need to be original even if they are using the others as unassessed participants.

If students set up a photographic studio collectively, and each take a shoot within that space, that would be okay. But they cannot share the same actual shots, as they cannot have each made the decisions for those same shots.

Can students work on their NEA outside of school/college?

There are guidelines on the way the NEA should be addressed in the **specification**, from page 31 to 34. Here it states that "Students must have sufficient direct supervision to ensure that the work submitted can be confidently authenticated as their own." On the candidate record forms, you will sign the top of page 2 to declare that this is true of your students.

In practice, this means that if you are aware of the decisions the student has made in their detailed planning, then they can film/photograph/record away from your centre, and you can match this work against the intentions you've already seen. The more detailed the planning, the more confidence you can have that the student has made the decisions themselves.

Although the briefs are written so that they can be answered wholly within the centre, there is greater scope for appropriate use of *mise-en-scene* if they can create content elsewhere.

Post-production editing done away from the centre is more problematic, as it's harder to identify whether the nuances are the student's own. For this reason, it would be more advisable to do this in Media Studies lesson-time in the centre.

Any tips on laying out and printing print products?

Size of pages

As far as print, magazine and newspaper products are concerned, the pages should be proportional in size to the product that students are producing. You don't need to print the products at this size. If a student has used the proportions of a real newspaper, for example, the full newspaper pages can then be printed onto A3 paper, to ensure that text size is of a size that will be clearly legible to the moderator.

There have been issues where some productions will profess to be a newspaper and be printed onto A4 with a font size that would clearly be far too large, once enlarged to the correct size.

If you've used proportions other than those of the A series international paper sizes, the product will fit within the paper but won't fill the whole sheet. You can add a note to this effect on the CRF if you're not sure the moderator will realise this is what's happened.

Paper

Regular photocopier paper will be okay for printing onto. The quality of the paper and the printing needs to allow the images, text and colours to be seen clearly.

Additional material

Whilst the minimum word count might be 400 words, for example, for a newspaper product, students might decide that their product would conventionally have more words than this on the pages they are creating. They don't have to write several hundred extra words. They can employ placeholder text for the additional space, as long as the requirements of the brief have been fully met elsewhere.

How much guidance can I give?

There is information about teacher guidance in the **specification** on page 32. Students can revise and redraft their work. You can review it and provide *generic* feedback. You shouldn't be providing specific guidance on making individual detailed changes.

Two good ways to provide guidance are to:

- refer students back to the brief, and ask if they have definitely covered all of the points in both columns
- refer students to professional media products in the same format and genre, and ask them to compare theirs with the professional products.

Using these approaches, students will often pick up for themselves the specific changes they need to make.

What about found images and footage?

On page 22 of the **specification** it states: ‘With the exception of musical performances, students should not use any non-original material in their media products.’ It goes on to state that ‘If a student uses any non-original images, footage or text, they should be aware their marks will be limited by the marking criteria.’

There are a couple of exceptions:

- Social media icons and other logos for major corporations can be used on relevant media products, where these have not been requested as original logos in the brief. This is obviously an established convention and shows students’ understanding of the media.
- If a student is creating work well beyond the brief, such as adding adverts to a newspaper page as they know that would be conventional, but adverts are not in the minimum requirements. The minimum requirements are the aspects that will definitely carry marks. This use should be acknowledged by the student and by the teacher on the candidate record form, and the found images should not be marked.

Using found images within a layered image or using found footage with a green screen is still classed as using found material, and should be avoided.

How do I know what a good one looks like?

In section 1, we mentioned two ways to do this:

- **Teacher Online Standardisation** (T-OLS) available on Centre Services.
- The **NEA Responses and Commentaries** booklet available on the AQA website.

In addition, a ‘good one’ will have met every aspect of the brief, so use the brief as a checklist. And ask the students to do the same.

In the NEA Teacher Booklet there are additional guidance points, including what you might expect to see in higher level responses. One of the aspects listed here is often the subversion of stereotypes. Even to get full marks, it’s not *necessary* for students to challenge or subvert stereotypes - it’s just that it’s something you’re more likely to see in the higher-level responses. The marking criteria themselves make it clear that students who deliberately use stereotypes, but don’t subvert them, can also score highly.

When should I ask for the work to be handed in?

NEA marks have to be with your GCSE NEA moderator by 7 May. You can set your internal deadline whenever you want, as long as you have time to mark the work and submit the marks by 7 May. Consider how long marking will take you (be realistic), and whether you have to internally moderate. Consider also whether you want to set a deadline for the first full draft, before giving generic feedback and allowing students to work towards a final draft.

Who can I ask for advice?

You have an NEA Adviser, contactable by email. Please make use of them whenever you’re not sure of something to do with this component.

4. Marking and submitting work

When and how do I submit the marks and the work?

When you have marked the NEA work, you will need to take your marks to your exams officer. Either that person or you will then enter them online. The marks need to be submitted by 7 May.

The AQA marks submission software will then tell you which students are in your centre's sample. If you have a small cohort, it may request everyone's work. If you have more than 20 students, it should request 15 students' work, including the top and bottom marked candidates. The request for the sample will also include the name and address of your moderator.

The selected sample then has to be with your moderator within the next 5 working days - each student needs their production work, their statement of intent, and a [Candidate Record Form \(CRF\)](#).

Work samples can be sent off as soon as the marks are submitted. Don't forget to include the [Centre Declaration Sheet](#).

What should be on the candidate record form (CRF)?

The CRF needs to show your marks, and be signed by both you and the student. Please note that if CRFs are not signed, then no marks can be awarded – you could get students to sign these as soon as they hand the work in, before you've marked it, to be on the safe side.

Forms can be filled in electronically and signed electronically by the student.

Any person who has been used in NEA projects as cast or crew and who is not the Media Studies student themselves should be included in the 'unassessed participants' box - it doesn't matter if they're a Media Studies student themselves or not. This could include a list of the photographic models, the actors, or the person who took a photograph that the candidate set up. Almost all students will have something to write in this box.

A commentary from you supporting your marks is needed and can be included in the 'concluding comments' box. If you're filling this in digitally, this box will expand when needed. If you're writing by hand and there isn't space, the work can be commented upon by writing directly, perhaps on the back, if it's printed work, or on a piece of paper if the production is video or online. Some centres create their own comment sheets. If you do this, you must also fill in everything on the CRF except for the concluding comments.

How do I go about marking?

The mark scheme for the NEA is in the **specification** on pages 23 to 27. There is no need for a new mark scheme each year, as this mark scheme covers all the potential briefs. If there were

ever to be any changes to the mark scheme, this would be shown in an updated version of the **specification**.

More advice and guidance on marking is given in the booklet **NEA Responses and commentaries**, and you can learn more about the standard to be applied on T-OLS. Your objective is to be consistent across your cohort.

You should start with the statement of intent, as this is marked separately. The statement doesn't need to match the product in order to get a good mark – there have been a handful of cases seen where the student wrote a superb statement of intent and then made a lower quality product that didn't relate to this at all. The statement's marks still stand, as long as a product was submitted.

After this, the moderation team would advise moving on to the Production: Effectiveness section of the mark scheme. Use the brief as a checklist to see whether the student has met the brief in full, and also consider the use of conventions and how well the product meets the needs of the audience. If the brief has not been met or if found images have been used, this is where the student will lose marks for these errors.

Following this, you can mark Media Language and Media Representations without penalising again for the same errors. Does the product use media language effectively to convey narratives and control connotations? Does it use appropriate and effective representations to communicate clear meanings?

Your comments on the CRF or elsewhere need to show how each of the 4 separate marks per student have been awarded - one for the statement of intent, and three for the production work.

Do I have to use Teacher Online Standardisation?

This system on Centre Services is for you to be able to check the agreed AQA standard for this component. Its use is not compulsory, but if it's your first time or if you've previously had marks regressed, it would be very worthwhile making use of it.

Do I need to carry out internal moderation?

If more than one teacher has marked the GCSE Media Studies NEA work at your centre, then you need to carry out internal moderation to ensure you've got the rank order of candidates correct. Each centre has their own methods for this, but one potential way is to mark work of each other's candidates on or around three agreed marks across the mark range. As this unit is out of 60, that could be, for example, 55, 35 and 15. Check whether there is any pattern to the discrepancies, discuss how these arose and amend the rest of the marks accordingly.

If you're the only person in your centre who marks work for this unit, there is no need for internal moderation, but do check that your rank order makes sense before you submit the marks.

How do I prepare the work for the sample?

[Recording and submitting NEA evidence](#) is a comprehensive document that outlines what formats to use.

Following the guidelines in the document ensures that the moderator can open digital files and see your students' work as intended, regardless of their computer type. More detail is given in the document, but in brief:

- Sound files should be .wav or .mp3
- Videos should be .mp4 or could be posted on an 'unlisted' link on YouTube or similar, with the URL sent to the moderator
- Print products should be printed out
- Websites can be sent on USB pen drives, as URLs with print-outs, or as video walkthroughs.

You can include all the digital work from your centre on one USB pen drive, but all files must be labelled with the candidate number and surname of the relevant student. The USB pen drive must be appropriately encrypted. There is also an [encryption guidance](#) document to help you.

Your sample must also contain the CRF and statement of intent for each student, collated together – treasury tags, staples or plastic wallets are fine for this.

It would be really helpful to the moderator if you could place the paperwork in candidate number order or in rank order.

Using your password

The correct USB media encryption password can be found on Centre Services by navigating to Resources, then to Administration and finally Administration Resources. Make sure you select the correct one for GCSE Media Studies in the year of submission.

It's important that you use this password as it will be shared with your moderator. If you don't follow this procedure this could cause a delay to the moderation of your students' work.

How do I send work to the moderator?

AQA will send you AQA branded sacks to send your students' work.

- Send your students' samples as soon as possible – at the very latest, within five days of the submission deadline of 7 May.
- Include a signed candidate record form for each student.
- Include a signed centre declaration sheet for each component.
- Use standard post (do not use a service that requires a signature from the recipient).
- Keep a record of all items you send.
- Follow the [encryption guidance](#) for relevant student samples.

How does moderation work?

Moderators mark the work to the agreed AQA standard, attempting, as far as possible to uphold the marks that the centre has awarded. The moderated marks are reported back to

AQA, who may find the need to adjust the overall marks as a result. The moderator usually does not see every piece of work across a cohort, so an individual adjustment cannot be made if a student is in the wrong place in the rank order. It is therefore essential that the rank order is definitely correct as this will be maintained through any adjustment to the marks.

The folders for moderation are selected by the marks submission system for the moderator, by their position in the rank order of the whole group. This might not give an equal focus to all of the briefs your students have worked on. You therefore need to ensure you're marking every brief to the same standard, again to ensure the overall rank order is correct.

The moderator will write a report about what they've seen which will be sent digitally to your centre at the same time as the GCSE results in August.

Your students' work will be returned to your centre, usually in late July. Some of the work may have been retained for the purposes of awarding the grade boundaries, for future standardising or for future training. If this is the case, there will be a notification with the returned work. Only work that was individually within tolerance of the agreed AQA standard will be retained. All work used for training and standardisation is redacted as appropriate so that the centre and the student cannot be identified.

5. Further guidance

Grade boundaries

The grade boundaries are set each year at the GCSE Media Studies Awarding meeting, once the exams have been marked and the NEA has been moderated. They therefore could change each year.

Visit the [grade boundaries](#) page of our website for the most recent grade boundaries.

Using the wrong brief

Occasionally there are teachers who have set the sample briefs available on the main AQA website, or have set the briefs from a previous year of submission, instead of the correct briefs downloadable from Centre Services. If you think you're in this position, contact mediastudies@aqa.org.uk as soon as possible for advice.

Use of AI

This has been left for this final section as it's one that's still being debated. Our understanding at the moment is that AI-generated imagery, created by prompts from the student, is *not* unoriginal/found material. The student would need to include, on the front of the CRF, not just the software used but also the prompts they used to generate the image. This would help to show how much they were in control. There's a lot of difference between 'house after an earthquake' and 'high angle shot of a mid-twentieth century UK semi-detached house after an earthquake at Richter scale 8, on a rainy day' for example.

Whatever the prompts used, the moderator would assume that the student was happy with, and therefore intentionally included, all the aspects within the image. We would suggest, for the moment, that use of AI is restricted to things the student cannot create in any other way, and straightforward photography is used wherever possible.

AI should not be used to generate the statement of intent or the wording of any text required in a production.

Other resources

AQA website and guidance documents

There are a number of relevant documents available on the Media Studies section of the AQA website, most of which have already been mentioned in this guide. These include:

- an overview of the NEA process
- two sample NEA schemes of work
- a guide to teaching the NEA
- a submission guide
- an encryption guide.

For information about NEA submission, see links below:

- [Key dates](#)
- [Non-exam assessment administration](#)
- [Submitting marks](#)
- [NEA marking guidelines](#)

Examiner's reports

The latest report is always available on Centre Services under Resources/Assessment and Training/Subjects/Media Studies. You can then filter for Qualifications: GCSE and Resource type: Reports on the exams. [Older reports are available on our website.](#)

Teacher Online Standardisation (T-OLS)

Please see information earlier in this guide for access.

Curriculum Connect meetings

These are informal meetings via Teams, at which members of the AQA Curriculum team present a major theme each meeting and teachers are free to ask questions. You can [book onto these sessions via the professional development web page.](#)

Feedback meetings

These take place in the Autumn term - one on the summer's exam papers and one on the NEA that has recently been submitted. The sessions are both free.

Visit the [professional development](#) section of our website to book a place. These currently take place online, as two-hour twilight sessions. The relevant assessment leaders will have created the material. The focus of both sessions is on the key issues that were seen that year and how centres can avoid these or improve on these in the future. They are very much looking forwards not just looking back.

AQA Centre Services

As mentioned throughout this document, there is a wealth of information on this secure site. Your Exams Officer can assist you with access.

The Media Studies team at AQA

Contact MediaStudies@AQA.org.uk if you have general questions about the qualification. They can also send you the contact details for your NEA Adviser.

Your NEA Adviser

You can email your NEA Adviser to ask questions specifically about the GCSE Media Studies NEA. This booklet is based on the general answers the NEA Advisory team has been giving to centres since 2018, but what we can't include here are all the individual responses that are about the circumstances of one centre or are about clarifying one set brief.

As we would tell our students: no question is too small and there's no such thing as a silly question. Please do make use of this service. We look forward to hearing from you.