

---

# A-LEVEL MEDIA STUDIES

(7572)

---

**Specification**

For teaching from September 2017 onwards  
For A-level exams in 2019 onwards

---

Version 1.3 7 August 2023





# Contents

---

<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1 Why choose AQA for A-level Media Studies	5
1.2 Support and resources to help you teach	5
<b>2 Specification at a glance</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1 Subject content	7
2.2 Assessments	7
<b>3 Subject content</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1 Close study products (CSPs)	9
3.2 Contexts of the media	10
3.3 Extended response and synopticity	11
3.4 Media language	11
3.5 Media representation	13
3.6 Media industries	15
3.7 Media audiences	16
3.8 Non-exam assessment	18
<b>4 Scheme of assessment</b>	<b>27</b>
4.1 Aims	27
4.3 Assessment weightings	28
<b>5 Non-exam assessment administration</b>	<b>29</b>
5.1 Supervising and authenticating	29
5.2 Avoiding malpractice	29
5.3 Teacher standardisation	30
5.4 Internal standardisation	31
5.5 Commenting	31
5.6 Submitting marks	31
5.7 Factors affecting individual students	31
5.8 Keeping students' work	32
5.9 Moderation	32
5.10 After moderation	32
<b>6 General administration</b>	<b>33</b>
6.1 Entries and codes	33
6.2 Overlaps with other qualifications	33
6.3 Awarding grades and reporting results	33
6.4 Resits and shelf life	33
6.5 Previous learning and prerequisites	34
6.6 Access to assessment: diversity and inclusion	34

---

6.7 Working with AQA for the first time	34
6.8 Private candidates	35
6.9 Age-appropriateness	35

## Are you using the latest version of this specification?

- You will always find the most up-to-date version of this specification on our website at
- We will write to you if there are significant changes to the specification.

# 1 Introduction

---

## 1.1 Why choose AQA for A-level Media Studies

### Refreshed and relevant specifications

We've worked with media teachers and subject experts in order to build on the success of our outgoing qualifications, providing you and your students with refreshed and relevant qualifications. We've included more explicit and detailed content in our specifications, highlighting the key concepts, ideas and theories, so that you're clear on what you need to teach.

Through studying Media Studies students will view, evaluate and analyse a variety of media products, and develop practical skills spanning a range of media forms. You'll find contemporary, diverse topics and varied and engaging content, helping your students to develop research, problem-solving skills as well as their creativity. They'll also refine their debating skills through the discussion of contemporary issues from a range of perspectives.

Our AS and A-level specifications offer a smooth progression from GCSE Media Studies and provide you with scope to teach contemporary thinking in media studies. Students will also extend their practical skills in their chosen medium, building their capacity for independent research, and gaining a deeper appreciation and understanding of the role media plays in day-to-day life. Our AS and A-level courses are also fully co-teachable so students can be taught in the same class.

### Clear, well-structured exams, accessible for all

We know how important it is for written assessments to be clear, well-structured and easy for students to understand. Students will enjoy the variety of question styles we use in our assessment, which includes both short and extended answer questions.

We've created exciting non-exam assessment briefs that provide you with clear guidance and support to help your students to create media products which they can be truly proud of.

### Clear progression to higher education and beyond

AS and A-level Media Studies give your students transferable skills for future careers and experience that prepares them if they choose to progress with their study.

You can find out about all our Media Studies qualifications at [aqa.org.uk/media-studies](https://aqa.org.uk/media-studies)

## 1.2 Support and resources to help you teach

We've worked with experienced teachers to provide you with a range of resources that will help you confidently plan, teach and prepare for exams.

### Teaching resources

Visit [aqa.org.uk/7572](https://aqa.org.uk/7572) to see all our teaching resources. They include:

- sample schemes of work and lesson plans to help you plan your course with confidence
- student textbooks that have been checked by AQA

- 
- progress tests with engaging on-screen delivery and instant feedback
  - training courses to help you deliver AQA Media Studies qualifications
  - subject expertise courses for all teachers, from newly qualified teachers who are just getting started to experienced teachers looking for fresh inspiration.

## Preparing for exams

Visit [aqa.org.uk/7572](https://aqa.org.uk/7572) for everything you need to prepare for our exams, including:

- past papers, mark schemes and examiner reports
- Exampro: a searchable bank of past AQA exam questions
- example student answers with examiner commentaries.

## Analyse your students' results with Enhanced Results Analysis (ERA)

Find out which questions were the most challenging, how the results compare to previous years and where your students need to improve. ERA, our free online results analysis tool, will help you see where to focus your teaching. Register at [aqa.org.uk/era](https://aqa.org.uk/era)

For information about results, including maintaining standards over time, grade boundaries and our post-results services, visit [aqa.org.uk/results](https://aqa.org.uk/results)

## Keep your skills up-to-date with professional development

Time in the classroom is precious, but we understand that as your career develops, the skills and knowledge you need may change. As well as subject-specific training, we offer a range of courses to help boost your skills.

- Feedback sessions to understand how students have performed in this year's exams.
- Virtual communities where you can chat to teachers in your subject area about what's important to you.

This is just the start. Our events calendar is full of different ways for you to learn, understand and be inspired. Find out more at [aqa.org.uk/professional-development](https://aqa.org.uk/professional-development).

## Help and support

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at [aqa.org.uk/7572](https://aqa.org.uk/7572)

If you'd like us to share news and information about this qualification, sign up for emails and updates at [aqa.org.uk/from-2017](https://aqa.org.uk/from-2017)

Alternatively, you can call or email our subject team direct.

E: [mediastudies@aca.org.uk](mailto:mediastudies@aca.org.uk)

T: 01483 556 301

# 2 Specification at a glance

This qualification is linear. Linear means that students will sit all their exams and submit all their non-exam assessment at the end of the course.

## 2.1 Subject content

1. [Media language](#) (page 11)
2. [Media representation](#) (page 13)
3. [Media industries](#) (page 15)
4. [Media audiences](#) (page 16)

## 2.2 Assessments

Media One
<p><b>What's assessed</b></p> <p>Section A will focus on Media Language and Media Representations. Questions in this section will test the following forms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advertising and marketing</li> <li>• music video.</li> </ul> <p>Section B will focus on Media Industries and Media Audiences. Questions in this section can test any two of the following forms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• radio</li> <li>• newspapers</li> <li>• film (industries only).</li> </ul>
<p><b>How it's assessed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written exam: 2 hours</li> <li>• 84 marks</li> <li>• 35% of A-level</li> </ul>
<p><b>Questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A range of questions relating to an unseen source and Close Study Products.</li> <li>• Two essay questions (20 marks), one of which is an extended response question.</li> </ul>



## Media Two

### What's assessed

Questions will focus on the in-depth media forms of television, magazines and online, social and participatory media/video games.

### How it's assessed

- Written exam: 2 hours
- 84 marks
- 35% of A-level

### Questions

- One medium length unseen analysis question.
- Three essay questions (25 marks), one of which is an extended response question and one of which is a synoptic question.



## Non-exam assessment: Creating a cross-media production

### What's assessed

- Application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework.
- Ability to create media products.

### How it's assessed

- A choice of one of six annually changing briefs, set by AQA.
- 60 marks
- 30% of A-level
- Assessed by teachers
- Moderated by AQA

### Tasks

Students produce:

- a statement of intent
- a cross-media production made for an intended audience.



# 3 Subject content

---

A-level Media Studies engages students in the in depth study of media products in relation to the four areas of the theoretical framework:

- media language
- media representation
- media industries
- media audiences.

Students are required to study media products from all of the following media forms:

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

Film is an inextricable part of the wider media landscape, which is intimately connected with other media, such as television, video games and online media. However, to avoid overlap with GCE AS and A-level film studies, film should not be a primary object of study in this context. Students may study individual feature films, but this must only occur in the context of cross-media study, which explores the convergence of media platforms and technologies, or in the context of the study of media industries. For the purposes of this specification, film will only be studied in the context of the study of media industries.

## 3.1 Close study products (CSPs)

In addition to the broad coverage of all nine media forms, students must engage in the in depth study of at least one audio-visual, one print and one online social and participatory media form. Each in depth study will link the specified media form to all four areas of the theoretical framework.

AQA will publish a list of products that students must study on the secure area of the AQA website on 1 June preceding the start of the course. These are the Close Study Products (CSPs). The CSPs will be reviewed annually. The newspapers will be updated every year in order to ensure that the stories students are covering do not become too outdated. Other products will be refreshed periodically.

You must ensure that you download a new CSP booklet every year in June in order to ensure that your students are studying the correct products as questions in the exams will relate to these products.

AQA will provide information about how to access the CSPs in the CSP booklet that can be downloaded from the secure area of the AQA website.

---

The Close Study Products (CSPs) will address the requirement that students engage with products which:

- possess cultural, social and historical significance
- reflect and illuminate the theoretical framework underlying the study of media together with the theoretical perspectives associated with them
- illustrate a full range of media products in terms of perceived quality, form and structure
- provide rich and challenging opportunities for interpretation and in-depth critical analysis, enabling students to develop a detailed understanding of how the media communicate meanings and how audiences respond
- cover different historical periods and different global settings
- be intended for different audiences
- demonstrate emerging, future developments of the media
- cover examples of media students would not normally engage with
- at least one media product produced before 1970
- at least one media product produced for a non-English speaking audience
- at least one media product produced outside the commercial mainstream
- at least one media product targeting, or produced by, a minority group.

The focus of study is not the products themselves but, rather, the theoretical framework and contexts of media. Exam questions will focus on the theoretical framework and contexts of the media but students will be expected to answer with reference to, or analysis of, relevant CSPs. These products should be seen as a vehicle for the delivery of the specification, rather than products to be 'learned' in detail.

It is essential that students study all of the CSPs, but it is advised that they are supplemented by further examples of age appropriate media products in order to develop a full knowledge and understanding of the contexts of the media and the theoretical framework.

Where a television programme is set as one of the CSPs, AQA will specify the episode that students should study in depth. Students should develop an outline knowledge of the series to place narrative, plot and genre elements of the specified episodes in context. Please see the Close Study Product booklet for more information about what students need to be familiar with in terms of the television series.

For this course, online, social and participatory media and video games will be linked. There will be some independent online, social and participatory media products and some independent video games but sometimes these two media forms will be linked and video games will be studied alongside associated online, social and participatory media products. Please see the Close Study Products booklet for more information.

## 3.2 Contexts of the media

The subject content is detailed in relation to each area of the theoretical framework.

This specification requires students to closely analyse and compare media products in relation to relevant key social, cultural, economic, political and historical contexts. Not every question in every exam series will require the analysis of the five contexts but students will need to be familiar with all of them in relation to a range of media products.

Knowledge and understanding should be developed through the practical analysis or creation of media products.

Media products should be considered in the light of the contexts in which they are produced and received.

There is a grid in the CSP booklet which illustrates the contexts in which each of the products should be considered.

## 3.3 Extended response and synopticity

This specification requires students to:

- provide extended responses to some questions
- demonstrate their ability to draw together different areas of knowledge, skills and/or understanding from across their full course of study.

These questions will be highlighted on the front of question papers.

Extended response questions will require students to demonstrate their ability to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, relevant, substantiated and logically structured.

## 3.4 Media language

In this section students will develop their knowledge and understanding of:

- how the different modes and language associated with different media forms communicate multiple meanings
- how the combination of elements of media language influence meaning
- how developing technologies affect media language
- the codes and conventions of media forms and products, including the processes through which media language develops as genre
- the dynamic and historically relative nature of genre
- the processes through which meanings are established through intertextuality
- how audiences respond to and interpret the above aspects of media language
- how genre conventions are socially and historically relative, dynamic and can be used in a hybrid way
- the significance of challenging and/or subverting genre conventions
- the significance of the varieties of ways in which intertextuality can be used in the media
- the way media language incorporates viewpoints and ideologies.

### 3.4.1 Enabling ideas to support the study of media language

The content below identifies the enabling theories, key ideas and terms that constitute key theoretical aspects of media language. Students will develop knowledge and understanding of the following theoretical aspects.

#### 3.4.1.1 Semiotics

Semiotics:

- Sign
- Signifier
- Signified
- Dominant signifier
- Icon
- Index

- 
- Code
  - Symbol
  - Anchorage
  - Ideology
  - Paradigm
  - Syntagm.

Barthes' ideas and theories on semiotics:

- Signification
- Denotation
- Connotation
- Myth.

### 3.4.1.2 Narratology

Narratology:

- Narrative Codes
- Narration
- Diegesis
- Quest narrative
- 'Character types'
- Causality
- Plot
- Masterplot.

Todorov's ideas and theories on narratology:

- Narrative structure
- Equilibrium
- Disruption
- New equilibrium.

### 3.4.1.3 Genre theory as summarised by Neale

- Conventions and rules
- Sub-genre
- Hybridity
- Genres of order and integration
- 'Genre as cultural category'.

### 3.4.1.4 Structuralism

Lévi-Strauss' ideas and theories on structuralism:

- Binary oppositions
- Mytheme
- Cultural codes
- Ideological reading
- Deconstruction.

### 3.4.1.5 Postmodernism

Postmodernism:

- Pastiche
- Bricolage
- Intertextuality
- Implosion.

Baudrillard's ideas and theories on postmodernism:

- Simulacra
- Simulation
- Hyperreality.

## 3.5 Media representation

In this section students will develop their knowledge and understanding of:

- the way events, issues, individuals (including self-representation) and social groups (including social identity) are represented through processes of selection and combination
- the way the media through re-presentation construct versions of reality
- the processes which lead media producers to make choices about how to represent events, issues, individuals and social groups
- the effect of social and cultural context on representations
- how and why stereotypes can be used positively and negatively
- how and why particular social groups, in a national and global context, may be under-represented or misrepresented
- how media representations convey values, attitudes and beliefs about the world and how these may be systematically reinforced across a wide range of media representations
- how audiences respond to and interpret media representations
- the way in which representations make claims about realism
- the impact of industry contexts on the choices media producers make about how to represent events, issues, individuals and social groups
- the effect of historical context on representations
- how representations may invoke discourses and ideologies and position audiences
- how audience responses to and interpretations of media representations reflect social, cultural and historical circumstances.

### 3.5.1 Enabling ideas to support the study of media representation

The content below identifies the enabling theories, key ideas and terms that constitute key theoretical aspects of media representation. Students will develop knowledge and understanding of the following theoretical aspects.

#### 3.5.1.1 Theories of representation

Theories of representation:

- Positive and negative stereotypes
- Countertypes
- Misrepresentation
- Selective representation

- 
- Dominant ideology
  - Constructed reality
  - Hegemony
  - Audience positioning.

Hall's ideas and theories on representation:

- Encoding/decoding.

### 3.5.1.2 Theories of identity as summarised by Gauntlett

- Fluidity of identity
- Constructed identity
- Negotiated identity
- Collective identity.

### 3.5.1.3 Feminist theories

Feminist theories:

- Male gaze
- Voyeurism
- Patriarchy
- Sexualisation/Raunch Culture
- Post-feminism
- Female gaze.

Van Zoonen's ideas and theories on feminist theory:

- Gender and power
- Gender as discourse.

hooks' ideas and theories on feminist theory:

- Intersectionality.

### 3.5.1.4 Theories of gender performativity

Theories of gender performativity:

- Sex and gender.

Butler's ideas and theories on gender performativity:

- Gender as performativity ('a stylised repetition of acts')
- Gender as historical situation rather than natural fact
- Subversion.

### 3.5.1.5 Theories around ethnicity and postcolonial theory

Theories around ethnicity and postcolonial theory:

- Cultural imperialism
- Multiculturalism
- Imagined communities
- Marginalisation
- Orientalism
- Otherness (alterity).

Gilroy's ideas and theories on ethnicity and post-colonial theory:

- Diaspora
- Double Consciousness.

## 3.6 Media industries

In this section students will develop their knowledge and understanding of:

- processes of production, distribution and circulation by organisations, groups and individuals in a global context
- the specialised and institutionalised nature of media production, distribution and circulation
- the relationship of recent technological change and media production, distribution and circulation
- the significance of patterns of ownership and control, including conglomerate ownership, vertical integration and diversification
- the significance of economic factors, including commercial and not-for-profit public funding, to media industries and their products
- how media organisations maintain, including through marketing, varieties of audiences nationally and globally
- the regulatory framework of contemporary media in the UK
- the impact of 'new' digital technologies on media regulation, including the role of individual producers
- how processes of production, distribution and circulation shape media products
- the impact of digitally convergent media platforms on media production, distribution and circulation, including individual producers
- the role of regulation in global production, distribution and circulation
- the effect of individual producers on media industries.

### 3.6.1 Enabling ideas to support the study of media industries

The content below identifies the enabling theories, key ideas and terms that constitute key theoretical aspects of media industries. Students will develop knowledge and understanding of the following theoretical aspects.

#### 3.6.1.1 Power and media industries as summarised by Curran and Seaton

- Regulation
- Deregulation
- Free market
- Media concentration
- Public Service Broadcasting (PSB)
- Globalisation
- Conglomerates
- Neo-liberalism
- Surveillance
- Privacy
- Security.

---

### 3.6.1.2 Regulation as summarised by Livingstone and Lunt

- Public sphere
- Governance
- Regulation
- Public interest/PSB
- Media literacy
- Power
- Value
- Transnational culture
- Globalisation.

### 3.6.1.3 Cultural industries as summarised by Hesmondhalgh

Cultural industries:

- Cultural industries
- Commodification
- Convergence
- Diversity
- Innovation
- Conglomeration
- Vertical integration
- Cultural imperialism.

## 3.7 Media audiences

In this section students will develop their knowledge and understanding of:

- how audiences are grouped and categorised by media industries, including by age, gender and social class, as well as by lifestyle and taste
- how media producers target, attract, reach, address and potentially construct audiences
- how media industries target audiences through the content and appeal of media products and through the ways in which they are marketed, distributed and circulated
- the interrelationship between media technologies and patterns of consumption and response
- how audiences interpret the media, including how they may interpret the same media in different ways
- how audiences interact with the media and can be actively involved in media production
- how specialised audiences can be reached, both on a national and global scale, through different media technologies and platforms
- how media organisations reflect the different needs of mass and specialised audiences, including through targeting
- how audiences use media in different ways, reflecting demographic factors as well as aspects of identity and cultural capital
- the role and significance of specialised audiences, including niche and fan, to the media
- the way in which different audience interpretations reflect social, cultural and historical circumstances.



## 3.7.1 Enabling ideas to support the study of media audiences

The content below identifies the enabling theories, key ideas and terms that constitute key theoretical aspects of media audiences. Students will develop knowledge and understanding of the following theoretical aspects.

### 3.7.1.1 Media effects

Media effects:

- Uses and gratifications
- Hypodermic needle theory
- Moral panic
- Cumulation
- Media literacy.

Bandura's ideas and theories on media effects:

- Social learning/Imitation

### 3.7.1.2 Cultivation theory

Cultivation theory:

- Socialisation
- Standardisation
- Enculturation
- Bardic function.

Gerbner's ideas and theories on cultivation theory:

- Cultivation differential
- Mainstreaming
- Resonance
- Mean World Index.

### 3.7.1.3 Reception theory

Reception theory:

- Agenda setting
- Framing
- Myth making
- Conditions of consumption.

Hall's ideas and theories on reception theory:

- Encoding/decoding
- Hegemonic/negotiated/oppositional.

### 3.7.1.4 Fandom

Fandom:

- Prosumer
- Interactivity.

---

Jenkins' ideas and theories on fandom:

- Participatory culture
- Textual poaching.

### 3.7.1.5 'End of audience' theories

'End of audience' theories:

- Digital natives
- 'We the media'
- Web 2.0
- Convergence
- Prosumer.

Shirky's ideas and theories on 'End of audience':

- Mass amateurisation
- Cognitive surplus

## 3.8 Non-exam assessment

The NEA element requires students to:

- apply their knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media studies to create a media product using one of the following forms:
  - television
  - music video
  - radio
  - newspapers
  - magazines
  - advertising/marketing
  - online, social and participatory media
  - video games
- communicate meaning to an intended audience.

### 3.8.1 The briefs

To complete the NEA, students must independently create a cross-media production in response to a brief set by AQA. AQA will release six briefs on 1 March in the year preceding the exam via Secure Key Materials. These briefs will change **annually**. The briefs will be linked to the A-level Media Studies CSPs. AQA will specify the media form and the intended audience for the media products. The media products that are devised and realised by the student must communicate meaning to a specified audience, draw on what they know and understand about the theoretical framework of media studies and demonstrate understanding of the digitally convergent nature of media products.

The [Marking criteria](#) (page 20) detail what students will be expected to demonstrate and provide evidence of when completing the NEA task. Additional task-specific content will be issued with each of the briefs. Please refer to [Non-exam assessment administration](#) (page 29) for more information about the instructions for conducting the NEA.

## 3.8.2 The Statement of Intent

Students must complete a Statement of Intent that outlines how they have applied their knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework to their media product. This must be submitted to AQA with the media product.

This Statement of Intent should be a maximum of 500 words long and it should be submitted to the teacher no later than 1 April in the year of assessment. The template for the Statement of Intent will be supplied by AQA in the NEA Student Booklet along with the briefs.

## 3.8.3 Size and duration of products

Each brief will specify the required length, amount or duration of the media product that must be created.

## 3.8.4 Unassessed participants

Students must complete an individual cross-media production. Students may, however, use unassessed participants to:

- appear in their media products
- operate equipment under the direction of the assessed student.

All unassessed participants involved in the products must be listed on the Candidate Record Form (CRF). Assessed students can only be credited for work they have undertaken themselves or has been completed under their direction. Students and teachers will be required to sign the CRF to confirm that this is the case.

Credit can only be given for contributions made by unassessed participants under the clear direction of the assessed student. Details of what each of the unassessed participants contributed to the product and how the assessed student directed that contribution should be listed on the Candidate Record Form.

## 3.8.5 Time spent on NEA

There is no limit to the amount of time that students can spend on their NEA but we recommend they spend around 30 hours on the physical creation of their products. It should be noted that excessive time spent on this component in the classroom could be detrimental to the overall attainment of the students. Teachers should strike a balance between the completion of the NEA and preparation for the examined components. Additionally, demonstration of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework is key to success in the NEA so time spent teaching the framework will inform the development of the NEA products.

## 3.8.6 Use of non-original material

With the exception of musical performances, students should not use any non-original material in their media products. All images, footage and text is to be created by the student. If a student does use any non-original images, footage or text, they should be aware that their marks will be limited by the marking criteria (see [Guidance on applying the marking criteria](#) (page 20)). They must acknowledge any non-original material on the Candidate Record Form.

Students do not have to write and record their own musical performances, either to use as part of a soundtrack or in a music video. Musical tracks that they use should be acknowledged on the Candidate Record Form.

---

## 3.8.7 Websites and video games

For briefs where website or video game creation is required, students do not need to be able to code. Students can use website design apps, online templates and game design software. Students are responsible for the design of the website or game and the content (such as language, images, audio-visual material) must be created by the student. Students must acknowledge any software or templates which have been used on the appropriate Candidate Record Form.

## 3.8.8 Marking criteria

### 3.8.8.1 Guidance on applying the marking criteria

Level of response marking instructions are broken down into levels, each of which has a descriptor. The descriptor for the level shows the average performance for the level.

Before you apply the mark scheme to a student's media product, review the product and annotate it and/or make notes on it to show the qualities that are being looked for. You can then apply the marking criteria.

Start at the lowest level of the marking criteria and use it as a ladder to see whether the product meets the descriptor for that level. The descriptor for the level indicates the different qualities that might be seen in the student's product for that level. If it meets the lowest level then go to the next one and decide if it meets this level, and so on, until you have a match between the level descriptor and the product.

You can compare your student's product with the standardisation examples to determine if it is the same standard, better or worse.

When assigning a level you should look at the overall quality of the product. If the product covers different aspects of different levels of the mark scheme you should use a best fit approach for defining the level and then use the variability of the product to help decide the mark within the level, ie if the product is predominantly level 3 with a small amount of level 4 material it would be placed in level 3 but be awarded a mark near the top of the level because of the level 4 content.

You should mark the cross-media production using a holistic approach. The following list offers some guidance about how to apply the criteria across the two products:

- Level 5: Both products within the cross-media brief are completed to an equal standard.
- Level 4: Both products within the cross-media brief are completed to a generally equal standard, although one product may be slightly better than the other.
- Level 3: Both products within the cross-media brief are completed, but one product may be better than the other.
- Level 2: Both products within the cross-media brief are attempted, but one product may be significantly better than the other.
- Level 1: Only one of the cross-media products may be attempted.

If a student submits a Statement of Intent with no accompanying media products then this should be awarded a mark of zero.

If a student creates an audio-visual product that is longer than the stipulated duration then you should only mark the work that falls within the time limit.

If a student creates a print or online product that exceeds the stipulated length or amount then you should mark all of the pages and only give credit for the best pages up to the number of pages stipulated in the brief.

If a product is shorter than the stipulated size or duration then no penalty is to be applied as the work is likely to be self-penalising – particularly in relation to the [Effectiveness and engagement with industry and audience](#) (page 24) section.

If a student has used any non-original images, footage or text or has failed to clearly demonstrate how they directed the activity of any unassessed participants in the media product then they should not be awarded marks above Level 2 in the [Effectiveness and engagement with industry and audience](#) (page 24) section of the marking criteria.

### 3.8.8.2 Statement of intent

Students will be expected to complete and submit a statement of intent which includes their interpretation of the brief, the research they have done, how that research has informed their ideas and the strength of the ideas they have developed.

The statement of intent should be submitted to the teacher in April before the submission of the final product. It should then be submitted to the moderator along with the students' final products.

Level	Marks	Description
5	9–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An outstanding, detailed statement that refers directly and effectively to the intended uses of media language and representations and how these will target the intended audience and reflect the appropriate industry context.</li> <li>• The intentions outlined in the statement are consistently appropriate to the brief, target the audience in a direct way and articulate an excellent concept for digitally convergent products.</li> <li>• Excellent evidence of the application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media through extensive and sustained use of subject specific terminology.</li> </ul>
4	7–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A detailed statement that demonstrates the intended uses of media language and representations and how these will target the intended audience and reflect the appropriate industry context.</li> <li>• The intentions outlined in the statement are almost always appropriate to the brief, target the intended audience and articulate a good concept for digitally convergent products.</li> <li>• Good evidence of application of knowledge and understanding of media through frequent use of relevant and accurate subject specific terminology.</li> </ul>

Level	Marks	Description
3	5–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A clear statement that demonstrates some intended uses of media language and some intended aspects of representation and how these will target the intended audience and reflect the appropriate industry context.</li> <li>• The intentions outlined in the statement are generally appropriate to the brief, target the audience in a general way and articulate a concept for products that are linked though not, necessarily, digitally convergent.</li> <li>• Satisfactory evidence of the application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media through some use of relevant subject specific terminology.</li> </ul>
2	3–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A statement making only occasional reference to the intended uses of media language and/or occasional aspects of representation and how these will target the audience or the industry context.</li> <li>• The intentions outlined in the statement are inconsistently appropriate to the brief, only sometimes target the intended audience and articulates some straightforward links between the products.</li> <li>• Basic evidence of the application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media through very little use of relevant and accurate subject specific terminology.</li> </ul>
1	1–2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A statement has been submitted.</li> <li>• The intentions outlined in the statement are unlikely to be appropriate to the brief, have minimal sense of the intended audience and articulates few, if any, links between the products.</li> <li>• Minimal evidence of the application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media in which any attempt to use subject specific terminology is likely to be inaccurate.</li> </ul>
	0	Nothing worthy of credit.

### 3.8.8.3 Media Language

In this section students will be rewarded for the degree of expertise they demonstrate in using media language within the chosen media form.

Level	Marks	Description
5	13–15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent application of knowledge and understanding of media language, demonstrated by the consistently appropriate and effective selection and combination of elements to communicate very clear meanings throughout the products.</li> <li>• An excellent cross-media production that constructs very effective narratives and shows deliberate control of connotations and clearly and purposefully constructs points of view that embody values and attitudes.</li> </ul>
4	10–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good application of knowledge and understanding of media language, demonstrated by the frequently appropriate and effective selection and combination of elements to communicate clear meanings throughout the product.</li> <li>• A good cross-media production that constructs effective narratives and shows some deliberate control of connotations, though this may not be throughout, and constructs points of view that reflect values and attitudes.</li> </ul>
3	7–9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfactory application of knowledge and understanding of media language, demonstrated by the generally appropriate but inconsistently effective selection and combination of straightforward elements to communicate generally clear meanings throughout the product.</li> <li>• A satisfactory cross-media production that constructs suitable narratives and shows occasional control of connotations but rarely constructs points of view.</li> </ul>
2	4–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic application of knowledge and understanding of media language, demonstrated by the occasionally appropriate selection and combination of simple elements to communicate basic meanings.</li> <li>• A basic cross-media production that constructs simple narratives and shows little awareness of connotations.</li> </ul>
1	1–3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimal application of knowledge and understanding of media language, demonstrated by little appropriate selection and combination of very simple elements to communicate very limited meanings.</li> <li>• A minimal cross-media production that shows little awareness of narrative.</li> </ul>
	0	Nothing worthy of credit.

### 3.8.8.4 Media Representations

In this section students will be rewarded for the degree of expertise they demonstrate in creating and using appropriate representations within the chosen media form.

Level	Marks	Description
5	13–15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent application of knowledge and understanding of media representations, demonstrated by the consistently effective use or subversion of stereotypes and/or stereotypical representations that are highly appropriate to the audience, form and genre.</li> <li>• Excellent use of media representations to communicate clear and highly appropriate meanings throughout.</li> </ul>
4	10–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good application of knowledge and understanding of media representations, demonstrated by the frequently effective use or subversion of stereotypes and/or stereotypical representations that are appropriate to the audience, form and genre.</li> <li>• Good use of media representations to communicate appropriate meanings throughout.</li> </ul>
3	7–9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfactory application of knowledge and understanding of media representations, demonstrated by the sometimes effective use or subversion of stereotypes and/or stereotypical representations that are generally appropriate to the audience, form and genre though there are likely to be some inconsistencies.</li> <li>• Satisfactory use of media representations to communicate generally appropriate meanings though this is unlikely to be throughout the products.</li> </ul>
2	4–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic application of knowledge and understanding of media representations, demonstrated by the rarely effective use of stereotypes and/or stereotypical representations that are only occasionally appropriate to the audience, form and genre.</li> <li>• Basic use of representations to communicate only occasionally appropriate meanings.</li> </ul>
1	1–3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimal application of knowledge and understanding of media representations, demonstrated by a lack of appropriate use of stereotypes and/or stereotypical representations that are very rarely appropriate to the audience, form and genre.</li> <li>• Minimal use of media representations to communicate very little discernible meaning.</li> </ul>
	0	Nothing worthy of credit.

### 3.8.8.5 Effectiveness and engagement with industry and audience

In this section students will be rewarded for how well their media product communicates meanings, reflect the industry specified in the brief, whether or not they have met the requirements stipulated in the brief and the extent to which they have exploited the potential for digital convergence. Teachers/assessors are to use their professional judgement rather than looking for evidence of testing the product on a live audience.



Level	Marks	Description
5	17–20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An excellent cross-media production that would successfully engage the designated audience by employing a consistently effective and appropriate mode of address throughout.</li> <li>• An excellent cross-media production that reflects very clear knowledge and understanding of the media industry through the consistent use of highly appropriate codes and conventions for the specified form, genre and industry.</li> <li>• The opportunities for digital convergence are used in a very clear and coherent manner throughout the cross-media production and are consistently effective.</li> <li>• Meets all the requirements of the brief and completes all of the tasks fully.</li> </ul>
4	13–16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A good cross-media production that would interest the designated audience by employing a frequently effective and appropriate mode of address.</li> <li>• A good cross-media production that uses generally relevant codes and conventions for the specified form, genre and industry.</li> <li>• The opportunities for digital convergence are used in a generally clear manner throughout the cross-media production and are frequently effective.</li> <li>• Meets almost all of the requirements of the brief and almost all of the tasks are completed.</li> </ul>
3	9–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A satisfactory cross-media production that would be of some interest to the designated audience by employing a sometimes effective and appropriate mode of address throughout.</li> <li>• A satisfactory cross-media production that uses some relevant codes and conventions appropriate to the specified form, genre and industry, though with some inconsistency.</li> <li>• The opportunities for digital convergence are used in a reasonably clear manner throughout the cross-media production and are sometimes effective.</li> <li>• Meets the main requirements of the brief and most of the tasks are completed but some of the details are missing.</li> </ul>
2	5–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A basic cross-media production that would only be of occasional interest to the designated audience by employing a mode of address that is only occasionally effective or appropriate.</li> <li>• A basic cross-media production that uses codes and conventions of the specified form, genre and industry inconsistently.</li> <li>• The opportunities for digital convergence are used inconsistently throughout the cross-media production and are only occasionally effective.</li> <li>• Meets some of the requirements of the brief but only a few of the tasks have been completed and the products may fall below the specified lengths/durations.</li> </ul>

Level	Marks	Description
1	1–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A minimal cross-media production that would be unlikely to interest the designated audience and has little sense of mode of address.</li> <li>• A minimal cross-media production that only very rarely uses codes and conventions of the form, genre and industry.</li> <li>• The opportunities for digital convergence are used very rarely in the cross-media production and are unlikely to be effective.</li> <li>• Meets very few of the requirements of the brief and the products are likely to fall well below the specified lengths/durations.</li> </ul> <p>For marks towards the top of the band these must be, at least, recognisable media products.</p>
	0	Nothing worthy of credit.

# 4 Scheme of assessment

---

Find past papers and mark schemes, and sample papers for new courses, on our website at [aqa.org.uk/pastpapers](http://aqa.org.uk/pastpapers)

This specification is designed to be taken over two years.

This is a linear qualification. In order to achieve the award, students must complete all assessments at the end of the course and in the same series.

A-level exams and certification for this specification are available for the first time in May/June 2019 and then every May/June for the life of the specification.

All materials are available in English only.

Our A-level exams in Media Studies include questions that allow students to demonstrate their ability to:

- recall information
- draw together information from different areas of the specification
- apply their knowledge and understanding in practical and theoretical contexts
- analyse critically and compare how media products, including products outside the commercial mainstream, construct and communicate meanings through the interaction of media language and audience response
- use and reflect critically upon a range of complex theories of media studies and use specialist subject specific terminology appropriately in a developed way
- debate critically key questions relating to the social, cultural, political and economic role of the media through sustained discursive writing.

## 4.1 Aims

Courses based on this specification must encourage students to:

- demonstrate skills of enquiry, critical thinking, decision making and analysis
- demonstrate a critical approach to media issues
- demonstrate appreciation and critical understanding of the media and their role both historically and currently in society, culture, politics and the economy
- develop an understanding of the dynamic and changing relationships between media forms, products, media industries and audiences
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the global nature of the media
- apply theoretical knowledge and specialist subject specific terminology to analyse and compare media products and the contexts in which they are produced and consumed in order to make informed arguments, reach substantiated judgements and draw conclusions about media issues
- engage in critical debate about academic theories used in media studies
- appreciate how theoretical understanding supports practice and practice supports theoretical understanding
- demonstrate sophisticated practical skills by providing opportunities for creative media production list of aims.

The exams and non-exam assessment will measure how students have achieved the following assessment objectives.

- AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media and contexts of media and their influence on media products and processes.
- AO2: Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to:
  - analyse media products, including in relation to their contexts and through the use of academic theories
  - evaluate academic theories
  - make judgements and draw conclusions.
- AO3: Create media products for an intended audience, by applying knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to communicate meaning.

### 4.2.1 Assessment objective weightings for A-level Media Studies

Assessment objectives (AOs)	Component weightings (approx %)			Overall weighting (approx %)
	Paper 1	Paper 2	NEA	
AO1	20	10	0	30
AO2	15	25	0	40
AO3	0	0	30	30
Overall weighting of components	35	35	30	100

### 4.3 Assessment weightings

The marks awarded on the papers will be scaled to meet the weighting of the components. Students' final marks will be calculated by adding together the scaled marks for each component. Grade boundaries will be set using this total scaled mark. The scaling and total scaled marks are shown in the table below.

Component	Maximum raw mark	Scaling factor	Maximum scaled mark
Media One	84	x1	84
Media Two	84	x1	84
NEA	60	x1.2	72
Total scaled mark:			240

# 5 Non-exam assessment administration

---

The non-exam assessment (NEA) for this specification is to create a cross-media production for an intended audience.

Visit [aqa.org.uk/7572](https://www.aqa.org.uk/7572) for detailed information about all aspects of NEA administration.

The head of the school or college is responsible for making sure that NEA is conducted in line with our instructions and Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) instructions.

## 5.1 Supervising and authenticating

To meet Ofqual's qualification and subject criteria:

- **students** must sign the *Candidate record form* (CRF) to confirm that the work submitted is their own
- all **teachers** who have marked a student's work must sign the declaration of authentication on the CRF (this is to confirm that the work is solely that of the student concerned and was conducted under the conditions laid down by this specification)
- teachers must ensure that a CRF is attached to each student's work.

Students must have sufficient direct supervision to ensure that the work submitted can be confidently authenticated as their own. If a student receives additional assistance and this is acceptable within the guidelines for this specification, you should award a mark that represents the student's unaided achievement. Please make a note of the support the student received on the CRF and sign the authentication statement. If the statement is not signed, we cannot accept the student's work for assessment.

## 5.2 Avoiding malpractice

### Advice to students

Please inform your students of the AQA regulations concerning malpractice. They must not:

- submit work that is not their own
- lend work to other students
- allow other students access to, or use of, their own independently sourced source material (they may lend their books to another student, but they must not plagiarise other students' research)
- include work copied directly from books, the internet or other sources without acknowledgement
- submit work that is word-processed by a third person without acknowledgement
- include inappropriate, offensive or obscene material.

These actions constitute malpractice and a penalty will be given (for example, disqualification).

---

## Advice to teachers

Students are free to revise and redraft a piece of work before submitting the final piece for assessment.

You can review draft work and provide **generic feedback** to ensure that the work is appropriately focused. In providing generic feedback you **can**:

- provide oral/written feedback
- explain, if necessary, the context of the task
- give general advice on how the task could be approached
- advise on resources that could be used
- remind students of the key areas that should be covered in their project.

In providing generic feedback you **cannot**:

- correct a student's work
- provide templates, model answers or writing frames
- provide specific guidance on how to solve the problem
- provide specific feedback to students on how to improve their projects to meet the requirements of the marking criteria.

If you identify malpractice **before** the student signs the declaration of authentication, you don't need to report it to us. Please deal with it in accordance with your school or college's internal procedures. We expect schools and colleges to treat such cases very seriously.

If you identify malpractice **after** the student has signed the declaration of authentication, the head of your school or college must submit full details of the case to us at the earliest opportunity. Please complete the form JCQ/M1, available from the JCQ website at [jqc.org.uk](http://jqc.org.uk)

You must record details of any work which is not the student's own on the CRF or another appropriate place.

Consult your exams officer about these procedures.

## 5.3 Teacher standardisation

We'll provide support for using the marking criteria and developing appropriate tasks through teacher standardisation.

In the following situations teacher standardisation is essential. We'll send you an invitation to complete teacher standardisation if:

- moderation from the previous year indicates a serious misinterpretation of the requirements
- a significant adjustment was made to the marks in the previous year
- your school or college is new to this specification.

For further information about teacher standardisation visit [aqa.org.uk/7572](http://aqa.org.uk/7572)

For further support and advice please speak to your adviser. Email your subject team at [mediastudies@aqc.org.uk](mailto:mediastudies@aqc.org.uk) for details of your adviser.

## 5.4 Internal standardisation

You must ensure that you have consistent marking standards for all students. One person must manage this process and they must sign the Centre declaration sheet to confirm that internal standardisation has taken place.

Internal standardisation may involve:

- all teachers marking sample pieces of work to identify differences in marking standards
- discussing any differences in marking at a training meeting for all teachers involved
- referring to reference and archive material such as previous work or examples from our teacher standardisation.

## 5.5 Commenting

To meet Ofqual's qualification and subject criteria, you must show clearly how marks have been awarded against the marking criteria in this specification.

Your comments will help the moderator see, as precisely as possible, where you think the students have met the marking criteria.

You must record your comments on the CRF.

## 5.6 Submitting marks

You must check that the correct marks are written on the CRF and that the total is correct.

The deadline for submitting the total mark for each student is given at [aqa.org.uk/keydates](https://www.aqa.org.uk/keydates)

## 5.7 Factors affecting individual students

For advice and guidance about arrangements for any of your students, please email us as early as possible at [eos@aqa.org.uk](mailto:eos@aqa.org.uk)

**Occasional absence:** you should be able to accept the occasional absence of students by making sure they have the chance to make up what they have missed. You may organise an alternative supervised session for students who were absent at the time you originally arranged.

**Lost work:** if work is lost you must tell us how and when it was lost and who was responsible, using our special consideration online service at [aqa.org.uk/eaqa](https://www.aqa.org.uk/eaqa)

**Extra help:** where students need extra help which goes beyond normal learning support, please use the CRF to tell us so that this help can be taken into account during moderation.

**Students who move schools:** students who move from one school or college to another during the course sometimes need additional help to meet the requirements. How you deal with this depends on when the move takes place.

- If it happens early in the course, the new school or college should be responsible for the work.
- If it happens late in the course, it may be possible to arrange for the moderator to assess the work as a student who was 'educated elsewhere'.

---

## 5.8 Keeping students' work

Students' work must be kept under secure conditions from the time that it is marked, with CRFs attached. After the moderation period and the deadline for Enquiries about Results (or once any enquiry is resolved) you may return the work to students.

## 5.9 Moderation

You must send all your students' marks to us by the date given at [aqa.org.uk/deadlines](http://aqa.org.uk/deadlines). You will be asked to send a sample of your students' NEA evidence to your moderator.

You must show clearly how marks have been awarded against the assessment criteria in this specification. Your comments must help the moderator see, as precisely as possible, where you think the students have met the assessment criteria. You must:

- record your comments on the Candidate Record Form (CRF)
- check that the correct marks are written on the CRF and that the total is correct.

The moderator re-marks a sample of the evidence and compares this with the marks you have provided to check whether any changes are needed to bring the marking in line with our agreed standards. Any changes to marks will normally keep your rank order but, where major inconsistencies are found, we reserve the right to change the rank order.

## School and college consortia

If you're in a consortium of schools or colleges with joint teaching arrangements (where students from different schools and colleges have been taught together but entered through the school or college at which they are on roll), you must let us know by:

- filling in the *Application for Centre Consortium Arrangements for centre-assessed work*, which is available from the JCQ website [jqc.org.uk](http://jqc.org.uk)
- appointing a consortium coordinator who can speak to us on behalf of all schools and colleges in the consortium. If there are different coordinators for different specifications, a copy of the form must be sent in for each specification.

We'll allocate the same moderator to all schools and colleges in the consortium and treat the students as a single group for moderation.

## 5.10 After moderation

We will return your students' work to you after the exams. You'll also receive a report when the results are issued, which will give feedback on the appropriateness of the tasks set, interpretation of the marking criteria and how students performed in general.

We'll give you the final marks when the results are issued.

To meet Ofqual requirements, as well as for awarding, archiving or standardising purposes, we may need to keep some of your students' work. We'll let you know if we need to do this.



# 6 General administration

You can find information about all aspects of administration, as well as all the forms you need, at [aqa.org.uk/examsadmin](http://aqa.org.uk/examsadmin)

## 6.1 Entries and codes

You only need to make one entry for each qualification – this will cover all the question papers, non-exam assessment and certification.

Every specification is given a national discount (classification) code by the Department for Education (DfE), which indicates its subject area.

If a student takes two specifications with the same discount code, further and higher education providers are likely to take the view that they have only achieved one of the two qualifications. Please check this before your students start their course.

Qualification title	AQA entry code	DfE discount code
AQA Advanced Level GCE in Media Studies	7572	TBC

This specification complies with:

- Ofqual *General conditions of recognition* that apply to all regulated qualifications
- Ofqual GCE qualification level conditions that apply to all GCEs
- Ofqual GCE subject level conditions that apply to all GCEs in this subject
- all other relevant regulatory documents.

The Ofqual qualification accreditation number (QAN) is 603/2372/3.

## 6.2 Overlaps with other qualifications

There is overlapping content in the AS and A-level Media Studies specifications. This helps you teach the AS and A-level together.

## 6.3 Awarding grades and reporting results

The A-level qualification will be graded on a six-point scale: A\*, A, B, C, D and E.

Students who fail to reach the minimum standard for grade E will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate.

## 6.4 Resits and shelf life

Students can resit the qualification as many times as they wish, within the shelf life of the qualification.

---

## 6.5 Previous learning and prerequisites

There are no previous learning requirements. Any requirements for entry to a course based on this specification are at the discretion of schools and colleges.

However, we recommend that students should have the skills and knowledge associated with a GCSE Media Studies or equivalent.

## 6.6 Access to assessment: diversity and inclusion

General qualifications are designed to prepare students for a wide range of occupations and further study. Therefore our qualifications must assess a wide range of competences.

The subject criteria have been assessed to see if any of the skills or knowledge required present any possible difficulty to any students, whatever their ethnic background, religion, sex, age, disability or sexuality. Tests of specific competences were only included if they were important to the subject.

As members of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) we participate in the production of the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments: General and Vocational qualifications*. We follow these guidelines when assessing the needs of individual students who may require an access arrangement or reasonable adjustment. This document is published at [jcq.org.uk](http://jcq.org.uk)

### Students with disabilities and special needs

We're required by the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to remove or lessen any disadvantage that affects a disabled student.

We can make arrangements for disabled students and students with special needs to help them access the assessments, as long as the competences being tested aren't changed. Access arrangements must be agreed **before** the assessment. For example, a Braille paper would be a reasonable adjustment for a Braille reader.

To arrange access arrangements or reasonable adjustments, you can apply using the online service at [aqa.org.uk/eaqa](http://aqa.org.uk/eaqa)

### Special consideration

We can give special consideration to students who have been disadvantaged at the time of the assessment through no fault of their own – for example a temporary illness, injury or serious problem such as family bereavement. We can only do this **after** the assessment.

Your exams officer should apply online for special consideration at [aqa.org.uk/eaqa](http://aqa.org.uk/eaqa)

For more information and advice visit [aqa.org.uk/access](http://aqa.org.uk/access) or email [accessarrangementsqueries@aqa.org.uk](mailto:accessarrangementsqueries@aqa.org.uk)

## 6.7 Working with AQA for the first time

If your school or college hasn't previously offered our specifications, you need to register as an AQA centre. Find out how at [aqa.org.uk/becomeacentre](http://aqa.org.uk/becomeacentre)

## 6.8 Private candidates

This specification is not available to private candidates.

## 6.9 Age-appropriateness

Care and discretion should be exercised to ensure that media products and topics selected for study, and students' own production work are age appropriate. Although no topic, product or media category is explicitly excluded by this guideline, particular sensitivity is required in relation to the selection or exclusion of material which may be divisive, offensive or which may give rise to safeguarding issues.

## Get help and support

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at

You can talk directly to the Media Studies subject team:

E: [mediastudies@aqa.org.uk](mailto:mediastudies@aqa.org.uk)

T: 01483 556 301