Introduction

This was the final full year of MEST2. As in previous years, there was evidence of lots of excellent work being undertaken by students across the country. Students and their teachers have shown a real commitment to the practical work over the years and creative approaches to the briefs and tasks have made moderation a real pleasure.

MEST2 will not be available for first time students in 2018 although it is available for students wishing to resit the component. No new brief is being published so resubmissions should use the brief published in June 2016 (for submission May 2017). All 2016-17 guidance materials are still relevant and available on the AQA website. Teachers will still be able to contact a coursework advisor should any queries arise.

Administration

Most administration was completed accurately and submitted on time. Like last year, the online mark submission system worked well and has reduced the paperwork for schools and colleges. It should be noted that moderators usually only look at a sample of the work submitted so errors on Candidate Record Forms or with the inputting of marks on the e-submission system are not always picked up. Do please check marks carefully before submitting them to AQA. Where errors are picked up in moderation, they can be amended online but this needs to be done by schools/colleges.

The majority of schools/colleges are including Candidate Record Forms with all submissions and are signing and sending the Centre Declaration Sheet. A small number send students' work to moderators with little or no annotation or commentary. Please note that it is a requirement that work submitted should show evidence of marking. It also helps the moderator understand the thinking behind the mark awarded. Most annotations and notes were extremely helpful when done. Some simply replicated the comments in the mark scheme without linking it to the specifics of a piece of work.

There are far fewer technical issues now than in previous years. The most common issue is not videos or websites that don’t work, but errors in the submission of urls, making the work inaccessible (see page 4). It is also worth noting that moderators work on their home computers. If you think your students’ work should be looked at using a specific browser, please inform your moderator but also ensure you have sent screen grabs or a video walk through of the e-media work too. Moderators may not have access to the browser you need them to use. It is good practice to send screengrabs or walk through videos to allow moderation to proceed quickly should technical issues with websites arise.

Most administration is completed and submitted on time but some issues are still arising during moderation.

- Detailed information about group work is not always sent to moderators
  Where students work in groups, please consider how the work will be received by the moderator and include clear lists of who worked with whom. Please make sure shared work is labelled and where one disc/pen-drive is submitted for the whole group, that it is not placed in one group member’s folder. This student may not form part of the moderation sample.

  Where the marks given to individual group members is not the same, please explain why on
the Candidate Record Form. The disparity in marks may be down to differences in the quality of the second production but where it is reflective of an individual student’s contribution to the group, please let the moderator know the reason why they are being rewarded more than another.

- **Some schools/colleges are not completing all sections of the Candidate Record Form**
  Please ensure that information about software, any found images that have been used or any additional help provided is included on the front page and details about any group work and specific comments regarding the submission are included on the second page. Some schools/colleges make their own comment forms and this is good practice as they help the moderator enormously. Do inform the moderator of any specific issues that you feel will help them understand the context of the productions and the marks you have awarded. The Candidate Record Form allows notes to be provided on the way group work has been managed. Please provide at least a basic indication as to each student’s contribution to the completed work.

- **Some schools/colleges are still sending work where all students have worked on the same brief and sometimes the same tasks**
  The briefs and tasks are offered as options for students to choose from. Whilst it is appreciated that some schools/colleges may have to limit choices for practical reasons due to access to resources, students should be selecting the topic and their approaches themselves.

- **Lots of schools/colleges are still sending far too much research and planning material**
  Only 5-8 pages as a sample of the research and planning undertaken is required. Sometimes so much work is submitted that finding the final productions, links to online submissions and/or the evaluations is quite difficult.

- **Some online submissions are inaccessible due to transcription errors/difficult to read urls**
  Please send all urls as links on an electronic document. This allows you to check that all links work before sending them to the moderator. The simplest way to do this would be to copy and paste urls from the browser into a document and then send the document to the moderator on a disc or pen drive. You can send one file with all urls for all students pasted in, or one document per student.

  Do keep copies of urls for all student submissions in case there are any queries during the moderation process.

- **Some work is not labelled correctly**
  Do please ensure that moderators can easily match work to the correct student by using names and numbers in all labelling, and ensuring that all elements of the submission are labelled appropriately and accurately. Please avoid labelling work with nicknames or the informal labelling that may be used during production (group names, etc.).

- **Some schools/colleges sent work that was not ‘fully realised’**
  As colours and proportions do not look the same on screen as they do on paper, print work should be sent hard copy for submission. This also demonstrates technical ability in preparing DTP work for printing. E-media work should be sent so it can be seen through a browser. This enables moderators to see the work as students intended and enables multimedia work to be assessed. There were a few cases where moderators were sent logins and passwords to students’ accounts on sites such as wix.com. Please send urls linking to published websites as it is not appropriate for moderators to access these accounts.
Please see the submission guidelines on the AQA website for specific advice on the submission of practical work.

http://filestore.aqa.org.uk/subjects/AQA-25702-SUB-GUIDE.PDF

**Briefs/Tasks**

There is still evidence that not all students are engaging fully with the detail of the brief and tasks selected. Stronger students produced work that showed an understanding of the institutional contexts that informed the brief and tasks. All briefs proved popular, with Briefs One and Three attracting more students than the less familiar Brief 2. Moderators saw some interesting and creative materials for the music brief (Brief Three) and some students approached Brief One in ways that showed excellent knowledge of film language and genre codes, creating effective and, at times, effecting work. There was, however, some evidence of misreading the brief. Some samples contained ‘trailers’ rather than ‘extracts’, with some students apparently not realising their work needed to be based on one of the given topics.

The new brief (Brief Two) on current affairs saw some interesting approaches. Students chose a range of social and political topics, and created engaging and persuasive materials. The influence of the EU referendum was evident in some folders and students covered other topics based on social issues and cultural/religious topics. Others tried to make lifestyle topics, such as fashion, into ‘current affairs’. However, this was not always fully successful. Stronger students engaged with the idea of creating a ‘brand’ for their campaign and to create materials that attempted to act persuasively.

Students seem familiar with Brief Three, although only a small few engaged with the idea of attempting to create viral interest with their material, which is identified as a requirement in the brief. Some promotional documentaries were submitted rather than music videos. Stronger students engaged with both the idea of communicating the musical genre and the artist’s brand. Some excellent examples were seen, some taking very original approaches and others demonstrating the influence of existing music videos. Social media submissions for Brief Three were sometimes populated with interesting images and information that considers creating a rapport with the audience. In weaker submissions, the Facebook pages and Twitter accounts added very little, with students often reusing images from print production and/or repeating the same image multiple times. Some pages were sparsely populated whereas stronger students created visual appeal and often included multimedia posts.

When chosen, moving image tends to be the stronger of the two submissions. This implies that less time is given to the print/e-media productions. A disparity in the quality of the work across the two tasks generally impacts on the mark that can be awarded. This often means that students who present a strong production do not get the mark their stronger piece deserves as the weaker production will lower the mark for the folder, based on the ‘best fit’ approach. Stronger students show strong knowledge and understanding of moving image codes and conventions, and the work is planned and edited with care and attention. Ambitious students pay close attention to locations, wardrobe, make-up and props. They often add post-production effects to their footage. Some schools/colleges are using high quality cameras and we’ve seen drone shots and HD quality work this year. Students with access to less specialized equipment can still achieve high in the mark scheme, however.

Weaker students relied on hand held cameras, often phones, and approaches tended to be based on capturing footage with some nods to genre codes. This was often presented as a montage of
images with little consideration of narrative. Regardless of the brief, lots of moving image work consisted of students following their actors walking somewhere and some footage is still being taken in portrait when this is not appropriate for the production being submitted.

Both print and e-media work needs good quality images to be successful. Approaches to photography are varied, with stronger students clearly planning their photo shoots and taking a creative and varied approach to the images they create. Found images often dominate weaker work and students who repeat the same images several times across the production, or who use ‘snapshots’ rather than images taken specifically for the brief/task, often find it difficult to attract higher marks. Some students use image manipulation software to enhance their photographs. This often adds significantly to the production’s visual appeal and enables the student to demonstrate their creative and technical skills.

E-media work often relies on templates and so students who showed their own creative and technical skills in the production of images, videos and other design elements could be rewarded high in the levels. Stronger students engaged with social media in a way that demonstrated their understanding of the need for audience engagement and interaction, demonstrating their understanding of the products’ marketing function. Weaker ones simply added images to page templates, often repeating images across productions and sometimes within the same page.

Print work again benefited from creative approaches to images. Stronger students considered the placement and size of images and text carefully, and showed creativity in the visuals of the page and the way information was communicated. Some students seemed to have a limited awareness of the principals of page design. Weaker students often missed the importance of readability and presented work that was too small or too large, used illegible fonts or colours, or misunderstood the way text often needs to be presented in columns.

**Evaluations**

The evaluation provides 25% of the marks for the unit and so weak evaluations can have a very negative effect on the overall mark achieved.

The main issue in evaluations at the lower end of the mark scheme is an over-reliance on description. This can be the description of the research process, the process of production and/or of the production itself. Some approaches to analysis are very personal with opinion being relied on the rather than analysis. Weaker students often make unsupported statements about the audience or the effect of their production choices. Higher level evaluations use evidence from pre-production research, as well as close analysis of the finished productions themselves.

Please note that high level credit cannot be given to students for naming concepts or theoretical ideas. Higher level work demonstrates the students’ understanding by applying the ideas as an analytical approach. Strong evaluations demonstrate their understanding of the brief’s/task’s requirements and evaluate the finished work in relation to the instructions given. An engagement with the work’s strengths and weaknesses can be rewarded, with higher level work providing this evaluation whilst considering the focus of the brief.

**Further support**

As ever, moderation has allowed moderators to view some wonderful and creative work. The clear majority of the work we see shows an engagement and enthusiasm from the students and a high
level of support for creative and individual work from teachers. The e-submission system has streamlined the mark submission and sampling process.

Further support materials are on the AQA website. Do make sure you contact your coursework advisor if you have any queries. Email AQA (mediastudies@aqa.org.uk) for more information on support for this unit.

**Coursework guidance and information**

http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/media-studies/as-and-a-level/media-studies-2570/coursework

**Coursework briefs 2017**

http://filestore.aqa.org.uk/subjects/AQA-W-2570-COURSEWK-BRIEF-17.PDF

**Guidance on the briefs for 2017**

Use of statistics

Statistics used in this report may be taken from incomplete processing data. However, this data still gives a true account on how students have performed for each question.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the Results Statistics page of the AQA Website.

Converting Marks into UMS marks

Convert raw marks into Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) marks by using the link below.

UMS conversion calculator