A-LEVEL

MEDIA STUDIES: CREATING A CROSS-MEDIA PRODUCTION

7572/C Coursework
Report on the Examination

7572/C
June 2023

Version: 1.0

Submission of Work

Most centres submitted correctly encrypted USB sticks using the 2023 password generated by AQA. Some centres used their own passwords or the one from last year's submission. Please note that under no circumstances should passwords be sent with the encrypted USB stick.

AQA send details about the passwords that should be used for encryption to exams officers each year. Please make sure you are using the current password.

There were some technical hic-cups with videos not playing or USB sticks not allowing access. Thanks to the centres who were contacted and swiftly sent replacements.

A number of centres sent all work electronically. Please note that the current submission guidance states that print work should be printed out for submission. This allows the students' work to be seen in the format that was intended as work does not always look the same on screen.

Where it is not possible to print work at the correct size, work should be sent showing the proportions of the product accurately. Billboard posters should be short and wide, newspapers should be proportionally correct rather than simply A4 or A3.

The best way to submit online work is 'live' online with a URL sent to enable access and view multimedia work. It is not appropriate to send your moderator log-in details and passwords to students' website builder accounts.

Printouts and walkthroughs are not necessary unless there is a reason why live work via URL is not available or possible. Please note that voiceover commentaries should not be sent with recorded walkthroughs. In these circumstances multimedia can be sent as a separate file but please show the multimedia working in the walkthrough.

Some online work was submitted using handwritten or printouts of URLs. This can sometimes cause problems when retyping to see the work. Please submit any online work using clickable URLs in a document on the USB stick. Do make sure all the work is clearly labelled and please include student numbers at the start of the file names. There were many examples of good practice in the way student work was labelled and presented. Thank you for your consideration.

Please check the AQA website for any amendments to the submission guidance next academic year.

Admin

Many centres uploaded marks well in advance of the deadline. Thank you. A reminder that marks need to be uploaded (via Centre Services) by May 15th. When you upload your marks, a sample will be generated. Work should then be sent to your named moderator within the next few days.

The vast majority of centres submitted all the paperwork correctly. Where missing documents were requested centres were quick to respond helping moderators complete their work.

Centres are reminded that each student's work should be accompanied by a completed Candidate Record Form and one Centre Declaration Sheet that should be signed and sent with the sample.

There is space on the CRF for teachers to add notes and information. The most helpful commentaries linked the student work to aspects of the mark scheme rather than just replicating it. Some centres provided no notes that showed how the mark scheme was being applied.

It is helpful to have some indication of the context of production – especially where students have taken unusual approaches to the tasks. For example, explanations of the sourcing and making of the imagery used can be very helpful.

Application of the Mark Scheme

Most centres applied the mark scheme accurately – or within tolerance of the standard. Where marking was inaccurate, marks tended to be generous. Often this impacted in the upper end of the mark scheme or in levels when work was placed at the top when lower in the level was more appropriate.

New standardising material will be available via the Teacher Online Standardising area of Centre Services next academic year and it is advised that you refer to the sample work and the commentaries before you start to mark your students' work.

Evaluations

Evaluations in the higher levels tend to respond to the brief's requirements and make clear and specific plans based on knowledge from the framework. Work at this level will state an intention and then explain how they will attempt to achieve it. Ideas from the framework are typically used to explain why these choices have been made at this level.

Work assessed lower in the levels becomes more descriptive of what will be done with limited focus on how or why. Theory may be mentioned but not engaged with or applied in these levels. Some evaluations at the lower end of the range often offer a simple reworking of the instructions in the brief.

Some evaluations were written in the past tense and evaluated the productions rather than state intentions. This makes it difficult to see evidence for the mark scheme descriptors and this should be reflected in the mark awarded.

Students should be encouraged to deal with both tasks in their Statement of Intent.

Media Language

Students need to show there has been careful consideration in the way media language has been selected and used in their productions. Work receiving marks in the higher levels will show an engagement with the way media language can be used and there will be some ambition and creativity in the selections made. There will be evidence of a clear understanding of the importance of media language in communicating ideas clearly to the audience. How this is applied depends on the form/task but for example, a video that varies editing speeds to create tension or a website with clear navigation and legibility are using media language effectively.

Work lower in the level tends to use media language in a more perfunctory way. Sometimes this can lead to a lack of clarity or confused messaging.

Representations

Students who achieved well in this area of the mark scheme demonstrated a clear understanding of the way media language choices combine to create meaning and they demonstrated a control over the creation of their intended meaning. Choice of language and images showed a consideration of the target audience and industrial context. Some students replicate stereotypes and others subvert them. Either approach to production is fine. Students who engage with the careful construction of imagery and consider the construction of brand and identity in their choices score well.

Work in the lower levels tended to take less care with their language choices in written work. Images in the lower levels tend towards simple illustration rather than engaging with the way images communicate meaning through connotation and symbolism for example.

Audience and Industry

This section of the mark scheme deals with the idea of audience engagement and awareness of the industrial context. Work in higher levels showed an active engagement with the chosen brief's requirements. This could take different forms in different briefs but included using language appropriate to the genre/audience group, being accurate in their use of codes and conventions (or clear in their subversion of them) and recognising any limitations created by the defined audience or industrial practices. In addition, work at this level accurately replicated the codes and conventions of the form and/or genre being produced.

Less successful work tends to be more personal in its approach and may not consider issues such as budget or regulation in the approach to production. Work at this level sometimes states a target audience but then choices made do not engage with the group or groups identified explicitly. Work in the lower levels tends not to have full control over the codes and conventions of the forms being constructed/genres worked in. Errors and inaccuracies in design and/or use of iconography may be present.

The mark for this area of the mark scheme should reflect the use (or not) of non-original imagery.

Specification and Brief Requirements

Centres are reminded that the NEA should be an individual task. Students should not work in groups to produce the same products. Any practical collaborations should be identified clearly on the candidate record form.

The specification is clear that no non-original imagery should be used in students' productions. Should this occur, instructions are given on how to apply the mark scheme. Where briefs/tasks state minimum requirements of a number of original images, this should not be interpreted to mean that other images can be non-original. This is simply the minimum number of images needed for the task.

Misunderstandings of this rule did lead to some leniency in the marking when the student used non-original imagery in their work and this was not taken into account when marking – especially for work awarded marks in the top levels of the mark scheme. Centres should consider this when supporting the students' productions. If non-original imagery is used this should be reflected in the

mark awarded. Please speak to your NEA advisor should you need specific advice with applying these specification requirements when marking your students' work.

Where students have created their own images, it would be useful for teachers to ensure that the information about software used is provided on the Candidate Record Form and that some information about the student's input into the creation of imagery is provided. This is especially important where students are submitting imagery that is not simple photography or film footage – eg animations. Editing found material is not considered original imagery.

Students and teachers sign the Candidate Record Form to say that the work presented is original. Information should be provided for any images that were not created by the student for these productions.

Minimum requirements are given for each task. Centres are asked to suggest that students focus on doing the highest quality work possible rather than spend time producing expansive work far exceeding expectations. Evidence shows that this often dilutes the overall quality of the product being assessed. It is worth paying close attention to the details of the minimum requirements for each task as top level marks (audience and industry) can only be awarded where all requirements are met.

The Briefs

Across the cohort, students attempted all briefs. The most popular seemed to be briefs 1 (TV), 6 (gaming) and 2 (newspapers) with perhaps the lifestyle brief being the least popular with students.

Each brief offered a range of challenges and opportunities for students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding.

Brief 1

Students dealt with both tasks in this brief well. Some really interesting approaches were offered in the video production with the promo video taking different forms – for example, early morning TV interviews, online magazine interviews and segments from entertainment programmes. Often a trailer/clips from the show were offered with these interview segments which gave students an opportunity to showcase their moving image production skills, creation of representations and awareness of audience more extensively.

Work lower in the level focused only on interviews with minimum thought given to mise-en-scene, the variety of shots and editing. Some videos were very simple with one set and one character's address to camera. This meant that media language use was limited and ideas about representation and audience appeal were all focused on the responses to interview questions.

Print adverts that recognised the importance of giving clear information as to how to access the programme and used the opportunity to engage with genre codes and conventions and selling techniques/audience appeal did well.

Work in lower levels was often characterised by images that were limited in terms of construction and design. Text overlaid on images at these levels often simply stated the programme's name and the idea of the adverts having a persuasive function was not always engaged with.

Not all students met all of the minimum requirements of the tasks in this brief – note the need for at least two locations in the video task and the idea that print adverts should employ a marketing strategy and create a clear brand identity.

Brief 2

As an 'all print' option, this brief proved to be popular. Students who achieved well demonstrated their engagement with the codes and conventions of both forms in terms of layout and design as well as function. Some students were clearly enthused to be able to create work that dealt with issues close to their hearts. The construction of newspaper products raises specific issues in the replication of layout and design codes and conventions. Work in the higher levels paid close attention to the design of newspaper pages considering the balance of text and images using columns, headlines and typeface with some accuracy. The proportions of the page were key to accurate work and students who replicated the shape of a newspaper page and used images and text in the right proportions often did well. They also communicated the content of their work effectively using language and images appropriate for the audience and the industrial context.

Higher level flyers engaged with the audience and provided a clear 'call to action'.

Some newspapers were less successful in their design and presentation. Overly large fonts, small headlines and limitations in the planning of the use of images and columns impacted on the effectiveness of the communication of ideas. Similarly, flyers at this level often comprised an image with a text overlay but without a clear aim or intent.

Some newspaper work was over-rewarded where the use of layout and design codes was inaccurate and impacted on the communication of ideas. This seemed to come from a lack of engagement with page shapes and the proportional relationships between elements on the page eg the font sizes used for headlines and body text, the use of columns etc. Similar issues were sometimes evident in flyers. Some of this could come from working on screens and not realising how the work will look when printed out. It may be possible to see issues when the work is put in 'print preview' but it is good practice to print out pages part-way through production to check the proportions. Newspapers don't need to printed at the correct size but page proportions should be accurate.

Brief 3

This was a popular brief. Students offered promotion for a range of artists from singer-songwriters to boy bands and rock groups. The students often did very well in the Instagram task. Stronger work created an identifiable brand identity for their band/artist and communicated this through the images used in posts as well as in the accompanying comments.

Promo videos were approached in different ways with many showing the influence of online media in the presentation of images and content. Stronger submissions engaged with the idea of constructing a narrative and camera shots and editing were used to construct rapport with the target audience and communicate genre and brand identity. It was good to see where students had thought carefully about the use of multiple locations and props. Less successful work tended to provide static interviews in a location that showed little thought about messaging and missed providing the minimum requirements of the task.

More successful adverts were engaged with the specific needs of the target audience and demonstrated a knowledge and understanding of advertising and marketing, offering a clear brand

identity and appropriate persuasive techniques. Some work at the lower end of the mark scheme omitted information to help audiences act and often presented ideas quite literally rather than engaging on subtle ways to sell the product.

Brief 4

Students' knowledge of the way Instagram is used to reach out and appeal to audiences was evident in higher level work. These students often engaged with the need to stand out and offer something interesting and entertaining for the audience. They also demonstrated this knowledge via the caption for each post and comments left by followers.

Some students completed this brief using non original images in either one or both of the tasks. See previous note on this. Lower in the range students often repeated images or used very slightly different images from the same shoot. This limited the mark that could be offered.

Many students responded really well to the idea of targeting niche groups with film franchises, genres and eras being some of the ways the students narrowed down their approach. Strong websites had a good sense of genre in their design and the pages were easy to read and access with clear navigational clues offered. There were some excellent examples of students reworking images for named films (posters and/or 'stills' from films) using friends as models, self-sourcing props and using local locations. This provided multiple ways for students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding.

Lower in the levels, Instagram work used images that did not have a clear connection to the website. Some students used the same images across productions whilst others used unrelated images that could have come from their phone library. Websites at this level tend to rely on templates and have a design that feels dated. Existing images of real film posters were commonly used at this level.

Brief 5

Perhaps the least popular of the briefs this year. Where undertaken, students offered different approaches to lifestyle with focus areas including fashion, beauty, travel etc. Online magazines that demonstrated an understanding of modern website design and features did well especially where images were taken for the purpose of the NEA and engaged with creating ideas about the subjects rather than simply presenting information. Less successful websites offered a design that was more 'old fashioned' or that simply used a templated design created by software. Many students used wix.com and this is an excellent way to present the work but it is important that students design their own pages both in terms of layout and 'house-style'.

Stronger audio features gave some variety in the use of sound including different voices, the use of music, idents, sound effects etc. Some really engaging work was submitted where the content was presented as a lively conversation. Lower down the mark levels, audio features were limited in the use of sound and were sometimes presented as one voice reading from a script.

Brief 6

There were some centres that seemingly misunderstood the need for the submission of the video task to be original, edited footage. Some students sent three minutes of game footage with commentaries or an inserted image of someone playing the game. Similarly, some blog sites were

reliant on found images to illustrate their submission. Centres are reminded that the specification says that to ensure access to the full range of marks in the mark scheme, no found imagery should be used.

In addition, videos at the lower end of the range showed limited use of set ups and editing with many original elements of video submissions being a single shot of a speaker. It is worth noting that the minimum requirements should be met for all submissions. For example, videos should always use 'at least two filming locations'.

More successful submissions used all their own imagery. Some examples of approaches included taking pictures of someone playing a game, using footage of interviews with players, editing original photographs to make them look like images from games etc. Students who identified gaming related content rather than relying on the games themselves tended to be more successful in this brief.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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